



Training is for Toddlers and Puppies

10 Strategies for Engaging Mentoring to
Develop Leaders Where Training Falls Short

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HR Magazine recently reported that best-in-class companies that develop people average 24% higher profit margins than companies that don't.

But it is estimated that when training is used for development, it results in only a 15% sustained behavioral change in the workplace.¹

Equally disturbing is the report that only 5% of learners actually transfer a new skill from training into practice. When those same learners are taught a theory, given a demonstration, provided an opportunity to practice it, and receive corrective feedback, the percentage increases to 25%.² Perhaps we should limit the use of training-only development to potty-training toddlers and puppies.

Now here's the bright spot in the study.

When mentoring is added to the theory, demonstration, practice, and corrective feedback, a staggering 90% of the learners transfer that new skill into practice!²

Without question, we need to develop people. And there are two significant ways to do so: train them and mentor them. Training is essential for conveying skills, but without mentoring, we fail to calcify those skills in the minds of our learners thereby making it improbable that they'll use those newly learned skills in the future. And that's like throwing time and money out the window.

When we rely on those leaders for the success of our people and our organization, we cannot afford to train them like toddlers and puppies and expect them to be great. Great only comes with mentoring.

77% of companies report that mentoring programs are effective in increasing employee retention and performance.⁶

Training vs. Mentoring

Let's differentiate among the two significant ways to develop people.

Training: In training we instruct someone on how to do their job or adopt a new skill. We prepare them to be successful by educating and teaching them. Training can occur in classrooms, workshops, webinars, seminars, online courses, instructions, guidebooks, and even workbooks.

Mentoring: Distinct from training, mentoring occurs when one person (the "Mentor") accelerates another person's (let's call them the "Protégé") success by sharing wisdom. The wisdom Mentor is sharing was gained in striving to achieve results or goals, or address challenges or obstacles similar to the ones the Protégé is facing. In such a mentoring relationship, the Mentor teaches, trains, guides, advises, coaches, observes, and prepares a Protégé for success.

Where Training Falls Short

When only 15% of training results in behavioral change in the workplace, and only 5% of learners transfer skills learned into practice, it is obvious that training falls short. Given the approximately \$125 billion spent on corporate training every year⁵, that's hugely disappointing.

In addition, according to the ASTD, we can increase managerial productivity by 24% with training, but add mentoring to that training and we can increase managerial productivity by 88%.⁴ Translated into minutes, that means a one-hour task will take 45 minutes after training and only 7 minutes after mentoring.

With training, we
can increase
productivity 24%

With training +
mentoring, we can
increase
productivity 88%⁴

Only 15% of training results in sustained behavioral change.¹

Finally, the study that generated the 5% statistic was conducted by following nurse learners. And they discovered a lot more than just this low percentage. Check out their findings:

Learners will transfer a *new skill* into their practice as a result of:

- learning a theory = 5%
- learning a theory & seeing a demonstration = 10%
- learning a theory, demonstration & practice = 20%
- theory, demonstration, practice & corrective feedback = 25%
- theory, demonstration, practice, feedback & mentoring = 90%²

Let's scratch beneath these statistics and discover the "why."

Why Training Falls Short

While training may teach a new skill, the experience alone is not enough to indoctrinate that skill. For a skill to stick, people need to experience it, and the way to experience it is to share it, explain it, show it, and employ it shortly after learning it.

So why can't we just listen and learn? Because we're not very good at it.

Can't we just listen better?

Numerous studies have found that we listen at only 25% efficiency. This means that the remaining 75% of our listening is inefficient as a result of ignoring, forgetting, distorting, or misunderstanding the words we hear. That's not surprising. Think about how much information is coming at us every moment of the day. We are assaulted every minute by a myriad of communications: text messages, emails, phone calls, commercials, conversations. It can be overwhelming, and to survive, we adapt by

listening quickly and bouncing from one conversation to another. Efficient? Yes. Effective? No.

As a result of having to listen quickly, research shows that within 48 hours of learning something, we only remember 10% of what we heard. And that's assuming we heard it correctly and did not distort it! That means that 90% of the information delivered in training will be forgotten within two days. For the companies that spend billions on training every year, that paltry ROI is a disheartening reality.

Evidently, hearing something in class is not the same as learning it.

