Providing Vision and Leadership for the Future of the HVAC and Sheet Metal Industry

MENTORING AND COACHING PRACTICES

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION

NEW HORIZONS FOUNDATION
A Chance to Grow
An HVAC and Sheet Metal Industry Initiative™

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DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION

2010 Prepared By:

FMI

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CONTENTS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the construction industry currently faces many challenges, one of the most difficult challenges involves the coming leadership crisis. However, it is not too late for companies to act to avert such a crisis from threatening the success of their organizations. The companies that develop their employees and have clear succession plans in place will more likely grow sustainable and strong organizations. It is clear that, to avoid the leadership crisis of tomorrow, organizations need to act decisively today.

Forward-looking firms are already preparing for what promises to be among the most severe labor shortages in the industry. Competent, capable workers are critical to the success of the industry; those organizations that can attract, retain, and develop these workers will have a clear advantage.

The subjects of this report, mentoring and coaching, are two processes that can be used successfully to prepare the next generation of leaders and owners, as well as to help attract new recruits. For generations, apprenticeship programs have successfully provided good careers and a well-trained, capable workforce for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC)/sheet metal contractors and fabricators. The processes of mentoring and coaching can create an apprenticeship-type program for higher management levels and potential future owners.

Whether future leaders come up through the current apprenticeship programs or have college degrees in fields such as engineering, business management, and accounting, few will have all the requirements needed to lead a complex business with unique cultures and behaviors to transmit to the next generation. Mentoring and coaching programs help formalize this process and assure that there are enough leaders to satisfy the need for organizational strategy and continuity.

Although more companies are using mentoring and coaching practices to prepare the next generation, use of these programs is still in the early stages in most sectors of the construction industry. Among the misunderstandings associated with mentoring and coaching is the definition of the terms. This report focuses on formal mentoring and executive coaching programs tied to a corporate strategy and administered by trained professionals.

Among the important distinctions between mentoring and coaching is that mentoring is usually undertaken by experienced personnel within the company to help less experienced personnel navigate through the challenges of learning the ropes, company processes, and challenges of new positions. Executive coaching, on the other hand, is conducted by trained professionals external to the company and hired to help individuals improve their skills both to achieve personal goals and to further the strategic needs of the company. FMI Corporation, the largest provider or management consulting to the worldwide building and construction industry and presenter of this report, recommends that neither of these programs be used to correct the shortcomings of problem employees. Rather, employees should see mentoring and executive coaching programs as a chosen honor and recognition that will improve their careers and make the company more competitive.

Mentoring and coaching programs are two effective tools organizations can use to develop key employees for future leadership roles. Organizations looking to the future will realize that they need to increase their skills in developing their employees and preparing them for the leadership challenges of tomorrow. Mentoring and coaching can be that first step that puts an organization on the path to a sustainable, successful future.

2 INTRODUCTION TO MENTORING AND COACHING

Historically, the construction industry has been seen as having broad swings in employment, making it continually more difficult to attract and retain trained personnel. In this report, FMI takes a close look at the practices of coaching and mentoring and the benefits that such practices can offer HVAC/sheet metal contractors and fabricators, especially as those benefits help to attract new talent to the industry and grow and retain the best people for company continuity, loyalty, and success.

Coaching and mentoring can be the most effective means of helping employees grow and develop. While the terms "coaching" and "mentoring" are familiar to most people, the practices of coaching and mentoring can vary greatly. For instance, both terms can refer to anyone who has helped people as they attempted to learn sports or how to improve what they do in their careers. In most cases, these informal relationships can represent one or two discussions or a lifetime of advice from a parent or relative. While FMI briefly discusses the benefits and challenges of such informal coaching and mentoring, the primary focus in this report is to consider formal coaching and mentoring practices. Toward this end, the New Horizons Foundation, an HVAC/sheet metal industry initiative, contracted with FMI Corporation to study best practices, challenges, and the means to implement mentoring and executive coaching in the HVAC/sheet metal industry. This report documents FMI's findings and recommendations for coaching and mentoring programs for this segment of the construction industry.

The objective of this initiative was to research and analyze mentoring and coaching best practices nationwide and to identify the critical components necessary to implement these programs, specifically in the HVAC/sheet metal industry. It is the intention of this report to give a thorough understanding of mentoring and coaching and to illustrate the differences between the two as well as differences between other personal development tools like training. The report also outlines the critical steps and characteristics of mentoring and coaching that HVAC/sheet metal companies should follow if they choose to implement these programs in their own organizations. Industry stakeholders are encouraged to use this information to inform their decisions for implementing mentoring and coaching programs in their own organizations.

For the purposes of this report, FMI defines mentoring as

A relationship between an experienced person and a less experienced person for the purpose of giving advice and support. The mentor provides wisdom, guidance, and counseling as mentees advance their lives, careers, and education.

FMI defines *executive* coaching as

A one-on-one collaborative relationship between a paid professional coach and client that is focused on equipping the client to more fully develop himself or herself and to facilitate a shift in his or her knowledge and behavior. Executive coaching helps clients achieve bottom-line business results.

In most instances below, when FMI uses the term "coaching," it is referring to executive coaching. The differences between coaching and mentoring are summarized in Table 1.

	Coaching	**Mentoring**
Relationship	One-on-one	One-on-one
Implementation	External	Internal
Focus	Specialized needs and goals	Professional and personal support
Time Frame	Midterm (6-12 months)	Long-term (1+ year)
Level of Expertise	-Certified/expert coaches -Experts in coaching process and interactions	-Non-experts/firsthand experience -Experts in the company and general field
Purpose	Skills - development-based	Relationship-based
Focus	Career that carries across any company (i.e., skills, relationships)	Company-focused to help navigate through the *specific company* (i.e., promotions, job positions)
Relationship Type	Paid relationship	Non-paid relationship
Organization Participation	Coaches work closely *with* the organization and include the organization on goal-setting/ progress reports.	Mentors work *for* the organization and do not include the organization on goal-setting/ progress reports.

Table 1: Coaching vs. Mentoring

Facing rapid changes in technology and economic trends, the future for the HVAC/ sheet metal contracting and fabrication industry, like that of many industries, is uncertain; however, organizations can take specific steps today to prepare themselves for the challenges of tomorrow. Although the cyclicality of the industry sometimes masks the need, most experts agree that the industry will be facing severe labor shortages over the coming decade. Organizations that are well-equipped to attract, retain, and develop people will have a sizeable advantage over those that expect to just place a help-wanted ad or call their local labor hall and have all the applicants they need. Mentoring and coaching programs provide for leadership development and continuity of knowledge and expertise. These factors alone will help to improve bottom-line results as well as help individuals overcome the challenges they face on a daily basis. Formal mentoring and coaching programs improve individual performance, spur personal growth, create higher retention, and improve employee loyalty. Mentoring and coaching are also essential pieces of leadership succession.

