

MENTORING AND COACHING

Background

What is the Difference between Mentoring and Coaching?

Mentoring

Mentoring can be defined as a “developmental partnership where two people invest time, know-how and effort to enhance growth, knowledge and skills.” This partnership transcends duty and obligation and often involves coaching, networking, sponsoring and career counseling.

Mentoring has become an effective method for businesses to help employees with orientation, career advancement, problem solving, coaching, and support. In addition, mentors can assist employees in dealing with the challenges associated with success, productivity, and job performance.

Mentoring within the BLM is a voluntary program where self-directed people can work together to meet developmental needs. Mentor/Mentee* partnerships are established on a one-to-one basis. The partnership is a constantly evolving, growing process with both members providing insights and feedback.

Although research has shown that the most effective mentoring program is a formal program, there are informal, peer-to-peer, and e-mentoring partnerships occurring throughout the BLM.

* The term mentee—one who is mentored—is sometimes referred to as mentoree.

Coaching

Coaching, defined as “a powerful, professional alliance focused on personal and professional development,” is a way to help employees make the best use of their own resources. Coaching helps employees assess and improve their performance of specific tasks.

Benefits of Mentoring

The benefits of mentoring include:

- Provides access to critical information and perspectives
- Reduces isolation and can boost self-confidence by developing networks
- Improves interdisciplinary understanding and awareness
- Maximizes employee contribution through career guidance and solid role models
- Promotes fresh ideas and renewed energy

Supervisory Support

It is essential to a successful mentoring partnership that a supervisor be involved and support the process. However, it is highly suggested that the mentor NOT be the employee's supervisor. Before a mentor is acquired the supervisor and mentee/employee need to meet to lay out the process for the mentoring partnership. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) with clear goals and objectives to move the employee from their current place to where they want to go needs to be developed. This will help the mentor understand where the supervisor and employee stand on improving job performance and career goals.

The mentee needs to keep the supervisor informed on how the partnership is evolving. Mentors should not meet individually with the supervisor without the mentee's permission. Funds should not be expended for most mentoring relationships. There may be some statewide programs which provide training for mentors/mentees which may have funding support. There are also professional mentoring services available for hire.

Other Sources

- BLM Leadership Academy, Mentoring Project
<http://www.ntc.blm.gov/leadership/mentoring/index.htm>.

The purpose of this site is to help meet the Bureau's needs of providing one-stop shopping for mentoring. The Resources and Links button is very handy in identifying other BLM states that have developed mentoring programs.

- U.S. Coast Guard Mentoring Program:
<http://www.uscg.mil/LEADERSHIP/mentoring.htm>

This site contains items such as a mentor guide, a mentee guide, an e-learning module, assessments on characteristics and skills for mentors, assessments on characteristics and learning needs for mentees, a mentoring process overview, an activity timeline, and frequently asked questions.