



**Dr. Michael Doody**, Director of Human Resources for Sprott Shaw College shares his tips for enabling leadership and coaching in direct reports.

## Mentoring **MATTERS**

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*One of my direct reports who has been recently promoted is struggling with delegation. They are extremely knowledgeable with high standards. I see them diving in and taking over when really the team should be learning how to do the work. What are some ways that I can help them shift from a doer into more of a coaching role?*

Mentoring your employees creates opportunities for both the mentor and the mentee to benefit from the exchange of information, experience and insight into effectively addressing the needs of the organization. When in a mentoring relationship with their employee, a leader can share their organizational goals, knowledge and expertise. By identifying the mentee's strengths and potential, the mentor can help develop and improve their skill set, and confidence.

Several key elements crucial for successful mentoring are:

- commitment to increased awareness
- communication
- delegation
- trust

Establishing trust and open lines of communication between you and your employees enables you to manage each others' expectations. You can then begin to confidently delegate tasks, allowing for questions to be asked without judgement, mistakes to occur without fear of retribution and learning to cultivate trust over time. Having identified a need to create a mentoring process which requires delegation and seeks to empower employees, a leader needs to start with assessment of self before reaching out and assessing others in the mentorship roles.

### *Lead with the Self*

A customary challenge for recently promoted managers is delegating tasks to their direct reports. The new leader, though highly knowledgeable and experienced, may be unable or unwilling to delegate. This may be due to concerns regarding fears of failure on the part of the employee and apprehension as to how this reflects on the new leader's own ability.

What they fail to understand is they are missing an opportunity to empower their team; to allow them to capitalize on their potential and grow into their current roles as well as future ones. There is also a missed opportunity to see from a different perspective and the possibility of performing a task more efficiently through shared learning and experience.

Common rationale provided by the leader is *"I do not have the time to correct their mistakes and I can do it faster."* What leaders fail to realize is that the short-term investment of time and sharing of information creates opportunities for long-term gains and a multitude of advantages.

Leaders must understand that by delegating to their mentees, they enable them to become more confident, productive, motivated, and satisfied in their roles. This in turn creates overall job satisfaction, which in turn equates to higher employee engagement and reduced turnover rates.

### *Know Your Team*

To create trust and understand potential, it is imperative for the leader to form a relationship with their team and develop an awareness of the strengths each individual brings to the team.

A key goal of mentoring is to capitalize on your employees' strengths and empower your mentee to grow into their roles by allowing them to ask questions without being judged, to allow them to make mistakes without retribution and to provide them with the information they need to be set up for success.

To empower your employees, you need to know what motivates and inspires them. What their career and personal aspirations are in their career and personal life. To achieve any of this, you need to communicate with employees. Create lines of communication with each member of your team so you become aware of what their current strengths are and what are their areas of development.

Through a mentoring process, a mentor can create development opportunities that benefit them as the leader, the mentee as potential future leaders and the culture of the organization.

## *Delegate Don't Dump*

Delegating responsibilities just because you don't want to do them is not an effective way of getting a job done – instead, this creates the perception that you are dumping grunt work on them. These perceptions can foster resentment and counterproductive resistance to the goal of developing your team and easing your workload.

When delegating, it is critical to manage expectations with all parties involved. Ultimately, delegating tasks enables leaders to develop their team and maximize the potential of the resources within their work unit and the organization.

## *Build Relationships through Communication*

In conclusion, effective mentoring capitalizes on your employees' strengths and empowers them to flourish in their roles by allowing them to ask questions without judgement, make mistakes without retribution all while providing them with the information they need to set up for success. To achieve this, you need to communicate with your employees. Mentoring creates a platform where you can construct avenues of communication for discussion around goals, empower through learning, and build trust by maintaining commitment. This can be achieved simply by building relationships one conversation at a time. To shift from the role of doer to one of coach, leaders need to build relationships and be a mentor to their employees.

Delegating through a mentoring process cultivates not only future leaders, but also creates a relationship between you and your direct reports by establishing ongoing engaging communication, sharing of knowledge and developing of the workforce that benefits the leader, their team and the organization. As Richard Branson avows, *"You do not build a business, you build people and they build the business."*



**Dr. Michael Doody** is currently the Director of Human Resources for Spratt Shaw College. He completed his Doctor of Education at Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, California in the School of Leadership for Change. His dissertation research focused on the role leaders play in successfully creating a culture of humanism and respect in their workplace.

As a people leader, his passion is promoting the efforts of others by enabling them to see themselves and their potential as others see them. While maintaining strong working relationships that are based on trust and mutual respect, he aspires to promote opportunities of self awareness within leaders. His driving goal is to create work environments that are equitable, inclusive and diverse through the fruition of engaging communication and altruistic leadership. When looking to mentor it is important for leaders to be aware that *"Altruistic leadership transforms potential into actionability."*



**Glain Roberts-McCabe** is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. She created **The Roundtable** to provide emerging leaders with the navigational skills, tools and savvy needed to manage increases in scope, pressure and leadership complexity.