3 WHY MENTORING COACHING NOW?

This section will explain

- **Forecasted labor shortages**
- **That HVAC/sheet metal contractors and fabricators are willing to participate in a mentoring or coaching program**
- **The importance of developing talent now as baby boomers are retiring**

It is an opportune time for an organization to prepare for the future by strengthening the capabilities of its people and preparing the leadership pipeline. Forward-looking design and construction companies are already preparing for the anticipated severe labor shortage in the industry.[1] For employees driven out of the market, the odds are against their return to the industry the longer they remain unemployed, especially in a competitive market where long-term unemployment means losing a certain amount of competency as the industry changes. Research suggests that organizations throughout the construction industry will see a host of new problems. One of the largest and potentially most severe will be the shortage of competent, capable workers—especially younger employees—who are critical to the long-term success of all organizations. Mentoring and executive coaching are powerful tools for recruiting, retaining, and developing this younger generation.

To better understand the current mentoring and coaching practices and needs of the HVAC/sheet metal contractors and fabricators, FMI surveyed both top-level and midlevel executives and managers. The results of that survey are incorporated throughout this report. For the sake of expediency, that survey in this report is referred to as the Survey or the Mentoring and Coaching Survey.[2]

According to the Survey, most organizations in the HVAC/sheet metal industry have not implemented coaching or mentoring programs. Survey results showed that 83 percent of top-level leaders and 82 percent of midlevel leaders, as seen in Exhibit 1, responded that their organization has neither a coaching nor a mentoring program. Nonetheless, although most organizations in the HVAC/sheet metal industry do not have a mentoring/coaching program, evidence suggests that employees in the industry would be willing to participate in one. According to the Survey, 87 percent of executives and managers surveyed stated they would "possibly" or "definitely" participate in such a program. (See Exhibit 2.)

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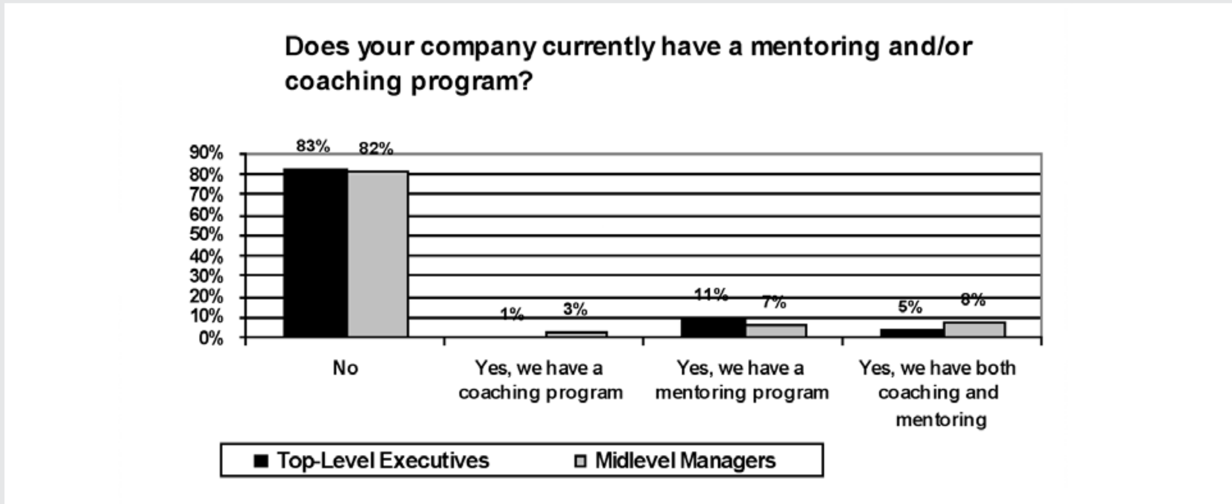

Exhibit 1: Extant Mentoring/Coaching Programs

While the benefits of instituting a mentoring program should be important to companies at any time, a review of the respondent mix for the Survey helps to demonstrate the immediate need. The breakdown of respondents by age group for the Survey for this report is very similar to those conducted for HVAC/ sheet metal contractors and the construction industry in general in other surveys conducted by FMI. The majority of top-level executives are older than 50 with nearly one quarter of those in leadership or ownership positions nearing normal retirement age within the next five years. Furthermore, the midlevel executives most likely to replace them are also largely over the age of 50, while less than 14

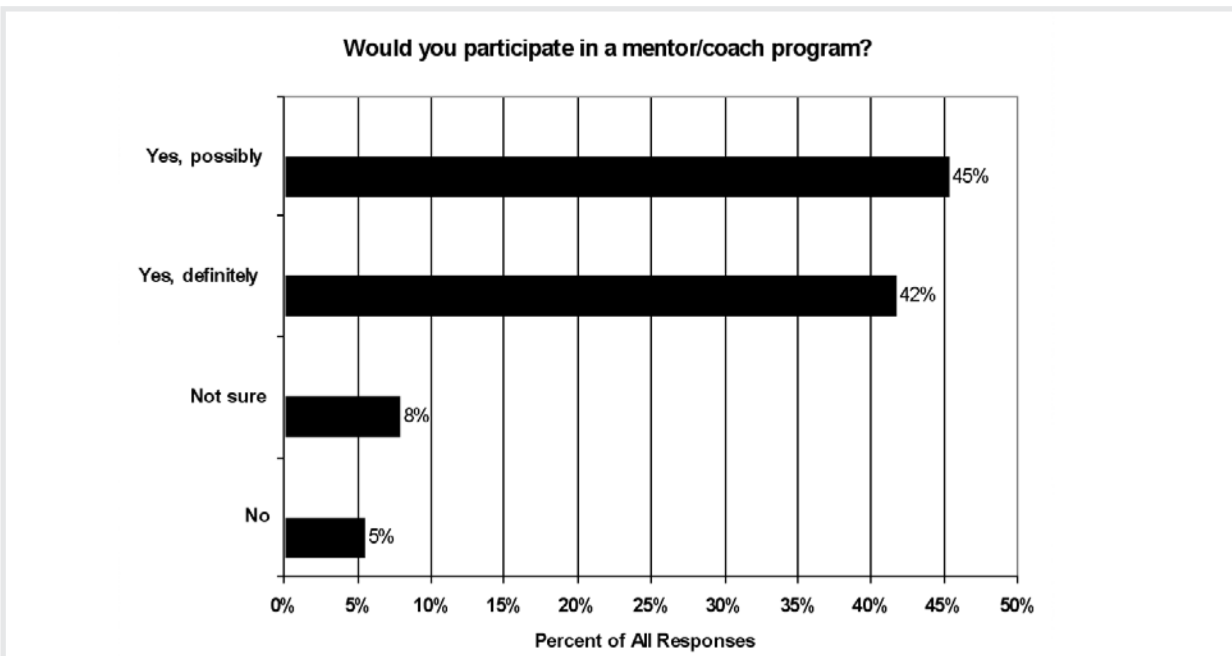

Exhibit 2: Mentor/Coach Program Participation

The major obstacle for organizations trying to attract Millennials is that they are ill-equipped to deal with the demands Millennials place on their employers.

percent were younger than 40. This result in itself confirms the need to investigate ways to bring younger talent—often of the "Millennial Generation"—into the industry and to provide the means to bring them up to speed in their careers maybe faster than any in previous generations, especially if the economy faces a significant rebound.

