

The Business Benefits of Mentorship

What can a businessperson get out of being a mentor?

The conception that a mentor/mentee relationship only offers benefits to the mentee is simply not true. **Being a mentor can offer a great sense of fulfillment, be a morale boost in the workplace, and serve as a great recruitment tool.**

Many mentors spend time guiding others in their field because it gives them a chance to share their passion with someone else. Offering guidance and encouragement, along with pointing out potential pitfalls, might be a way for someone successful to give back after the great mentorship they received when they were starting out. Or they might be doing it just because it feels good.

Mike Capps, a former CNN correspondent and now a sports announcer for Round Rock Express in Austin, Texas, feels impelled to mentor.

“Being a mentor is just part of who I am,” Capps says. “I believe if you don’t share your knowledge and expertise with others you are cheating yourself and society. I want to offer realistic, constructive feedback and encourage people to explore and take hold of their fire, passion and dreams.”

Studies have shown there are reasons behind why mentoring feels good. A 2002 study at Emory University in Alabama showed helping others actually triggers the pleasure centers in the brain, making us feel good. Women were studied playing a game. Despite a built-in incentive to betray each other, brain imaging showed when the women cooperated, the “reward circuits” in their brains showed increased activity. Even when it doesn’t make financial or strategic sense, we feel better when we help each other out.

Taking the time to mentor can bring benefits to the mentor down the road. One of those benefits is a morale boost for employees.

Bringing a mentee into the workplace brings a level of enthusiasm and passion that may be lagging within the team. If a mentee spends time at a bakery, for example, and is so excited to get up at 4 a.m. and start baking bread, the other bakers might take a second look at their job. They think: If this person thinks this job is so cool, maybe I could be enjoying it more.

Mentoring can also be a great recruitment tool. Working with mentees brings mentors face-to-face with people passionate about the work the mentor does. Mentorship can prove to be the ultimate recruiting/networking connection. Sometimes a mentor sees so much potential in a mentee they hire them.

One of the largest franchise restaurant corporations in the United States has instituted a policy to encourage franchise owners to mentor, with the hopes of

recruiting more potential franchisees. **Businesses that embrace mentorship as a part of their recruitment plan will find mentees bring more passion and singular focus than the typical job applicant.** A person who seeks out a mentor and a ride-along experience while they explore the field of long haul trucking, for example, would likely be a much different trucker than someone who takes a less enthusiastic route to the same job.

While mentoring requires commitment and time, those who take the plunge find the time they spend mentoring others makes them feel great and renews enthusiasm in the workplace. They may even find they've met the perfect fit for an open position.

Brian Kurth has contributed on-air advice on NBC's TODAY Show, CNBC, CNN, FOX News, ABC News, MSNBC and National Public Radio (NPR) and has been featured in articles in O, The Oprah Magazine; The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Globe and Mail, The Times (London), BusinessWeek, Fast Company, Fortune, Entrepreneur Magazine, MORE Magazine, Men's Journal, AARP Magazine and Black Enterprise Magazine, just to name a few.

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