



First steps in mentoring



Contents

Mentoring – what is it and how it stands out among other development tools?	3
Mentoring a coaching.	4
Mentoring in an organization – how to use its potential?	5
Mentoring in your company – where to start?	7
Mentor from outside the organization – is this a solution for me?	8
I want to use the support of a mentor. What next?	10
Why Sii?	11
Contact us.	12



EWA LISAWA-SZTANDOR BA&BPO

Mentoring – what is it and how it stands out among other development tools?

Mentoring has been a very popular trend recently. If you are wondering what makes it so popular and you are considering giving in to this trend, then this article is for you. You will find out who can benefit most from mentoring, how to consciously use it to develop your organization, and... last but not least, what you can get out of it for yourself, regardless of your role within the company.

Let's begin by explaining the term. Although the concept of mentoring in business has begun to grow and flourish intensively in recent years, its roots can be traced back to the ancient story of Odysseus, who handed over his son Telemachus to the care of the mythical Mentor before sailing off to the Trojan War. By condensing many available definitions of mentoring into one, for the purposes of the article, this explanation can be adopted:

Mentoring is first and foremost a process based on a relationship between the mentor and the mentee, in which the former accompanies the latter in their development in the broadest sense of the term, supports them with knowledge and experience, but leaves them room for independent choices and decisions.



Mentoring versus coaching

Sometimes mentoring and coaching are treated as the same thing. Wrongly so. While mentoring uses elements and tools of coaching, it also includes giving advice and guidance by a mentor, sharing knowledge, and experience along with demonstrating desired attitudes – these elements are not present in coaching. Coaching focuses on achieving the client's goals, based fully on the client's potential and resources. In mentoring, the possibility of using the mentor's resources comes into play.



TEAM BA&BPO



Mentoring in the organization – how to use its potential?

The implementation of a mentoring program provides several tangible benefits for the company. The key benefits include:

Using the full potential of experienced employees.

Not everyone in the organization can become a manager. Nor does everyone want to. But everyone who has been accumulating knowledge and experience over the years can share it differently if they present the right attitude and willingness and are provided with certain tools.

Increase in satisfaction.

Mentoring is a perfect way to appreciate more experienced employees while offering them additional development opportunities and giving them a chance to prove themselves in a new role.

Effective development of individuals and relationship building.

Mentoring, as a one-to-one relationship, provides a very individual approach to the employee and enables them to benefit precisely from the areas of knowledge and experience of the mentor that they exactly need. If we add to this the building a relationship, which is the basis of the process, we get one of the most effective and beautiful development methods.



TEAM BA&BPO



Cost optimization.

As a result of the above-mentioned 100% adjustment of developmental content to the recipient, mentoring – in comparison to typical training – is also characterized by the highest cost-effectiveness. An additional advantage of this solution is the formula combining theory, i.e. knowledge, with practice, i.e. the mentor's experience gained in the course of their professional development.

Using the potential of diversity.

The exchange of perspectives between a mentor and a mentee, who are usually different in age, experience, stage in life, and therefore world view, brings the desired diversity to foster innovation in the organization. Appropriate use of this aspect can be one of the company's significant competitive advantages.



Mentoring in your company – where to start

How do you get started with mentoring so that your company benefits from it? The basis for success is the proper implementation of a mentoring program in the organization – we will soon devote a dedicated article to this topic. However, if, as a company, we do not have our program and we do not have the resources to set it up at the moment, what remains for us is to consider external mentoring. Will this solution work for your

company? In what specific situations can you benefit by choosing independent mentors? Where to look for them and how to find the right ones?

The answers to these questions can be found in the second part of the article. To access them, please fill in the contact form below.



Mentor from outside the organization – is this a solution for me?

At least a few examples come to my mind that confirm the benefits of external mentoring. I will mention specific situations from my experience both as a mentee and as a mentor, where an external mentor proved to

be invaluable developmental support – both for the individual and the organization.

First steps in ... (enter your field here)

Let's assume that you are an HR manager (or any department in the company you work for). You don't have much experience, you've been given the chance to develop with the company or your experience is limited to a small number of organizations. You do a lot of training and reading, go to conferences, and exchange knowledge with managers from other departments, but still, there is only one HR department and you don't always have someone to compare your ideas with, confirm them with market practice or with the experience of someone who knows the subject and all the tricks.

In such a situation, the use of a mentor with several years of experience and various professional adventures in HR is worth its weight in gold and benefits both you and the entire organization. For me, reaching out for such support during my crazy career at Sii not only gave me a boost, but also a lot of concrete tips and tools to do better. 8 Great Place to Work® titles in a row confirm that the entire HR department, and ultimately the entire organization, has benefited strongly.