4 MENTORING AND COACHING MILLENNIALS

This section will explain

- **How Millennials differ from generations before them**
- **How hiring Millennials will give organizations a future talent advantage**
- **That, while Millennials can appear demanding, they are more passionate about finding meaning at work than status or money**
- **How mentoring and coaching programs are an effective way for organizations to meet the needs of this generation**

The Millennial Generation, born between 1981 and 1999, consists of 76 million people and makes up the fastest-growing segment of workers today. Many in the industry have struggled with how to relate and connect with this generation, as they seem very different from the generations before them. Some choose to ignore or work around the issue of managing and leading Millennials. However, Millennials will play a critical role in the success of organizations over the next decade. As the more experienced Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) begin to transition out of the workplace, this will create a massive talent gap; there are simply not enough skilled, experienced workers to replace the boomers. The next generation, Generation X (born 1965-1980) is too small to fill all the positions left by the Boomers. Many positions will fall to the Millennials. For that reason, the organizations that can most effectively recruit, retain, and develop this generation will have a talent advantage in the coming years.

To understand the value of mentoring and coaching Millennials, it is important to look at some of the characteristics of this generation. Millennials can appear demanding—they want a good job in a stimulating work environment; they want good pay and good bosses. Perhaps even more challenging for some is that they also want to find meaning in what they do.[3] Millennials are much more likely to leave the organization if they cannot find meaning and passion in the work they do. This is not necessarily a problem; in fact, according to the 2009 Kelly Global Workforce Index, 51 percent of Millennials would accept a lower wage or less prestigious role if their work contributed to something more important or meaningful.[4] Millennials are often more passionate about meaning than status or money.

The major obstacle for organizations trying to attract Millennials is that the organizations are ill-equipped to deal with the demands Millennials place on their employers. Millennials want feedback—they want it consistently and immediately. They will not be satisfied with waiting for the year-end review. They also want to make progress. They do not want to feel like they have reached a plateau or are not moving forward in their professional lives. This is where mentoring and coaching can be a powerful process for Millennials. Matching up a Millennial with a more experienced employee or with an executive coach sends several messages—it states that the organization values this individual's contribution, shows there is a future for them in the company and that the organization is working to help them grow and develop. While this is true for any employee, regardless of generation, the Millennials are looking for many of the same things that mentoring and coaching provide. Organizations looking to attract, retain, and develop this younger generation can use mentoring and coaching as an effective means to do so.

5 DIFFERENCES AMONG MENTORING, COACHING, AND TRAINING

This section will explain

- **The differences between each program and what each entails**
- **How using a combination of the three programs can be beneficial**

Some organizations express confusion over the difference among mentoring, coaching, and training. Both mentoring and training usually have more experienced employees teaching new knowledge and skills to younger employees. However, while training is a critical piece of talent development, it cannot replace or replicate the benefits of mentoring. Mentees learn more about clients and company business, company policies and philosophies, and political expertise than they would in a training program. Training is an excellent tool for specific knowledge acquisition and skill development, but mentoring is more effective in helping younger employees understand the intricacies of the organization and how to navigate them effectively. Coaching typically uses an external, certified coach to guide leaders in the organization as they work on a specific coaching plan.

While people often confuse the differences among mentoring, coaching, and training, best-practice organizations will use a combination or all three to develop their people. For example, an organization may identify a specific employee with the potential to one day run the entire organization. Although that candidate does not currently have the entire skill set necessary for that position, his or her managers believe he or she has the potential and the desire to rise to the top of the company. The organization will want to use a combination of mentoring, coaching, and training to get this high-potential employee to that point.

The candidate's managers might create a list of the necessary competencies and areas needed to be well-equipped for the position. These might include

- Leadership
- Strategic Planning

> Training is an excellent tool for specific knowledge acquisition and skill development, but mentoring is more effective in helping younger employees understand the intricacies of the organization and how to navigate them effectively.

- Customer Relations
- Human Resources
- Operations
- Information Systems
- Knowledge Base for the HVAC and Sheet Metal Industry
- Business Results

In each of these areas, the candidate may have some level of competence. For example, he or she may be extremely strong in operations and business results but lacking in strategic planning. The organization will then want to train the candidate in strategic planning, specifically. However, it may also want to provide the candidate with a mentor—someone to help guide the candidate through company-specific challenges, opportunities, and obstacles that come with moving to the top of that particular organization. The organization may also want to find an external executive coach to assist the candidate to obtain the softer skills required of higher-level leaders, such as emotional intelligence or becoming an inspiring leader. Training will get at the specific development skills, while mentoring builds a partnership with a more senior employee who can help shape the candidate for greater responsibility. Coaching then creates an external relationship that provides the candidate with a new, outside perspective as he or she moves through the process. Training is critical for development, but the real influence comes when a candidate has a coach or mentor to work with and to bounce ideas off. Great organizations assess their specific needs and then use a unique combination of coaching, training, and mentoring to develop their high-potential leaders.

In smaller organizations, the differences when comparing mentoring, coaching, and training can become blurry. Often, specific leaders are charged with multiple tasks—to train certain people as well as to serve as a coach or mentor to some of the same people. This blurring of responsibility contributes to the confusion between these three terms. Many organizations expect leaders to "coach" other employees. While this may be helpful to a certain extent, it does not feature the same level of benefits as having an external executive coach. Formal mentoring programs and external executive coaching help to make this distinction clearer; while leaders are expected to regularly train, develop, and assist younger employees; they are not necessarily tasked with serving as coaches or mentors. The organization must make a clear distinction between the everyday process of training co-workers and serving as a mentor focused on building a partnership with a less experienced co-worker. While smaller organizations will have employees wearing multiple hats, it is helpful for them to make this distinction.

Example Case 1
Mentoring: Finding a Career Path

Matt is a 29-year-old project engineer who is seen as having high potential for success by many in the organization. He is a hard worker, intelligent and generally well liked by those he works with. He has been with his current company for only about two years but has done exceptional work. To Matt, it seems as if he has been on the right path for career growth, but he has grown increasingly frustrated over the last few months as he looks ahead at his career. He has quietly complained about a lack of developmental opportunities in the organization. He is not sure where he can go next, but he is certain he does not want to remain a project engineer for the rest of his career. He wants new challenges and professional growth. He believes he has had enough training, but he is still frustrated with what he perceives as a lack of future opportunities.

Greg, his supervisor, has been aware of Matt's growing frustration. He has even heard rumors that Matt has looked elsewhere for other job opportunities. Greg knows that the organization has invested a great deal of resources training Matt, and he does not want to lose such a good worker. In conversations with Matt, Greg has often heard Matt criticize the slow-moving culture of the organization. After spending time considering his options, Greg suggests to Matt that working with a mentor might help him understand the organization better.

The mentor they agree on is Tony, an experienced project manager who has been with the organization for more than 15 years. Like Matt, Tony started his career in the organization as a project engineer and rose through the ranks to senior project manager. Tony has been looking for some new challenges himself and has expressed a desire to use his experience to develop others. Greg asked Tony to serve as a mentor for Matt, and, when he introduced them, he saw that the two immediately connected.

As his mentor, Tony was soon able to get Matt to open up about his frustrations with the organization. He listened sympathetically and gave his own views of the company's culture. He admitted that career paths were sometimes unclear, but he strongly believed in the opportunities the company offered. Together, they mapped out a potential career path for Matt and set about creating the opportunities he would need to gain new experiences and skills to move up in the organization.

