

BEING A GOOD MENTOR CAN BENEFIT YOUR (YES, YOUR) CAREER

This relationship is a two-way street you can ride all the way to Successville. When you sign on to be a mentor to a junior employee, you probably think the arrangement is weighted in favor of the mentee. After all, the traditional dynamic sees you doing the bulk of the giving, while the latter just has to absorb your priceless wisdom and reap the rewards. But what you may not realize at first is just how much your own career stands to gain from the mentor experience.

“Mentoring creates a culture of engagement where employees feel valued and encouraged to step up to their full potential,” says Patricia Barlow, president and founding partner of Blue Mesa Group, a corporate coaching and leadership training firm in Fort Collins, Colorado. “It invites development, creativity and inclusion.” That goes for both the mentor and mentee. The following benefits of mentoring can put some polish on your career track and make you look very good in the eyes of potential future employers.

You’ll help improve your company’s overall performance Because you’ve got years of experience and historical knowledge of your company under your belt, you can help point your mentee in the direction that will yield the most impressive results— with the least amount of time wasted.

But just as important is what your mentee will teach you. In high-level positions, you’re likely expected to oversee your department budget, strategize on big-picture campaigns, delegate responsibilities and manage the people who produce the work to support those campaigns. That leaves you little time to get in the proverbial trenches, which is where trends develop and innovations begin to percolate.

By mentoring a junior employee, you’ll be privy to all the activity that happens at the ground level, away from your sight lines. Having that fresh, unbiased perspective can help guide you to new, better ways of operating, which naturally increases your value in the eyes of your co-workers and superiors.

You’ll be better at your own job As a mentor, you’re going to get feedback. Granted, it’s a different sort of feedback, but it would behoove you to keep your ears open.

Good leaders need active listening skills, which you will need to hone as a mentor, says Rene Petrin, founder and president of Boston-based mentoring consultancy Management Mentors. As a mentor, be receptive to feedback from your mentee about your leadership style, how well you listen and how well you are able to provide suggestions and solutions.

Your strategic-thinking skills will be challenged in ways that you might not have experienced previously. A terrific way to learn and think critically about something is by teaching it to someone else. By observing your mentee’s professional development and taking note of their successes and misfires, you can tweak and improve your own leadership and management practices. Remember, not every mentee is the same, so you’ll come to understand how to best advise people with different learning styles—and this type of adaptability can get you noticed far and wide.

"If you mentor, others will learn about that and you will be viewed as someone who can be approached and is willing to help others," Petrin says. "This enhances your own success with colleagues and peers."

You'll bolster your reputation As your former mentees rise through the ranks and capitalize on the success that you helped them achieve, their careers may lead them to some attractive job offers—and perhaps they'll bring you along when they make the move. And even when you're no longer working full-time, you can entertain the possibility of speaking at your former mentees' events or even taking on some consulting gigs.

"All of the wisdom that you've gained from your years of working will be passed on to those that come after you," says Karen Cappello, a mentor coach in Tuscon, Arizona. "This is a win-win-win for you, the company and your mentee."

Source: <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/mentoring-can-benefit-your-career>