

Mentoring for Productivity

Mentoring is a powerful way to provide context and help employees refine and build their skills, which in turn will enable them to put those skills to use on the job more quickly and efficiently. Savvy organizations have started using mentoring as a productivity tool, going well beyond its traditional role as a personal development tool geared toward career moves and career advancement.

When mentoring is used as a productivity tool, people are able to learn from their peers and colleagues as a way to address skill gaps and learning needs. Mentoring can provide a unique way to learn that allows employees to:

- study a concept
- ask probing questions of experts and peers
- apply their new knowledge on the job
- share their experiences with their mentoring cohorts
- learn from the experiences of those around them
- adjust their approach as needed when applying their new skills.

Ultimately, through mentoring, employees become more productive more quickly because they learn while doing.

How to Get Started

Many Times 100 and Fortune 500 companies are using mentoring to support peer learning and productivity improvements. Here are some ideas on how you can use mentoring to improve productivity among your workforce:

Bring peers together from across different departments and functions to solve a critical business problem. This problem can be large or small, just so long as it's critical to you and your organisation. Having people from different areas of the organisation take part will help unique ideas form because of their distinct perspectives and experiences. Focusing the purpose on resolving a critical problem will also showcase how mentoring can impact the bottom line.

Form mentoring groups when you launch a new product so that the participants can learn about the product together, share stories about how customers are using your new product, gain insights into any problems that may exist with the product and how to handle them, give feedback on new ways to market the product, and so forth. Again, a blend of people from various departments and functions can make for a richer learning experience.

Use mentoring to re-skill a portion of the workforce to meet emerging needs, such as helping your IT team learn a new set of skills for your emerging product market, or helping your sales team learn about selling tactics that work in a different part of the world that your company wants to penetrate. Whatever the emerging skill set is that your company needs, you can form mentoring groups where peers can learn together from internal experts and from one another's experiences.

Extract adapted from Randy Emelo's new book, [Modern Mentoring](#), available now from ATD Press

I'm supporting a major player in the technical field to launch and to ensure that the uptake is successful, and have provided some briefing sessions for mentors and mentees alike. Do contact me to discuss your mentoring challenge or to support your existing mentors: peter@peterwelchcoaching.co.uk