Matt and Tony met regularly, sometimes to plan specific steps, other times just to talk about Matt's progress and his changing views of the organization. Matt soon became more aware of his own potential and began to take personal responsibility for his role in the organization. He slowly changed his mind about leaving the company and decided instead that he wanted to learn all he could so that he would eventually become a key leader in the organization. Tony helped Matt identify the types of experiences he would need to realize his ambitions, and together they created a five-year plan to help Matt get where he wanted to go. Matt soon grew more comfortable operating in the organization's unique culture and felt he was on the right track in the right place.

At the end of the formal mentoring relationship, Matt and Tony realized they had created not just a strong mentor-mentee relationship but a lasting friendship as well. They decided to continue to meet regularly, and Tony let Greg know he was interested in mentoring others when the opportunity arose.

6 MENTORING

This section will explain

- **Why mentoring is so important**
- **The greatest benefits to be expected in mentoring programs**
- **The difference between informal and formal mentoring**

6.1 Purpose of Mentoring

People have practiced mentoring in some form for thousands of years. While the look and shape of mentoring has shifted over time, the concept has always been prevalent in an unstructured, informal manner. Most leaders today can think back over their career and recall people who served as mentors to them, even if they never referred to them by that name or had any type of formal process in place. In the last several years, mentoring has emerged as a powerful tool to help organizations and individuals leverage the knowledge and experience of their more senior workers to the benefit of the younger ones. While mentoring occurs throughout the industry, it is often conducted in a haphazard, informal way.

Research suggests that formalizing mentoring—putting in a structure and processes to facilitate the mentor/mentee relationship—greatly increases the effectiveness of the program. Organizations, by being intentional about the way they assign and support the mentor/mentee relationship, can find themselves transformed by a process that is relatively simple and feasible to implement. Mentoring integrates employees into the core of the organization, serving as a major communication link that reinforces the modes of interaction required to support the organizational culture.[5] This process can increase employee loyalty and employee morale. Mentoring can help participants recognize that they are primarily responsible for their career development. The mentoring process gives them tools to help move that development along.

6.2 Benefits of Mentoring

Example Case 1 above shows a good employee who appears to be preparing to leave the organization, because he does not see that he has a future there. The organization is about to lose the kind of employee that it wants more of—well trained, hardworking, and ambitious. This is a simplified case but not an unusual one. Companies may do a good job of training new employees to a point but then forget to look after their ongoing development. In the case above, the supervisor is observant enough to recognize the problem and suggest a mentor. While few organizations in the HVAC/sheet metal industry have implemented formal mentoring programs, the recognition of their importance is there. In the Survey, 80 percent of both top-level and midlevel leaders responded that their organization would "yes, definitely" or "yes, possibly" benefit from such a program. While organizations may struggle with how to implement a mentoring program, survey results are clear that leaders in

In the last several years, mentoring has emerged as a powerful tool to help organizations and individuals leverage the knowledge and experience of their more senior workers to the benefit of the younger ones.

the industry see the need and the benefits of having a mentoring program.

Mentoring provides a number of benefits to both the individuals involved and the organization. While a comprehensive list of every benefit mentoring offers is too lengthy, many of the most often cited benefits include

- Establishes ownership
- Promotes shared responsibility
- Maximizes organizational resources
- Maintains integrity
- Facilitates knowledge utilization
- Supports integration of key processes into the organization
- Creates openness to learning through mentoring
- Shortens employee ramp-up time/increases readiness[6]

Mentoring can achieve a diverse array of results, depending on the individual needs of the organization. Most mentoring programs accelerate the career paths of the mentees and develop the skills of both mentors and mentees. When used effectively, mentoring creates great value for the organization. The mentor passes off hard-earned wisdom and helps shape the next wave of upper management, while the mentee is able to boost his or her career with valuable advice. This, in turn, reduces turnover rates and helps the mentee deal with organizational problems, accelerating his or her assimilation to the corporate culture.[7]

It is important to note that mentoring is not a one-way funnel of information and influence from mentor to mentee. Mentors and mentees can influence each other, seek solutions together, determine actions, make decisions, gain consensus, maintain hierarchy, and discuss the meaning of on-the-job experiences.[8] Often, the mentors themselves will learn a great deal from their mentees. This is especially apparent when mentors and mentees are of different generations. For example, pairing a more experienced Baby Boomer with a younger Millennial will undoubtedly give the Millennial valuable insight and guidance from the more experienced Baby Boomer. However, the Boomer could also be taught how to use technology more effectively—an area the younger mentee is more likely to have mastered. While most of the influence will flow from mentor to mentee, it would be a mistake for mentors to think they have nothing personal to gain from the relationship. At the very least, serving as a mentor is an excellent opportunity to practice people skills and relationship building as well as serving as a means to develop talent. Mentoring is such a powerful process because of the positive impact it has on all involved.

6.3 Informal Mentoring

When creating a mentoring program, organizations can choose between an informal program and a more formally structured one. While formal programs are typically more successful, many organizations use informal programs because of the specific nature of their culture and employees. In these less

> The majority of top-level executives are older than 50, with nearly one- quarter of those in leadership or ownership positions nearing normal retirement age within the next five years.

structured programs, mentors and mentees initiate the relationship, and the programs are often open to all employees. Informal mentoring programs typically have only a small subsection of employees actively participating at any given time. Informal mentoring programs rely on the mentor and the mentee to self-monitor and evaluate the value and effectiveness of the relationship. This can be done successfully, but there are no outside checks to ensure that the relationship is beneficial or that the mentee is making progress toward his or her goals.

The decision to implement a formal or informal mentoring program ultimately rests with each individual organization based on several factors. Specifically, these factors are the needs of employees, the systems already in place, and the goals of the mentoring relationship. Table 2 shows the most critical differences between these two types of programs.

While informal programs work for some organizations, most have found that a more structured, formal program creates greater benefit for mentors, mentees, and for the organization. According to the Survey, 88 percent of respondents acknowledged that their organizations practiced informal mentoring. While informal mentoring is often beneficial, formal mentoring has proven to achieve greater results.

7 FORMAL MENTORING

This section will explain

- **How to identify the right mentors and mentees**
- **How to effectively match mentors and mentees**
- **The proper training for mentors and preparing mentees**
- **The frequency and duration of the mentoring engagement**
- **How to implement a mentoring program**
- **Effective ways to monitor the mentoring process**
- **Evaluation of the mentoring program as a whole**
- **How and when to conclude the mentoring partnership**

Formal Mentoring	Informal Mentoring
Specific goals are established.	Goals are unspecified.
Results are monitored.	Results are unknown.
Participation may be exclusive.	Participation is open to all who qualify.
Mentors/Mentees are matched using a consistent, thoughtful process.	Mentors and mentees self-select.
Mentee's manager is involved.	Mentee's manager is not involved.
Program coordination is provided.	Coordination is not provided.

Table 2: Formal vs. Informal Mentoring

In the example mentoring case, it is apparent that the company did not have a formal mentoring program to which Matt could apply. However, Greg, the supervisor, faced with losing a good employee, hit upon a solution. In this case, he happened to make a good pairing of Matt with the seasoned veteran, Tony. This example and the success of this relationship will likely cause Greg to use this approach again when necessary; but a formal program will help take some of the element of chance out of the situation.