Take Notes

We can boost our retention of information we receive simply by taking notes. By writing down what we hear, we will remember 50% more after two days, a significant increase from 10%. The process of writing will anchor the information in our brains.

But listening and writing notes is also not enough to really learn something.

Share your Notes

In order to be able to use information in the future, we must first acquire an understanding of it. Listening and writing do not guarantee understanding. In order to really learn something, we must talk about it and share our learning with others. The act of talking transports the information via the brain's neural highways from short-term memory to long-term memory, essentially locking it in for future access and employment.

This is the core of mentoring - sharing our learning with others to accelerate their success!

We forget 90% of what we learn within 48 hours.

We can increase the retention to 50% just by taking notes and to 75% by taking notes and sharing the information with others.

Why Mentoring is Essential

1. Mentoring increases the retention of information learned in training

Mentoring forces us to explain concepts that we've learned, thereby ingraining those concepts and increasing the retention of the information we acquired in training.

2. Mentoring facilitates the transfer of new skills into practice

Mentoring gives us the requisite experience with a new skill that we acquired in training. As a result we'll actually use the concepts, not just fill our shelves with training binders.

3. Mentoring allows leaders to practice being human

If we are going to lead human beings, we need to act like human beings. We need compassion, empathy, and connection to people, and we need a commitment to the development of others. Successful mentoring requires all of these while providing the forum in which to practice each.

Without mentoring, training is limited in value. Granted, training gives the text-book information that is required for acting like leaders.

But it is mentoring that reveals the stuff that never gets written down. Why isn't it written down? Because it's the on-the-job stuff, the shortcuts, the who-to-know, the who-to-always-pick-up-the-phone-for, the who-to-never-email, and the what-information-is-needed-to-make-a-difference-with-this-boss-or-that-CEO. That stuff is so specific to a department or a team that no trainer would ever know about it, let alone address it. That stuff only gets divulged in mentoring relationships and conversations. Mentoring is the conduit through which 'this stuff' is passed on from leader to leader.

96% of executives say mentoring is an important development tool.⁷

10 Strategies for Developing Leaders

A leaders' specific role in mentoring is irrelevant. Leaders develop when they are the Protégé and again when they go on to serve as the Mentor. Our challenge is to actually get them to the mentoring table. The secret is to work mentoring into their already full agendas and to entice them with clear expectations, specific results, and enormous value. To achieve this, we can:

1. Incorporate Mentoring into Training
2. Incorporate Training into Mentoring
3. Employ a Task Force to Help Leaders Solve Problems
4. Institute Project Mentors for each new Project
5. Use Mentoring to Identify and Assess Future Leaders
6. Establish Thought Leaders for Everyday Success
7. Assign Every New Manager to New Manager Mentoring
8. Teach Mentoring Skills to Supplement their Supervising Skills
9. Add Mentoring to Performance Reviews
10. Teach Leaders how to Create and Leverage an Advisory Board

1. Incorporate Mentoring into Training

When people have to talk about what they've learned in their training class, they are forced to explain it. This process calcifies the information in their minds, increasing their ability to use that information in the future by a staggering 75%! So not only does their retention increase, but their ability to actually act on that information increases.

By incorporating mentoring into training, learners better understand the information they learned in class. For example, pairing each participant in a Career Action Workshop with a Mentor will ensure that participants take action on their careers when they leave the workshop.

As an added benefit, the Mentors who work with Protégé learners re-learn those lessons during their mentoring relationship. As a result, the

67% of employees say they learn more about their jobs from co-workers than from bosses.⁸

75% of Fortune 500 CEOs cited mentoring as 1 of top 3 key factors in their career.⁹

information from training is engrained in both the Mentor and the Protégé, ready for use in the long-term. The irony is that through this process, Mentors are actually maximizing *their own* learning, not just their Protégé's learning.

2. Incorporate Training into Mentoring

With this strategy we require Mentors to teach new skills to their Protégés. Why should we look to Mentors to do training? Because teaching a skill in a training or workshop is not nearly as elaborate, meaningful, and contextual as having a Mentor explain the same concept and providing relevant, on-the-job examples. According to *Brain Rules* author John Medina, if information is not transformed into a more durable form, it will quickly disappear. The transformation of information and translation of concepts is the role that Mentors can play.

