



**CORNERSTONE CONSULTING**

**Mentoring Matters:  
Briefings for Business Leaders**

**Topic:  
How Can We Measure Mentoring?**

**QUESTION: HOW CAN WE MEASURE MENTORING?**

When determining the measurements of success for a Mentoring initiative, it is very important to first identify the business objectives that are to be accomplished by the initiative.

Once the objectives have been identified, appropriate measurements can be more easily established.

Some examples of measurement results from various organizations are:

- ⇒ Training budgets were slashed and fewer dollars were available for instructor led training. Required development was able to take place through the mentoring relationship versus an individual attending a training course. This saved not only the cost of creating the training initiative, but also related costs of attending a course such as charge for the training/class/workshop, travel, and time away from the job.

In reverse, limited training funds were allocated by first identifying those development activities which could be accomplished through mentoring relationships which in turn released dollars that could be directed towards other/additional training and development activities.

In both situations, mentoring allowed the organization to ensure that equivalent (especially if the budget had been slashed) or, in many cases, more hours of developmental opportunities were available for employees. This was very important during economic crunches or downsizing. It is important for industries where continual employee development needed to take place, but budget restraints existed.

The ability to increase the number of hours spent in training/development per year without an increase in the training budget through mentoring.

- ⇒ Many organizations measured a decrease in the learning curve based upon on-the-job mentoring that reinforced classroom training. This measurement revealed that individuals who went to classroom training without the follow-up of on-the-job mentoring had a longer learning curve than those individuals who had been reinforced by on-the-job mentoring following classroom training. This result was very different than just on-the-job training – it specifically measured the success of the mentoring relationship.
- ⇒ Measurements showed that organizations were accelerating new hire orientation/up-to-speed training with mentoring and reducing the related time from as much as 3 months down to 6 ½ weeks. Each new hire was assigned a qualified Mentor that focused on the individual's targeted needs versus putting everyone through the same new hire/orientation activities.
- ⇒ Measurements by organizations accelerating the learning curve and reducing the amount of time it took to be efficiently functional on a job – from as much as 18 months to 13 months.

Some organizations did not use specific *quantifiable* measurements, but identified specific “behaviors” that they wanted to see take place and/or change. They then measured the effectiveness of the mentoring initiative based on the fact that these new behaviors were modeled by the Mentor and then by the Mentee.

**BUSINESS ISSUES: WE WANT TO IMPLEMENT A MENTORING INITIATIVE WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION BUT WE CAN'T SEEM TO GET SENIOR MANAGEMENT TO MAKE IT A PRIORITY.**

One of the main reasons that senior management does not make mentoring initiatives a priority is because many times they don't see the **business reason** the undertaking.

When there are many areas of the organization where downsizing is taking place, budgets are being cut, and everyone is becoming more and more accountable for justifying any expenditure, members of management may fail to see a return on investment for putting time and effort into this initiative. With this perception or mis-perception, how can you blame them?

A more correct perception about mentoring is that it is no longer a warm, fuzzy, feel-good initiative. **Mentoring is a valid strategy for developing individuals while saving the organization time and dollars.**

An important step is to position mentoring correctly. In order to position mentoring as a business strategy, two elements must be in place. **First, the mentoring initiative must be tied to specific business objectives and second, it must include factors that define and measure its success.**

If you don't take these steps, then mentoring will just be another "flavor of the month program" and will not receive the commitment and recognition that it deserves.

Before you can determine how to measure the success of your mentoring initiative, you must **first** identify your business objective. Be sure that you truly have identified and defined a business objective and not just a nice "wish". A common reason organizations indicate they want a mentoring initiative is because they want their employees to be better developed. This is a very nice "wish", but it is not a sound business objective. The test to ensure that you are reaching a business objective is to keep asking the question "So what?"

A dialogue might go like this (*note this is totally hypothetical and is an abbreviated version for use as an example*):

- (Self) We need a mentoring initiative so our employees are better developed.
- (Inner-self) So what? What does it mean if our employees don't get development?
- (Self) If employees don't get the development they need, then we won't be as productive and/or we will always be in a reactive versus proactive mode.
- (Inner-self) So what? What does it mean if we aren't as productive as we should be?
- (Self) We can lose business to our competitors.
- (Inner-self) So what? How much business could we lose and how does that affect us?
- (Self) We could lose over 20% in revenue this year if our production goes down.
- (Inner-self) So what? How could mentoring help production?
- (Self) If employees were better trained on how to use the present technology to its fullest capacity, then we could increase product and/or cut production loses.
- etc., etc., etc.

By continuing on with this type of dialogue you will be able to identify the specific business criteria that can be influenced/ affected by mentoring.

Last, it is important to understand that each division, department, etc., within the organization may have different objectives that mentoring can/will influence OR there may be one overall organizational objective.

**Questions or feedback - please contact us:**

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