Formal mentoring programs are often structured to ensure that the mentors and mentees achieve the greatest mutual benefit from the relationship and that progress is continually made. While formal mentoring programs are structured, they are also designed with freedom in mind. The most successful formal mentoring programs are voluntary for both mentors and mentees. These relationships are highly flexible and can easily turn into friendship. An open friendship is when both parties feel comfortable speaking honestly and openly about issues while maintaining a positive relationship. According to the Survey for this report, 60 percent of top-level executives and 43 percent of midlevel executives believed a voluntary program would be most successful in their organization. While voluntary programs do provide an opportunity for employees to opt out of participating, the benefits outweigh the downsides to the use of voluntary programs. However, a different approach may work, depending on the needs and goals of each individual organization.

Formal mentoring programs will vary based on the different needs of organizations, but most formal mentoring programs contain six essential components, which are discussed in depth in the paragraphs below:

1. Identifying and matching mentors and mentees
2. Training mentors and preparing mentees
3. Implementing the mentoring program
4. Monitoring the mentoring process
5. Evaluating the mentoring program9
6. Concluding the Mentoring Partnership

Each of these structured components is a means of ensuring that the mentoring program is effective and that progress is being made in the relationship.

7.1 Identifying and Matching Mentors and Mentees

Successful mentoring programs begin with an intentional means of identifying mentors and mentees. While some organizations have implemented company-wide mentoring programs, which are open to all employees, limited programs are more effective. Mentoring programs should be restricted to a select group of participants. Not all employees will make effective mentors, and not all employees will be open to receiving mentoring. Participants in the program should meet certain criteria that are predetermined by upper management, as described in the following sections.

Mentoring programs should be restricted to a select group of participants. Not all employees will make effective mentors, and not all employees will be open to receiving mentoring.

In the example case, Greg knew the skills and interests of both Matt and Tony, which allowed him to make a good pairing of mentor and mentee. While the idea of mentoring Matt was successful, what is Greg's response when others see this success and ask about the possibility of being mentored? Is Matt getting special treatment because he was complaining about a lack of career choices? Would that encourage others to do the same thing? Clearly, the company has learned that mentoring can be beneficial; however, there need to be some guidelines, and the program should have some strategic purpose for the organization.

To implement a successful mentoring program, top executives and leaders must take ownership of the process. Upper-level management should be heavily involved in the creation of the program and lead the effort to communicate the benefits and goals of the program to all levels of employees. Participation in the mentoring program should be seen as an honor, and this message must be communicated from the top of the organization. Having upper-level management explain that mentoring programs provide further opportunities within the organization and that selection is limited to high-potential, strong performers will resonate better among employees.

Identifying Mentors

Mentors should be employees with seniority in the organization who will be able to draw upon vast knowledge and experience to assist and guide their mentees. Mentors need to understand the culture of the organization and what it takes to be successful in that environment. The best mentors are those who have shown a passion and desire to improve their own learning as well as the learning of others.[10] Participation as mentors should be voluntary, but it is highly recommended that upper-level management participate. When upper-level management is involved, it demonstrates commitment and the investment that the company is making in its future leaders.

Many organizations struggle with finding the right number of mentees to assign to a single mentor. The most successful mentoring organizations have found that a single mentor should have three to five mentees at any given time, as each mentee represents a significant time and energy investment to build the relationship. Organizations must recognize that they have limited resources and must choose mentees wisely so as not to overwhelm the mentors. Mentors with more mentees than they can handle will be prevented from investing the necessary resources, and all mentoring relationships will suffer. Likewise, a mentor having a single mentee gives the mentor a limited perspective. Learning from the successes and failures of each mentee relationship allows the mentor to pick up best practices faster and apply lessons learned with one mentee in conversations with other mentees.

Mentors should also understand that, while the role involves a primary focus on the mentee, the mentor also receives some benefits for serving in that role. Many mentors have expressed great personal satisfaction and improved leadership skills because of serving as mentors. This benefit to mentors was shown in the Survey where 85 percent of top-level executives and 78 percent of midlevel executives rated their time as mentors as either "excellent" or "enjoyable." (See Exhibit 3.)

Identifying Mentees

In the example case, Tony proved to be a good mentor. His experience was complementary

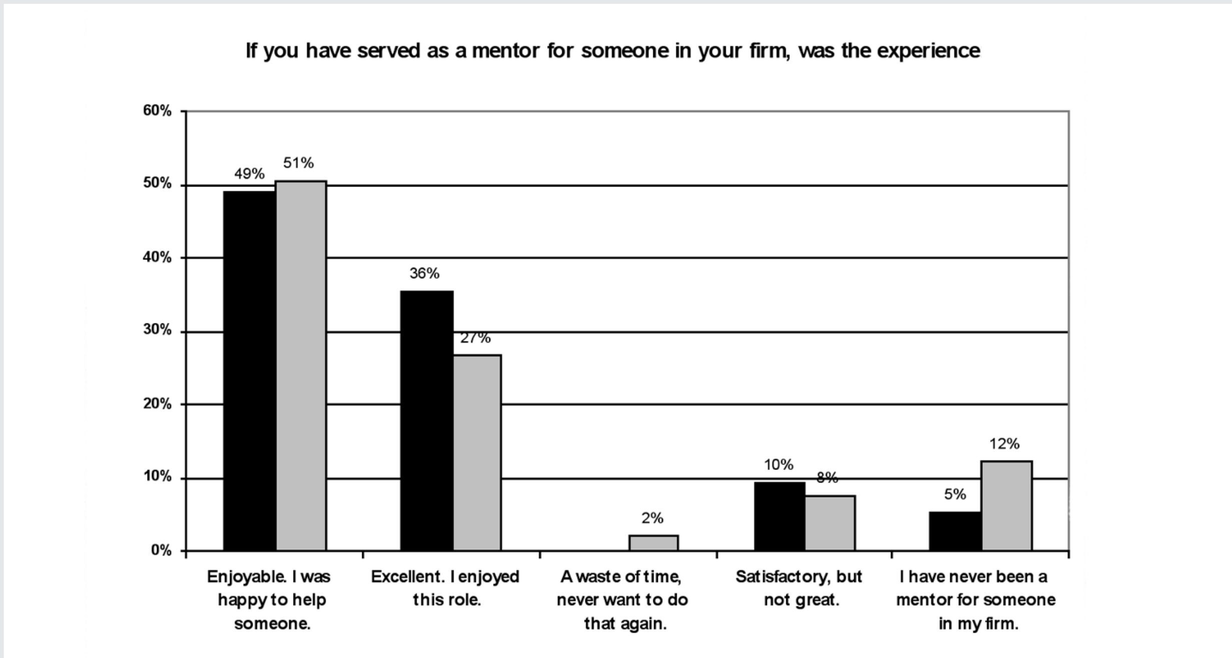

Exhibit 3: Mentoring Experience

to that of Matt's, and he was looking for an opportunity to do something for his own career challenges. How can the organization identify other "Tonys" for future mentoring assignments? Moreover, how can the organization identify future employees like Matt to receive mentoring before they decide to leave or become disgruntled employees?

Mentees should be chosen only if they meet certain criteria. Mentees should be a select group of younger employees—high potentials, new workers, new hires from other industries, first-time supervisors, women, and minorities. Potential is a key component for being selected as a mentee and should be looked for at all levels of the organization, not just at the entry level. Those chosen as mentees should be workers with not only potential, but also the desire to advance in their careers.

