

Mentoring

The history of mentoring has its origins in ancient Greece where Mentor is a character in Homer's epic poem, the Odyssey. When the King of Ithaca, Odysseus, went to fight the Trojan War, he entrusted the care of his kingdom to Mentor who was the teacher and overseer of Telemachus, Odysseus' son.

Webster's Dictionary defines a mentor as "a trusted counselor or guide".

In order for the next generation of club managers to be successful, these aspiring leaders will require role models and guidance. Through ongoing committed involvement, mentors can play a critical role in developing growth opportunities and expanding knowledge while strengthening the industry as a whole. Too often clubs and managers are caught up in the day-to-day operations and don't allocate time for this vital developmental task.

Mentoring gives you the opportunity to facilitate the professional growth of a young mind by sharing experiences and knowledge and by challenging the protégé to think beyond his/her own learning and experience.

The mentor and the club will benefit as well by enhancing communication skills, by developing and positively impacting the efficiency of the team, retaining talent and by creating a significant experience in the mentor's life. The October issue of Success magazine is devoted to defining success. Darren Hardy, in his publisher's page states, "We are taught early in life to strive for success, to achieve the status-win the trophy, get the notable degree, land the big position...And when we are waving from the mountaintop, having finally achieved these trappings of "success" we often feel a stark emptiness inside. What's wrong? We might have acquired everything we ever wanted, except the one thing that really matters – significance. We want to know that our lives meant something, that we've had a positive impact on the lives of others." Mentoring gives our lives significance.

Appropriately matching the mentor with a protégé is vital to the success of the program. These matches can be found through personal profiles, comparative interest inventories and old-fashioned "sitting down and talking through aspirations". In order to broaden the scope of the horizons of the protégé and to expand your club's knowledge base, it is helpful if mentors are not just from the club's professional staff. Fellow managers, retired CMAA members, university professors and members can be used to impact the lives of others. The key is finding a match that works socially as well as professionally.

There are five techniques of mentoring defined in a 1995 study entitled Working Wisdom by Robert Aubrey and Paul Cohen:

1. Accompanying – requires the mentor to walk side by side with the protégé to help them understand the value of what they are undertaking and learning
2. Sowing – requires the mentor to lay the groundwork of why and how prior to leading the protégé to the realization of the answer
3. Catalyzing – throw the protégé into a situation or issue, provoking a response which can be used to teach from or change a learned skill
4. Showing – use your own examples and demonstrate a skill or activity
5. Harvesting – create awareness of the new skills and knowledge by asking key questions to determine what was learned and how it will be used

Most clubs use an accompanying method to engage younger staff members in a mentoring process, normally during the orientation phase of work. In the past, mentoring has usually been relaxed and unstructured.

A new and formalized program of ongoing professional expertise is now available for a modest monthly cost through mentoring firms such as High Powered Leadership (www.highpoweredleadership.com) where the author is President.

This type of program strengthens the abilities of the department heads and develops and grows their leadership, while improving operational results. Another proven company that offers this type of service is Pipeline Golf Marketing. They provide top industry experts who act as ongoing mentors specifically for membership, event sales and marketing staff at your club. See Pipeline's website for further information: www.pipelinegolfmarketing.com.