3. Employ a Task Force to Help leaders Solve Problems

The task force is essentially "Reverse Group Mentoring." Instead of one Mentor mentoring many Protégés, we bring many Mentors together to mentor one Protégé. The twist is that we put our fearless leader in the Protégé role and invite individuals from various departments, roles, and levels in the organization to serve as Mentors. Together they are doing what Mentors do best - providing the Protégé (our fearless leader) with fresh perspectives and approaches to problem-solving.

4. Institute Project Mentors for each Project

For every new project, identify someone at the company who has already been-there-done-that for that type of project. Assign that person as the Project Mentor for the current project lead. Not only will project leaders accelerate their own success, Project Mentors will inevitably develop their own skills and competencies as a result of sharing their own wisdom on the project and re-learning the lessons they too once learned the hard way. That's the boomerang power of mentoring.

Retention of employees increased from 55 to 85% when a mentored manager took over a group.¹⁰

5. Use Mentoring to Identify and Assess Leaders

Want to know who your future leaders are? Ask them to raise their hand. How? Offer people the opportunity to apply for a leadership mentoring program and require a stringent application, including requisite references. You will soon discover those who are serious about developing their leadership. Then, look to your Mentors to assess the leadership potential of those Protégés, including additional development needs. Registration for such an opportunity speaks volumes; no registration will be even louder.

6. Establish Thought Leaders for Everyday Success

Want to elevate the status of the peer mentor concept? Call them “thought partners.”

It often feels lonely at the top, whether it’s the top of a project, a team, a department, or an organization. People in these positions often wonder if they’re doing it right, especially when others are quick to complain and slow to compliment. Leaders of all shapes and sizes need a thought partner to gut-check their thinking, strategy, tactics, and attitude. In addition, we can look to thought leaders to hold each other accountable to daily habits, yearly goals, and career visions.

If it’s so obviously essential, what’s the problem? Leaders get so mired in managing development that they forget they need to *be* developed. They may grumble about being too busy, but we can spur them with clear expectations, specific results, and an invitation to pilot the idea. Then set them up with their own thought leader and they will never operate the same again.

7. Assign Every New Manager to New Manager Mentoring

No matter what we tell new people during a new manager training session, by the end of the day, their heads are spinning and they’ve forgotten most of it as they walked out the door. Spark their momentum by assigning every new manager a Leader Mentor, someone who will ensure

Just by mentoring middle managers, we can increase the internal promotion of talent from 35% to 73%.⁵

that they do not acclimate to leadership the hard way. Implement mentoring into the manager on-boarding process and we can help our new managers cross the chasm from individual contributor to middle leader.

8. Teach Mentoring Skills to Supplement Supervising Skills

We can increase the internal promotion of talent from 35% to 73% just by mentoring middle managers.⁵ That's indicative of the remarkable impact that managers have on talent. In addition, it advocates for a trickle-down approach to developing. We mentor the middle leaders, who will then turn around and mentor the talent below them, who will ostensibly mentor the talent below them, and so on and so on and so on. Through this process, new talent will be identified as the stand-out talent that can be promoted to new opportunities within.

9. Add Mentoring to Performance Reviews

If mentoring is so critical to our leaders' success, then why does it get relegated to an employee benefits category? One director said to me recently, "Mentoring will be great. We really need it because it is imperative that our people be ready to move to the next level in 6 months. But we're also really busy. Can we make them do this mentoring thing on their own time?" Elevating the importance of mentoring is the only way people will prioritize it. It should be an expectation of leaders, a competency, a skill, and an agenda item on annual performance reviews.

10. Teach Leaders how to Create and Leverage an Advisory Board

Every leader should engage their own Advisory Board. When opportunities or situations arise, leaders can reach out to any one of his/her advisors for advice, perspective, and ideas. They serve as thought partners, helping leaders think through issues, especially when the issues are sensitive or confidential and outside the scope of peer mentoring.

Advisory Boards do not typically come together like a Task Force or even a formal Board of Directors, but instead they are available on a situational, as-needed basis. Ideally, a leader's Advisory Board should

comprise individuals both from within the company and external to the organization.

Not only will the Advisors mentor the leader in decisions to be made, they will have an opportunity to witness the true potential of that leader. This format will naturally spawn into sponsorship relationships, whereby an Advisor may advocate or endorse the leader for new opportunities. Sponsorships are another key element in a leader's success kit.