Some employees are content to remain where they are, doing the job they are currently doing for the majority of their careers. These employees are critical to the success of the organization but do not necessarily make the best mentees. Participation as mentees should be voluntary, but employees should see selection as an honor.

Mentoring "problem" employees or those struggling to achieve results is significantly less effective. Mentoring is primarily a means of advancing learning and growth to benefit both the employees involved and the organization as

Often, companies will assign a mentor to "fix" an underperforming employee. While this may have some benefit, it will greatly hurt the success of the entire mentoring program.

a whole. Often, companies will assign a mentor to "fix" an underperforming employee. While this may have some benefit, it will greatly hurt the success of the entire mentoring program. If employees view selection of a mentee as proof of underperformance or a sign of dissatisfaction with that individual, employees will see the entire mentoring program in a negative light, and it will be undermined. Workers will see having a mentor assigned as a last resort, instead of recognition of past success and the belief that even greater success lies ahead.

Mentoring is an excellent tool to help individuals overcome their weaknesses or challenges in the workplace. Their selection in the program should be based on the belief that they have potential to succeed in the organization—not because they need to be "fixed."

Matching Mentors and Mentees

The simplified example in Example Case 1 understates the importance of matching mentors and mentees. In the example, it appears Greg was both creative and resourceful in solving what could have become an employee retention problem. In very small organizations with few employees, this might work well for a time. However, it would be better if supervisors like Greg had organizational backing and more depth to call on in a formal mentoring program.

While there are multiple ways of matching mentors and mentees, all selection methods must involve an intentional, careful process. One of the keys to a successful mentoring program involves pairing the right mentors with the right mentees. A healthy pairing will create a strong mentoring relationship, allowing both the mentor and the mentee to openly discuss issues while establishing a mutual bond of trust. An unhealthy or misaligned pairing will result in frustration and fail to generate progress or results. The Survey showed that industry executives believe that having a high level of chemistry between the mentor and mentee is "very important" or "important." Leaders in the industry clearly recognize the essential role compatibility plays in an effective mentoring partnership.

One effective means of matching mentors and mentees is to allow the mentees to select three people as possible mentors. This allows the mentee some freedom in choosing who he or she would like to be his or her mentor. Mentees will typically choose people with whom they already feel a certain level of comfort, who might serve as a role model to guide them in their career. From that point, an upper management leader will select one of the three people to serve as mentors. Some factors to consider when matching mentors and mentees are similarities in personal values, work ethic, skills and experience, career goals, and personality. Considering these factors will help generate a mutually beneficial and healthy mentor/mentee match.

Allowing the mentee to have some freedom in choosing his or her mentor has shown to produce better results. Letting the younger

The Survey showed that industry executives believe that having a high level of chemistry between the mentor and mentee is "very important" or "important." Leaders in the industry clearly recognize the essential role compatibility plays in an effective mentoring partnership.

(or less experienced) employees have some control over choosing their mentor creates higher satisfaction with the process, as he or she is more likely to have greater chemistry with his or her mentor. This also helps prevent the more experienced mentors from choosing mentees who are too similar to them. Unfortunately, the Survey showed that, for organizations surveyed that currently have mentoring programs, 61 percent of respondents said that mentors are assigned to the mentees without the mentees having a choice in the matter. This approach mostly counts on luck and is an ineffective means of matching mentors and mentees, although it is prevalent in the industry today. Those organizations could expect to see greater results from their mentoring programs by allowing their mentees more freedom in choosing their mentors.

Many mentoring programs have achieved great success by focusing on diversity between the mentor and mentee. Often, mentoring programs take great pains to ensure that mentors and mentees are in different divisions or functions. This ensures that the mentee receives assistance and guidance in areas to which he or she may otherwise receive no exposure. Working with a mentor from a different department often helps mentees feel more comfortable and speak more candidly. The relationship and subsequent conversations will tend to be more open and honest, as there is less concern about sharing confidential information within the mentee's department or area of work. As many firms in this industry are small to midsize, this may not be a feasible solution. If pairing employees with different departments were not possible, it would be wise to emphasize the importance of confidentiality. Ultimately, each organization must make a decision based on the needs and goals of its employees as to how much diversity or homogeneity to include in the mentor/mentee pairing.

7.2 Training Mentors and Preparing Mentees

An often-cited failure of formal mentoring programs involves a lack of training and preparation for mentors and mentees. As in the sample case, in most instances, the mentors and mentees will have little to no experience in what is expected and anticipated to come out of the mentor/mentee relationship. Both groups will need to go through an orientation process to prepare them for the mentoring program and to increase their understanding of the goals and expectations for the program.

Mentor Training

Mentors need to be trained on what it means to be a mentor as well as what is expected and not expected from them. Typical mentor training involves clarification of roles, important issues for building successful relationships and making a commitment to the process and to the mentee. Different mentor training programs cover different topics, but the majority includes sessions on active listening, giving constructive feedback, relationship building, and the expectations of the program as a whole. Some research has suggested that giving constructive feedback is the single

> While training content will vary based on the goals of each organization implementing the mentoring program, it is critical that mentors be trained on the essential skills needed to serve successfully as a mentor.

most important skill a mentor can have. While training content will vary based on the goals of each organization implementing the mentoring program, it is critical that mentors be trained on the essential skills needed to serve successfully as a mentor.

Mentors need to understand what their expectations are in the role. Many mentoring programs suggest that mentors are responsible for the following:

- Increasing the mentee's learning of the organization and industry
- Challenging mentees to think and analyze multiple options before making a decision
- Encouraging mentees to look beyond the problem to find root causes and solutions
- Sharing insight as to how to operate more effectively within the organization
- Giving feedback on performance and behavior
- Challenging mentees to take initiative in their careers

Mentor training programs also stress what mentors are expected not to do. This includes the following:

- Telling mentees what to do
- Making promises of career advancement
- Criticizing thoughts, feeling, behavior, or actions
- "Rescuing" mentees by making excuses and bailing them out

In addition to the expectations of the role, many first-time mentors find it helpful to understand the stages of relationship building as it relates to mentoring. The four stages of successful mentoring relationships are

1. Initiation
2. Development
3. Culmination
4. Transformation

Understanding these four stages provides some guidance and direction to the expected changes that will occur in the mentor/mentee relationship. The first stage is initiation. This stage is characterized by a strong sense of enthusiasm of the mentor to teach the mentee and the mentee to learn from the mentor. The two parties begin to become acquainted with each other. The second stage is development. In the development stage, the mentor and mentee reach a level of comfort, stability, mutual trust, and satisfaction. The relationship grows as both parties develop a friendship. The third stage is culmination. At this point, the mentee outgrows the mentor's advice and guidance. There is no definitive timeline for when this will occur, but at some point, the mentee will develop to the point where the mentor/mentee partnership no longer makes sense. This would occur if the mentor does an effective job of enhancing the mentee's learning and providing positive and constructive criticism. Eventually, the mentor and mentee reach the final stage, transformation, which involves the relationship

Eventually, the mentor and mentee reach the final stage, transformation, which involves the relationship reaching a higher level of maturity that both parties no longer define as a "mentoring" relationship. Successful mentor and mentee pairings will often create a lasting friendship between the two.

reaching a higher level of maturity that both parties no longer define as a “mentoring” relationship. Successful mentor/mentee pairings will often create a lasting friendship between the two.

