

# Guidelines for Mentoring Optimization

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It's a common knowledge that the society and time we live in are characterized by continuous technological change and most of employee skills may become outdated fairly rapidly. Therefore, an enterprise that aspires to be successful and respond quickly to changes in the market environment should pay great attention to training programs of the employees. In this regard, it is important to develop guidelines and recommendations to improve the quality of mentoring as the system involving Mentoring Council, enterprise executives, mentors and training centers for mentors. The paper is intended to provide theoretical and practical contribution to training students of technical universities, as well as young personnel starting their career and experienced executives.

*Keywords:* mentoring, guidelines, optimization, modern enterprises.

## INTRODUCTION

The current trend for a modern enterprise in Russia is to be focused on market relations and the competitive process. Today's competitive business environment is based on managing human capital and constantly improving methods and tools of personnel management, making the organization work more effective (Andreeva & Nechaev, 2013; Kartashova, 2009; Kibanov & Durakova, 2005; Shaidullina, 2009; Tyunikov & Maznichenko, 2005; Zaitseva, 2013). Most companies require employees with special qualifications, and at the same time, the new skills help the workers feel more mobile on the labour market. New products, services and competitors appear with incredible speed. Competitive pressure is increasing, and it's getting more and more difficult for companies to keep pace with growing demands and hold the leading position. The need for workers with new skills and qualifications influences the relationship between employers and employees. Key competencies of the candidates applying for job, certainly, play a crucial role in personnel selection (Masalimova, 2012, 2013; Plotnikov & Skuridina, 2014; Batyshev, 1985; Masalimova & Sabirova, 2014, 2015; Masalimova & Nigmatov, 2015). Personnel training should be carried out continuously, from the moment when the employee starts with the company. On this stage mentoring is one of the most effective forms of workplace learning.

The mentors are highly qualified and experienced personnel, who are able to transfer knowledge and experience within and across organization, share their

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experience in applying effective methods of work, help the mentee to improve the qualification and professional skills, acquire duties and responsibilities they are expected to fulfill (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 2007; Zevunov, 2009; Klucharev & Pahomova, 2008; Charina, 2004). All these listed above have been stated in Mentoring Regulations of this country. But who is to play the crucial role? In fact, it is an experienced worker, or technician, or the head of department who *meets* with new employee on their first day. Whatever strong educational background and work experience he/she could have, still, one cannot become a mentor without any training and preparation (Masalimova et al., 2014a, 2014b).

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **The essence of mentoring**

The study of the glossary on theory and practice of mentoring made it possible to reveal its essence which focuses its activities involved in formation of corporate and professional competencies of young employees to overcome information and value barriers in their professional activities, their social and professional adaptation, as well as nurture young employees' potential with the aim of determining the track of their further individual professional development.

### **Tasks in mentoring**

Study of various company *mentorship regulations* and guidelines allowed disclosing the following tasks:

- formation of a corporate culture of young employees;
- their professional training and education;
- their social and professional adaptation;
- development of young employees potential;
- determining the track of their further individual professional career;
- providing career opportunities for young employees;
- improving the quality of both new and experienced employees skills in accordance with the standards and regulations adopted by the enterprise, or company (Barieva, 2011);
- participating in the implementation of corporate standards, and ensure their continuity;
- improving labor productivity;
- *reducing employee turnover*;
- building a cohesive staff team and its image.

### **The functions of mentoring**

Bearing in mind all the tasks enlisted, the study allowed to determine functions for mentoring activities:

- organizational-and-managerial, assuming they are able to control trainees in corporate training, thus providing futuristic (forward) management, establishing a management model of their motivation;
- social-and-pedagogical, aimed at social and professional adaptation of young employees, corporate culture, detecting and developing their personality potential, and their career path support;
- organizational-and-methodical, involving teaching and psychological-and-pedagogical maintenance in corporate training, developing effective methods of learning, teaching materials, and guidelines related to mentoring;

- informative and consultative, which imply an effective and systematic transfer of professional information, skills and experience, preserving and enhancing the best practices of the enterprise;
- correcting-and-reorganizing which means adjustment and readjustment of the content and technologies used in corporate training taking into account requirements of the modern enterprise.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

We have developed guidelines for mentors, as well as for Mentors and Managers Council at the enterprises to improve the process of corporate training of young personnel and optimize mentoring process in modern enterprises of Russia.

*For mentors:* conducting evaluation interviews with a young employee about his preferences, inclinations, abilities and achievements; his majoring at the university he had graduated from; novelty, practical significance, possibilities and feasibility for his diploma project implementation in the enterprise; study of the personality of the young employee to identify his individual psychological features; mentee's study of the corporate values and traditions of the enterprise, administration, mentors, staff and other mentees with a view to his speedy adaptation; mentee's study of structural divisions of the company or organization; assisting him in the study of the legal and regulatory framework of the enterprise; mentee's study of sociologic-and-economic characteristics of the region; systematic monitoring the tasks accomplished by the young personnel and timely assistance when required; assisting him/her in developing the program of his/her professional self-development; helping young professionals in introspection and self-management; willingness to answer mentee's arising questions; forming mentee's motivation to carry out professional activities, interact with the staff; mentee's studying regulations and interaction forms through e-mentoring; mentee's learning electronic corporate university potential; helping not only in professional and career development of the mentee but also his personality potential; attitude towards a mentee not as to the young and inexperienced staff but as a potential young professional able to generate new ideas;

