



The Future at Work

POWER of Mentorship

Building the Business Case for Workplace Mentorship

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The Challenge

The business challenge of finding and keeping the best talent and the myriad of systemic issues impacting young people between the ages of 16-24 that are both out of school and out of work present an unlikely win-win situation for businesses operating in communities full of untapped potential. Young adults not working or in school are widely considered “opportunity youth” because they represent more than five million of America’s future talent that has not been exposed to the viable resources necessary for success in the workplace. This staggering reality coupled with the fact that the number one problem on the horizon for businesses is the spiked turnover of new talent, poses a challenge for advocates, practitioners, and policy makers alike – identifying ways to support the successful transition and progression of opportunity youth in the workplace. It is clear that mentorship is more than an act of kindness but instead a key solution for strengthening the talent pipeline for businesses and empowering the next generation of leaders.

The Power of a Mentor as a Role Model

Experts cite that young adults who were at risk for falling off track but had a mentor are...



55% MORE LIKELY TO ENROLL IN COLLEGE



52% LESS LIKELY THAN THEIR PEERS TO SKIP A DAY OF SCHOOL AND 37% LESS LIKELY TO SKIP CLASS



78% MORE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER REGULARLY



90% ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MENTOR THEMSELVES



46% LESS LIKELY THAN THEIR PEERS TO START USING ILLEGAL DRUGS AND 27% LESS LIKELY TO START DRINKING



130% MORE LIKELY TO HOLD LEADERSHIP POSITIONS



81% MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE REGULARLY IN SPORTS OR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Source <http://www.mentoring.org/why-mentoring/mentoring-impact/>

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Through mentorship, young adults will be equipped with the interpersonal relationships, support systems, and social capital to succeed in the workplace, and in life. According to Dr. Jean Rhodes, “Virtually every aspect of human development is fundamentally shaped by interpersonal relationships. So it stands to reason that when close and caring relationships are placed at the center of a youth intervention, as is the case in mentoring programs, the conditions for healthy development are ripe.” LeadersUp contends that mentorship is the first step because prior to accessing opportunity and exposing young people to additional resources, they must have a support system equipped to shepherd them through the process. National mentoring research proves that having a mentor provides immense benefits for young people, including but not limited to several positive outcomes ranging from academic and employment to life and family. One study cites that mentorship can even help to provide an early warning for young people at the pivotal turning point of their life, where positive influence is critical to what would become a life changing decision. We also find that young people who have gone astray can be mentored back onto the right track. For many of these youth, education and the pursuit of postsecondary training and subsequent employment leads to an increase in potential lifetime earnings.

Preparing College Students for Tomorrow Requires More Mentors **Today**

Mentorship is a powerful tool for growing talent and it should start early. A Gallup Report published by USA Funds on the Minority College Graduates Report cites that the benefits of mentorship are learned over time and for many the effects are especially pronounced while in college, and subsequently for college-age youth. Understanding that Opportunity Youth – youth between the ages of 16-24 – are also college-age, this research along with other studies prove the case for early and effective mentorship as a precursor to promising life outcomes. This same study surveyed college graduates and found that the odds of engaging in work nearly doubled when they had 1) at least one professor who made them excited about learning 2) professors who cared about them as people and 3) a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams. The table below shows the percent of graduates who felt that they had a mentor that encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams.



AMONG COLLEGE GRADUATES, A SURVEY SHOWED THAT THE ODDS OF ENGAGING IN WORK NEARLY DOUBLED WHEN THEY HAD A MENTOR WHO ENCOURAGED THEM TO PURSUE THEIR GOALS AND DREAMS.

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OVERALL

National Average	22%
White	21%
Black	27%
Asian	21%
Hispanic	24%

MALE

White	20%
Black	31%
Asian	20%
Hispanic	23%

FEMALE

White	23%
Black	24%
Asian	22%
Hispanic	25%

Source: "Gallup-USA Funds Minority College Graduates Report"

Though effective mentorship matters for all youth, the need for culturally relevant mentorship is welcomed in historically underserved African American, Hispanic, and American Indian communities.

For example, the African American community is particularly over-represented in the opportunity youth population (18.5% nationally), as there are a disproportionate number that are not in school and not working – in Chicago 1 out of every 4 African Americans is an opportunity youth – schools that serve the unique interests of African Americans such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) demonstrated an increased percentage of black graduates who felt that having a mentor encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams. This was a sentiment shared more at HBCUs (42%) than at non-HBCUs (23%). Additionally, graduates from HBCUs were three times as likely to be thriving in all five elements of well-being (purpose, social, financial, community, and physical) if they had a mentor compared to only twice as likely for black graduates of non-HBCUs.

Mentorship Matters

Nurturing the mind is the critical component.

Mentoring can help to develop non-cognitive skills that are important to success. Much of this success can be attributed to the character of a young person including their ability to persevere, be optimistic, and respond to challenges. Mentors can help youth set goals, manage their time, develop leadership skills, be advocates for themselves, and develop self-confidence and character.

