Mentoring

The mentor is an experienced person who is able, willing and available to teach, train or coach a person with less knowledge in a specific area – regardless of age, gender, or expertise in other unrelated areas. The mother with four children may be a mentor to young parents, the young computer champion to a senior staff, and the senior expert to the young professional. Mentoring aims at (1) skills development, (2) fostering the understanding of the organisation and its culture, and (3) career development.

Beside this traditional mentoring (with fixed roles), peer mentoring (with interchanging roles) and team mentoring (with a network structure) are practised, the latter two having common features with other approaches (peer assist / peer review).

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How to go about it?

Reflect on own past experiences as a mentor or mentee (beneficiary). What has been a great experience? What made it successful? Check the mentoring concept (as a part of the knowledge management) of your organisation: What are accepted standards?

1. Determine the goals of the mentoring process. Define the beneficiary's expectations and preferred learning styles, and reveal the mentor's concept.
2. Choose the right mentor. Experience, knowledge and skills are one thing – a fine relationship between mentor and beneficiary the other. Your boss might not be the best mentor for you.
3. Develop a mentoring plan. Include moments for emergencies.
4. Define objectives for each meeting. Focus on the beneficiary's situation and questions, not on the mentor's experience.
5. Give up the mentoring when you feel strong enough.

More information: www.daretoshare.ch

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