Finally, we must set expectations that leaders should serve on someone else's Advisory Board. We want our leaders to not only consume but to contribute.

The English sculptor and artist Henry Moore said it best, "I think, what has this day brought me, and what have I given it?" It is in this vein that we want to foster a leadership team to think similarly about the company. *What has the company brought me, and what have I given it?* And it is mentoring that can generate not only the question, but the answer.

76% of companies surveyed use mentoring to develop critical leadership skills.¹¹

NOTES

1. S. Cromwell & J. Kolb 2004, Human Resource Development Quarterly
2. Study done by and documented: Showers, B., Joyce, B., and Bennett, B. (1987). "Synthesis of research on staff development: A framework for future study and a state-of-the-art analysis." Educational Leadership, 45 (3), 77-87
3. ASTD estimates from 2010 report
4. ASTD, Barbian, May 2002
5. Based on results from Memorial Care Medical Centers Mentoring Program
6. Jeff Barbian, "The Road Best Traveled," Training, May 2002
7. Workforce, 1998
8. Leadership IQ, 2011
9. AccountTemps
10. ROI Monograph Marketing
11. January 2010 issue of Workforce Management

About the Author

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From Silicon Valley corporate attorney to mentoring expert and advocate for reinventing middle managers, Ann Tardy is the Founder and President of LifeMoxie Mentoring (www.lifemoxie.com).

Ann has been scouting the power of mentoring since 1995 when she became a start-up attorney in Silicon Valley. There she led over \$2 billion of venture-backed financings for her entrepreneurial clients at two of Silicon Valley's largest law firms.

Ann went on to lead the legal departments for two high-tech start-ups, taking one company public and the other to acquisition. Following that adventure, Ann launched her own law firm, growing it to 75 clients before selling it.

Ann passed the CPA exam upon graduating with an accounting degree from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. She then graduated with honors from Chicago-Kent College of Law and passed the Bar exams in Illinois and California.

She was honored as an *Outstanding Business Woman of the Year* by the American Business Women's Association and honored with the *Vanguard Award* from The McGraw-Hill Companies for her contributions to their employees.

Ann is also the founder of *The Mentoring Council* (www.mentoringcouncil.com), connecting leaders of mentoring initiatives to share best practices. In addition, she served for 5 years as the volunteer Co-Director of the Entrepreneurial Education program at a middle school, training 12-year-olds how to start and run businesses through a community-based mentoring program.

Ann is also the author of:

- *LifeMoxie - 9 Strategies for Taking Life by the Horns*
- *Moxie for Managers - The Secret to Evolving from Manager to Leader*
- *Why Mentoring Matters - How Smart Leaders Mobilize Relentless Leadership*

In summer 2011, Ann cycled 4,200 miles from San Francisco to New Jersey in *The Moxie Ride*, to film the documentary *Work Matters*, capturing what people love about their jobs and how bosses influence their success. In 2012, she cycled *The Moxie Ride 2*, this time from Key West, Florida to Bar Harbor, Maine to collect research for her upcoming book *Rousing the Remarkable*.

About LifeMoxie Mentoring

Manager Advocates, Mentoring Strategists, Workforce Enthusiasts

LifeMoxie Mentoring develops smart mentoring solutions to mobilize people and leadership. Using our proven 7-step process, we prepare mentoring leaders to effectively drive organizational objectives.

Since 2003 we have been rousing the remarkable in people and organizations. With offices in San Francisco, Chicago, and the New York area, we partner with leaders to mobilize leadership and ensure workforce effectiveness.

Recognizing the Power in the Middle

The power in your organization rests in the middle. And the only way to unleash it is to evolve it. We do that with our smart mentoring solutions, our leaders-in-the-middle programs, and workforce efficacy consulting.

Rousing the Remarkable

We prime new managers to evolve from mediocre to magnificent. Only then can they evolve from manager to leader.

Employing Smart Mentoring

We equip middle leaders with smart mentoring solutions to develop their teams and drive their objectives. With mentoring as a strategic advantage (instead of a missed opportunity), they foster work-effectiveness, job-readiness, and leader-preparedness.

Leveraging Influencing Strategies

Add behavioral economics and emotional intelligence, and these managers have the emotional context they need to make a difference with people and with the organization.

Evolving Managers into Middle Leaders

Only when managers see themselves as leaders in the middle will they be ready to influence change and execute organizational strategies.