Through our work with young people, LeadersUp has explored the institution of culturally relevant resources to provide LeadersUp associates with the supports necessary to build healthy peer cohorts, inclusive learning environments, and map promising career trajectories prior to completing the program. Mentorship is a better practice for incubating young and talented new hires with key wraparound services and is the important next step in developing a mind calibrated and equipped with the skills necessary to win in the workplace.

Finally, mentors as agents in a young person's life often provide bridges to external networks and resources that they would not otherwise be able to access.



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Mentorship Wins in the Workplace: The Bi-directional Benefits of Mentorship in an Intergenerational Workplace

There are benefits of mentoring that go beyond just what the mentee can gain from the relationship; mentoring has long-term benefits on the mentee, the employer, and the mentor:

For the mentee, a mentor can help an employee understand a task, guide them through problem-solving, encourage greater interaction with others, provide tips on career growth, and help with networking.

A mentor can gain valuable confidence and job satisfaction by engaging in a mentoring relationship along with improving supervisory skills and an understanding of the work environment through listening to employee concerns.

For the employer, mentored employees yield greater productivity with fewer on-the-job mistakes, thereby cutting costs. Mentored employees also tend to have greater job satisfaction, leading to increased employee retention and lower turnover, again reducing expenses.

The long-term benefits of mentoring relationships include more self-directed employees that have stronger communication and problem-solving skills, as well as employees that value collaboration that can lead to a stronger organization. Mentored employees are also more likely to be involved with a professional organization, thereby furthering not only their own careers, but the profession as a whole.

Source: <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-mentoring-workplace-18437.html>

The current multi-generational workplace fosters a bi-directional learning environment:

- The Veteran worker is dedicated—they want to get the job done regardless of the personal sacrifice; the Baby Boomer likes to process, discuss, and collaborate; and Generation X is more self-reliant so they prefer working independently
- Baby Boomers flourish in coaching and mentoring situations; Generation X grows through independent research and online self-study as well as believing that two-way learning experiences are valuable (i.e. “I learn from the boss and the boss learns from me”)

Source: <http://www.hr.duke.edu/pas/multigenerational5.html>

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Building a Mentorship Program

There are five primary benefits of having a workplace mentoring program:

1. **Internal Knowledge Transfer:** mentoring is an effective approach to organize, create, capture, and distribute knowledge and reduces the time required for knowledge transfer by providing direct access to a range of experts and peers who can share knowledge and skills.
 - **Benefits:** mentoring creates a culture where learning and the sharing of knowledge becomes part of the daily fabric rather than a forced task.
2. **Career Planning and Leadership Development:** mentoring serves as a platform for organizations to discuss employees' career goals and offer development opportunities and guidance to employees as well as help employees understand what they want from their careers.
 - **Benefits:** mentoring serves as a foundation for career and leadership development through collaboration by focusing on the development of individuals and interpersonal links.
3. **Diversity:** mentoring empowers a diverse range of employees to share their opinions, ideas, knowledge, and experiences.
 - **Benefits:** mentoring creates an environment of trust, belonging, understanding, support, and encouragement for a diverse workforce and gives employees an opportunity to voice their concerns, overcome hurdles, and find solutions. **Mentoring also helps build a robust pipeline of diverse talent for the future which can help differentiate corporations from competitors, gain new clients, and become successful on the global scale.**
4. **Onboarding New Employees:** mentoring can help reduce the time to competency for new employees by linking new hires to specialists, peers, and managers who can provide the necessary information while helping new hires feel comfortable in their new work environment.
 - **Benefits:** new hires can benefit most from group mentoring where they develop multiple connections and become productive faster while embracing company culture. This also demonstrates an organization's commitment to new employees' careers.
5. **Employee Engagement:** mentoring helps each employee identify themselves as a vital part of an organization and creates a heightened level of ownership within an organization.
 - **Benefits:** mentoring creates a space for dialogue and regular feedback resulting in greater clarity on issues such as the importance of one's role, job expectations, reward, and career advancement. Mentoring also enhances employee communications and improves working relationships. These factors contribute to improving employee engagement and ultimately lead to an increase in customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and retention.



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Mentorship: A New Direction in Business

The core objective of mentoring in business is to attract, motivate, develop, and retain profitable talent while increasing productivity. This can be further understood as the following:

- To source new employees and help them get acquainted with the organization and accustomed to their job
- To train and develop existing employees to enhance performance
- To encourage personal and professional growth and increase job satisfaction
- To identify and develop employees with potential to fill key leadership roles
- To understand and respond to the diversity needs of the workforce

<http://mentorourkids.org/articles/Five-Benefits-of-a-Workplace-Mentoring-Program.pdf>

Mentorship is not just for the mentee, but for the mentor, the business sector, the community, and the future. To join LeadersUp in launching a workplace mentorship program within your business email Jeffery Wallace at Jeffery@LeadersUp.org.





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