On the other side of the mirror

Depending on what we want to work on in the mentoring process, working for the same company may be a greater or smaller issue. Using a mentor from outside the organization will be beneficial paradoxically when we have a very strong organizational culture which, although binds us together immensely and builds the identity of the company and its foundations, can sometimes make it difficult to move beyond certain paradigms or certain ways of solving problems and approaching challenges.

Let's consider an example of giving and receiving feedback. As a leader, you face the challenge of giving dif-

ficult feedback to your employees. You act according to the rules developed in the organization, you use the tools, but still don't feel satisfied and you wonder what you are doing wrong. When discussing your experience with a mentor who is from outside the company, it may turn out that it's not you doing something wrong, but that the process doesn't quite suit you. That there are small nuances that you can't see from the inside of the organization, but an eye looking from the outside will be able to see them from a distance and present you with your challenge from a different perspective, potentially pointing out other areas for change.

How to be a better manager? By learning from the mistakes of others!

The function of a manager is a big challenge. You cannot learn formulas and act on them overnight. Experience teaches us the most and it would be good not to break the team (or yourself!) down along the way. So why not benefit from the experience and advice of someone who is already much further along their leadership journey and can share their perspective and recommendations? A mentor, as our partner, will offer us advice, support, and feedback, while leaving us with

autonomy, independence, and decision-making. Are these not the best possible conditions for shaping and developing our leadership skills? And the more we are „separated” from the mentor by the potential dependencies arising, for example, from working for the same company, the more independent the insight and the greater the objectivity.



TEAM BA&BPO

I want to use the support of a mentor. What next?

The decision on whether you want to participate in a mentoring process seems to be easy to make, but finding a mentor for yourself can be quite challenging. Whether we are talking about mentoring within your organization or using external support, it is worth reflecting on the following points:



What are my goals for mentoring? What support am I primarily looking for? The answers to these questions should be the base and the starting point for the search for an ideal mentor. If I am looking for support in the area of knowledge, it is obvious that the ideal mentor should have it – not just theoretically, but proven in practice. If I am looking for support on my journey as a female leader in a heavily masculinized organization, it is a good idea to look for a female mentor who has had a similar journey.



A good mentor should have the necessary knowledge and skills in a given field and present attitude that is close to yours or desired by you. Identify what is important to you in this context and let this be your guideline for the search.



Also, remember that mentoring is first and foremost a relationship. A human-to-human relationship. Therefore, in addition to knowledge and competencies, the values you share with the mentor are very important. As well as whether you can build a relationship with a given person. And I don't necessarily mean looking for people who are similar to you – on the contrary, ask yourself whether you gain more by colliding your perspective with someone who thinks exactly like you or with someone who points the finger in a direction you don't see...? Why am I writing about this in the context of values? Because if you build your relationship on shared values, taking advantage of the above-mentioned synergies arising from your differences will be much easier and will become a fascinating adventure for both of you!



Once you know whom you are looking for and what you need, nothing is stopping you from reaching out to your ideal mentors directly with an invitation for collaboration. Because in mentoring, it is the mentee who is responsible for their development, the mentor helps but will not do the work for them :)



TEAM BA&BPO

Why Sii?



16 years of practical experience in building strong teams in an organization



25 training specialists on board, including 2 qualified FRIS methodology practitioners



A variety of training programs and scenarios tailored to your organization



A wide range of online and offline training – workshops, 1:1 mentoring sessions, group training, online courses, graphic materials for employees



A long-standing mentoring program implemented and developed from scratch in an organization that already has over 7 500 employees

Just as in antiquity Odysseus entrusted his son to the care of the Mentor, so today each of us can learn and profit from others. And since supporting others also requires support – we invite you to contact us. You can

benefit from our knowledge and experience both in implementing a mentoring program in your organization and in finding out for yourself what a mentoring relationship can be and what it can give you.

About the author

Joanna Kucharska

HR Subject Matter Expert

For 15 years at Sii, I was responsible for retention and HR support processes, including onboarding, development programs, mentoring, training, and support for managers in the area of building and developing effective teams, employee engagement, and activation programs. The cherry on top was the effective digitalization of the HR area, all of which I now share with our clients.



Looking for support? Contact Sii!

We identify HR processes that need improvement, define competency models and career paths, introduce mentoring programs and implement digital solutions.

Contact us

With 7 500+ specialists, Sii is the largest technology consulting, digital transformation, BPO, and engineering services vendor in Poland. Sii Poland's experts execute projects for leading companies in the automotive, banking and finance, Hi-tech, healthcare, retail and logistics, and utilities industries. Sii Poland has 14 offices in Warsaw, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Poznań, Kraków, Łódź, Lublin, Katowice, Rzeszów, Bydgoszcz, Częstochowa, Piła, Białystok and Gliwice. More information about the company can be found on the website: www.sii.pl.