Mentors should also understand some of the qualities that are important in an effective mentoring partnership. While this list could include dozens of qualities, some of the most important are

- Balance
- Truth
- Trust
- Courage[11]

Mentoring partnerships should be in balance. The mentor should not wield power and control, but instead should build a relationship based on interdependence and mutual respect.[12] Mentors and mentees must be willing to communicate the truth. Much of mentoring involves openly discussing various issues, and both parties need to know that they are not going to hold anything back. Truth builds trust in a relationship; mentees need to trust that their mentor is looking out for their best interest and the mentor’s primary goal is to provide guidance and help the mentee in his or her career. Finally, courage is required in a mentoring partnership—the mentor must have courage to act as a role model, willingly supporting the mentee. Likewise, the mentee must have courage to admit that he or she does not know it all and is willing to learn from someone more experienced. Mentors should keep these characteristics in mind as they work to build an effective partnership.

Without proper clarification, first-time mentors can struggle when adapting to their new roles. Many question how much help and assistance they are supposed to provide. How to build an effective partnership and know the line they must walk as mentors is often unclear. For this reason, an initial kick-off training program is vital to the overall success of the mentors.

Mentee Preparation

Like first-time mentors, new mentees are often unclear as to how the mentoring process should work. The mentee orientation/preparation should cover the expected roles, developmental objectives, the benefits of mentoring, active listening skills, identifying potential challenges, and how to terminate the mentoring partnership if needed. Organizations need to invest time upfront to clarify the mentoring process for new mentees and to establish clear expectations.

Like mentors, mentees need to understand their role in the process and the expectations for their role. Typically, mentee training programs suggest mentees are responsible for the following:

- Openly sharing successes and failures
- Consulting with mentors regarding career goals, professional interests, and questions
- Welcoming the mentor’s interest in their career development
- Appreciating the time the mentor gives
- Being open and sincere
- Setting realistic expectations
- Accepting constructive feedback

Mentee training programs also suggest what mentees are expected not to do. This includes the following:

- Expecting the mentor to drive the relationship
- Complaining

- Expecting unrealistic results and instant progress
- Taking advantage of the mentor

In addition to the expectations of the role, many first-time mentees find it helpful to understand the four phases of mentoring. These four phases of mentoring are different from the four stages previously described for mentors. Mentors must take a higher-level view of the mentoring partnership—initiating and cultivating the relationship. Mentees should be primarily focused on their own developmental goals and communicate these with their mentors. For this reason, the four phases for mentees involve specific actions for the mentees to take. The four phases of mentoring for mentees are

1. Preparation
2. Goal Setting
3. Implementation
4. Closure[13]

Understanding these four phases of mentoring provides new mentees with guidance and structure in regards to the mentor/mentee relationship. The first phase, preparation, begins with self-preparation. New mentees need to spend some time in self-preparation, identifying their personal goals for the mentoring program, what they hope to achieve and how they will know whether the relationship is successful or not. After the self-preparation, mentees need to spend time developing the relationship with their mentor. Trust and openness should characterize this relationship. This should be discussed and established on the front end of the mentoring relationship. The second phase, goal setting, involves the process of setting specific, well-defined learning goals. Mentoring works best when there is a clear goal in mind towards which the mentor and mentee can work. This phase also involves establishing the criteria for success, means to measure that success, and the delineation of mutual responsibility. The third phase is implementation. In this phase, learning and development, sharing best practices and networking occur as the mentor helps the mentee work toward achieving his or her goals. The final phase is closure, with achievement of the mentee's goals and both parties agreeing to end the mentoring relationship or bring it to a different level of application and integration. This next stage could include an ongoing friendship or continuing the mentoring partnership on a more unstructured level.

Mentoring Frequency and Duration

In the example case, Matt and Tony appear to have set up a plan and goals for their mentoring relationship. When they had achieved what they set out to achieve, their formal mentoring relationship was completed. However, it might not have worked out so well for others who could flounder around with a plan and carry on the relationship long after it was needed. This could cause frustration for both the mentor and the mentee. Formal mentoring programs should be clear on the frequency and duration of mentoring meetings during the engagement. There is a great deal of freedom here in both frequency and duration based on the needs of each organization. Many organizations

The third phase is implementation. In this phase, learning and development, sharing best practices and networking occur as the mentor helps the mentee work toward achieving his or her goals.

structure mentoring programs to last at least one year, although some have achieved success with shorter, six-month programs. Other organizations have succeeded with longer ones. While the specific goals and culture of an organization will determine the duration for the mentoring program, a good rule to follow is to have mentors and mentees commit to a one-year engagement. However, some in the industry believe mentoring programs should be more open-ended. According to the Survey, 44 percent of top-level and 54 percent of midlevel executives believed an open-ended program would work best in their organization. While mentoring programs should have the option of continuing past the original end date, it is recommended that clear start and end times be defined. This allows the program to have a closed end date, but also the option to continue if the relationship continues to work and is beneficial for those involved.

Organizations have achieved success with a range of meeting frequencies. Some organizations have requirements that mentors and mentees meet two to three times per year, although four to five sessions is strongly recommended. Many organizations have even more stringent guidelines, requiring mentors and mentees to meet once per month, while others encourage weekly meetings. While the numbers may look different depending on the organization, 75 percent of top-level and 76 percent of midlevel HVAC/sheet metal executives responding to the Survey believe that clear guidelines about frequency of meetings are a critical part of a mentoring program. However, when the leaders whose organizations have a mentoring program were surveyed, 74 percent stated that there was no requirement in their program on the number of meetings. This more informal approach to mentoring may provide some benefit, but it is missing its true potential by having no requirements.

The more often meetings between mentors and mentees occur, the better for fostering healthy relationships and for returning greater results. Many successful mentoring programs have established baseline meeting requirements but find that the mentors and mentees meet much more frequently than is required.

Finding time to meet is one of the most challenging, yet critical, aspects of the mentoring program. In an industry that is very deadline driven, mentors and mentees will need to fight the urge to postpone meetings in favor of focusing on completing tasks and doing other work. While both parties obviously must continue to perform their jobs, mentoring will work only if it is a priority. A best practice for finding time together is to schedule meetings five or six months in advance. This allows both the mentor and the mentee to choose times that work for them and then commit to keeping that time free and focused on developing the mentoring relationship. Since the time spent together is critical for the process, the active listening training that both mentor and mentee receive prior to the beginning of the relationship is critical. The time set aside for the mentor and mentee to meet is such a small fraction of the entire time spent at work that it should be a focused process, devoid of interruptions and distractions.

7.3 Implementing the Mentoring Program

After the mentors and mentees complete the program's necessary training, the mentoring program can begin. During the first meeting between mentor and mentee, they should develop specific guidelines. The primary objective of the initial meeting is to establish a relationship between the mentor and mentee. If the two already work together, this will be easier. However, many pre-existing

The mentee should understand that the mentor keeps any conversations that take place during the mentoring process confidential.

relationships are very different from the mentoring partnership, so laying the foundation for future conversations will be a critical aspect of the early meetings.