*For the Board of Mentors:* organizing the selection procedure of mentors according to criteria including not only the normative (age, work experience in the enterprise, qualification according to mentor's regulations, but also the content level (criteria for mentor training taking into account the requirements of the competency model of the modern mentor tailored for a certain enterprise; mentors' study mentees' functional responsibilities in corporate training apprentices; implementation of timely diagnostics of psychological-and-educational, methodic and mentoring competencies; organizing and conducting lectures, seminars and psychological trainings, debates, round tables for mentors to provide them techniques of effective corporate teaching training of young personnel; studying and sharing mentors' domestic and foreign experience and achievements, as well as identifying their adaptive capacity for a particular company; providing recommendations in organizing, methods and information necessary to become a mentor; attract mentors and mentees to participate in "the Best Mentor" competition; inventory and assessment of both quantitative indicators (number of mentees trained by one mentor) and qualitative performance (creativity and initiative of the mentor, his qualifications development, etc.) when selecting the ways to motivate mentors; organizing and holding 'New Ideas Auction' in the course of which mentors share their experience in training young personnel in the company; regular communication with the trainees and learning about their attitudes toward their mentors to identify interpersonal and professional issues;

informing of the peculiarities of the electronic mentoring to ensure transparency of the results in corporate training of young personnel and experienced mentor staff in the course of sharing professional knowledge and experience; informing mentors of the complementary interaction of mentors and mentees involving professional and complementary cooperation of mentors and mentees interested both in their professional duties and areas of company activities; monitoring young personnel development in order to predict and prevent the risk of their overgrowing the targeted skills and the mentor's level in them; development and improvement of Mentoring Regulations in the company; development of promising directions for improving the mentorship.

*For the company CEO:* creating of an in-company, or corporate, training-and-manufacturing institution; regulatory, legal, scientific and methodic support for mentoring activities; search for the social partners to organize and conduct courses for further development of mentors; integrating into specialized vocational training institutions or universities for the purpose of selecting and targeted training of prospective students for a particular company; developing mechanisms to control the system of mentorship motivation; introducing the system of selecting experts in the enterprise as members of the Board of Mentors on the basis of the discussed criteria (competencies, management, research, corporate, communicative, foreign language, psychological-and-pedagogic, methodic and mentor competencies),

Organizing systematic development training for mentors; monitoring the work of the Council of Mentors; coordinating subject interests in corporate training for solving general and specific tasks; analysis of mentoring results; documentary support in mentoring process (i.e. the draft order "On the appointment of a mentor", monitoring the development of individual adaptation programs of mentees, as well as mentoring period completion); maintaining the contact with the mentor and trainee to provide them necessary assistance; constructive application of experience and achievements of mentoring abroad taking into account the best national traditions of mentoring of this country; ensuring member rotation in the Board of Mentors and their horizontal and vertical mobility; development of guidelines for mentors for effective mentoring program.

*For centers that provide mentors training and developing:* working out legal documents regulating mentors refreshment every 5 years; involving higher educational institutions, enterprises and research institutions in developing mentoring methods and the information base for corporate training of mentors; studying national and international experience of corporate mentor training and its introduction into the company system; scientific generalization of innovative practices; organizing and conducting seminars, conferences, "round tables" on the issues of corporate mentoring; regular publication of educational and methodic manuals and handbooks for mentors; systematic training of instructors, teachers and consultants for successful educational process at the center; diagnostics of mentoring needs in the enterprise; implementing mentor programs of both full-time or part-time modes; covering the subject, objectives, area of knowledge and study, the list of competencies, improvement potential in the learning process; recommended duration of study; program focus on adopting psycho-pedagogical, mentoring competencies meeting the training course requirements and developing programs of mentors; including modern innovative domestic and foreign technology in developing mentors programs; developing curriculum, syllabus and methods for such programs; final assessment after the program completion, final certification and awarding relevant documents confirming their successful participation; evaluation of the effectiveness of training and professional development of mentors; enhancing training programs and further development courses for mentors.

## CONCLUSION

Mentoring is an effective method of helping inexperienced employees develop and progress in their profession. Therefore, the research considerations are important for the Russian system of corporate education and mentorship for the following reasons: the recommendations drawn up for mentors, the Council of Mentors, corporate top-ranking executives and managers of the centers providing training and further professional development programs contribute into the whole process of involving the young employees into corporate training system in Russia, and, thus, help to improve and optimize mentorship as a significant part of effective corporate training and retraining system.

Recommendations and guidelines being an essential part of the modern enterprise allowed to highlight challenges and promising directions that require further consideration: study of the issues related to the diversification of arrangement, content and technologies used by corporate mentors and depending on the rapidly changing industrial realities; development of theoretical and methodological support for continuous mentoring programs and activities both for mentees and mentors. The documents developed may serve as tools to bridge the gap between theory and practice, provide information about effective initiatives and ensure clear understanding of mentor requirements and responsibilities.

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