



## **MENTOR PROGRAMS: Share Expertise, Develop People**

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One of the best tools for developing employees is a mentor program. Most often, seasoned employees informally or formally advise employees who aren't direct reports. These experienced professionals encourage employees, cheerlead new ideas and approaches, provide career advice, and offer insight to company policies and politics.

Mentor programs contribute to building performance cultures, in which individuals strive to improve their skill sets and apply that knowledge to their jobs. Because they're getting unique attention, individuals in mentor programs tend to feel more appreciated; as a result, overall company morale increases, retention climbs, and talented employees are better prepared to move quickly into key positions.

Mentor programs also accomplish the following:

- **Encourage a culture of information sharing.** Knowledge and intellectual property are valuable assets to any company. When employees feel secure about helping colleagues and building on each others' ideas, the company will bring products and services to market more quickly, discover breakthroughs faster, and reduce redundancies in information gathering.
- **Support leadership succession.** It's debatable whether great leaders are born or made; it's probably a little of both. Identifying future stars and giving them access to the talents of today's leaders ensures that when it's time to turn over the reins, solid people are in place and up to speed.
- **Rejuvenate seasoned employees.** It's not just the protégés who learn. As they teach, mentors feel a renewed sense of pride in the company and get fresh and diverse perspectives.

Effective mentor programs are carefully crafted and orchestrated, pairing the right people together and defining specific goals for the program. Additionally, they tie directly to the organization's culture and business objectives. Throughout the duration, outcomes are measured and aspects of the programs are fine tuned.

### **BottomLine**

Mentor programs benefit everyone involved. Internally, employees work better together and produce better results. Externally, you're sending a message to stakeholders and potential employees that your organization values the knowledge of its experienced workers and recognizes the potential of its rising stars.

*If you would like more information about this or other human resources and employment practices issues, please contact Praxis HR via email at [info@praxis.com](mailto:info@praxis.com) by phone at 206.262.8133 or visit our website at [www.praxishr.com](http://www.praxishr.com).*