The mentor needs to address the issue of confidentiality. The mentee should understand that the mentor keeps any conversations that take place during the mentoring process confidential. Mentoring works most effectively when open, honest conversations take place, and this will happen only if the mentee trusts that discussions around issues or concerns will go no further in the organization.

Mentors should also work with mentees to set specific goals and boundaries for the mentoring process. Mentees must identify the key areas of interest or objectives they have for the program—what is it that they want to achieve by the conclusion of the program? This should be as specific as possible to give both parties a clear goal against which to measure progress. In the Survey, 74 percent of top-level and midlevel executives believed clear objectives and goals would be necessary for the program to be successful in their organization. Unfortunately, 48 percent of respondents currently in a mentoring program stated that participants were not required to establish goals and objectives. While industry leaders recognize the importance of this, roughly half of the programs do not follow through with this belief. Having clear objectives and goals allows both the mentor and mentee to have a shared direction.

The mentor and mentee should also establish boundaries for the partnership, for example, not calling a mentor at home or late at night may be an established boundary. Finally, the mentor and mentee should set expectations together. Expectations can include meeting frequency, length of discussions, and what both parties expect to get out of the process. Mentoring works both ways. It benefits the mentor as well as the mentee, and both parties should openly discuss this.

Mentors should start the process with a list of objectives to achieve early on. Defining the goals and expectations ensures that the mentoring partnership begins with both parties in agreement and going in the same direction. The initial meetings are critical to the long-term success of the mentor/mentee partnership.

7.4 Monitoring the Mentoring Process

One of the major strengths of a formal mentoring program (as opposed to an informal one) involves the process of monitoring the mentoring program to ensure results. This process should monitor the progress the mentee makes toward his or her established goals. However, it is important to recognize that mentoring is not a cure-all process. A healthy mentoring relationship will definitely spur progress, and results should be visible, but this will occur at a realistic pace. Sudden, abrupt changes and instant fixes typically will not happen, and this needs to be acknowledged as expectations are established.

In the case example, it is not clear that anyone monitored the overall progress of the mentoring relationship except the mentor and

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mentee. It is possible that Greg, the supervisor, could see some change in the work and behaviors of Matt and may have had casual conversations with both Matt and Tony to see how things were going. If they were working for a large organization, it is easy to see how even casual process monitoring could get lost in the day-to-day concerns.

Many organizations establish internal checkpoints to monitor the mentees' progress. These internal checkpoints are typically face-to-face meetings between the mentees and the company sponsoring the mentoring program. Companies usually schedule these checkpoints every three to six months. However, there is flexibility in the frequency of these check-in meetings. Other organizations schedule ongoing evaluations every four to six weeks. Determining the frequency of these meetings depends on the needs and culture of each organization; but as a rule for a company starting a new mentoring program, it is better to evaluate the process more frequently, rather than less.

In addition to regular in-person meetings, many organizations schedule monthly or quarterly telephone interviews and surveys for both mentors and mentees. The phone call involves the individual(s) responsible for overseeing the mentoring program and each mentor and mentee. These short, 15- to 20- minute interviews or surveys intend to monitor the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship to see if both sides agree that progress is being made and that the relationship should continue.

The aforementioned in-person meetings, phone interviews, and surveys are intended to monitor progress and measure results. Typically, measuring progress occurs by asking for accountability from both mentor and mentee. This can involve asking the following questions:

- Have I been open and honest with my mentor/mentee?
- Have I devoted the necessary time to build the relationship with my mentor/mentee?
- Have I removed distractions during time with my mentor/mentee so that I am actively listening?
- Have I made the mentoring relationship a priority?

In addition to self-accountability, it is beneficial to ask mentees how they believe the mentoring process is working for them. Participant check-in is important to let mentees or mentors voice any concerns or frustrations with the process. This is especially important if there are less tangible, visible results from the process than expected. Mentoring takes time to generate results. So, as long as mentor and mentee both believe the process is working, the mentoring relationship should continue.

Measuring results is a critical piece of monitoring the mentoring process. According to the Survey, 78 percent of top-level executives and 74 percent of midlevel executives believe monitoring the progress of mentees would be a critical component of a mentoring program in their organization. While it is unrealistic to expect immediate results, the relationship should produce visible progress made on the part of both the mentee and the mentor. Questionnaires, performance assessments, and feedback from peers are ways to measure this. These methods should begin to show progress. If not, it may be an indicator that either the relationship or the process is not working effectively.

While progress should be visible several months into the process, many organizations realize it may take longer for concrete results to emerge. They schedule a 360-degree assessment for the mentee after one year of mentoring. This tool allows all those around a mentee—managers, peers and direct reports—to offer feedback on the progress and effort of the mentee. Many organizations use this metric to measure the effectiveness of the mentoring and to make changes for the future.

7.5 Evaluating the Mentoring Program

In addition to midcourse monitoring, organizations need to periodically perform a higher-level evaluation of the mentoring program to ensure the continued success of the program. While the monitoring discussed earlier focuses on the effectiveness of each individual mentor/mentee pair, the evaluation component involves looking at the mentoring program as a whole. Evaluation is a critical component that allows upper management to know how effective the program is and the changes needed, if any, to ensure that it delivers the maximum value to the organization.

In the case example, the evaluation of the process was likely very informal. The mentor and mentee seemed satisfied with the process, and the supervisor may have felt that the process worked. From the limited case information, how successful the process was or if there were significant problems is unknown. Such uncertainty leads many organizations to use qualitative tools for evaluation. These can include evaluation forms filled out by the mentor and mentee, questionnaires, verbal discussions with those involved, tracking increases in productivity, and employee feedback. In addition, some organizations use more quantitative measurements, including tracking turnover rates, employee satisfaction, the number of high-potential employees promoted, and increased skill levels. The most successful programs are evaluated both qualitatively and quantitatively.

While the best means of evaluating a mentoring program includes both qualitative and quantitative measurements, organizations starting a mentoring program for the first time would be wise not to overlook the qualitative aspects of the evaluation process. Upper management individually interviewing mentees can supply helpful, insightful feedback as to the merits of the mentoring program. This conversation will generally center on the following questions:

- What was your overall impression of the program?

Evaluation is a critical component that allows upper management to know how effective the program is and the changes needed, if any, to ensure that it delivers the maximum value to the organization.

- Was mentoring a positive or negative experience for you?
- What was the most beneficial aspect of the program?
- What was the most frustrating aspect of the program?
- Did your mentor support you? Did your manager support you?
- What changes or suggestions do you have for the program?
- Was the program well organized?
- Did you communicate effectively with your mentor?
- Did anything prevent you from achieving success in the program?

Organizations implementing first-time mentoring programs should leverage the best practices used and developed by other companies. However, each organization has a different culture, unique employees, and a different set of goals and needs for a mentoring program. For that reason, it is unlikely that the first iteration of a mentoring program will be the final one. Organizations need to commit to measuring and evaluating their program, collecting feedback from mentors and mentees, and then using that feedback to implement changes. What works for one company most likely will work for another, but there are no guarantees or magic formulas. An organization creating a mentoring program will need to continually modify and evolve the program based on its current and future needs.

7.6 Concluding the Mentoring Partnership

At the conclusion of the mentoring partnership, both parties need to identify the next steps. The mentee and mentor may choose to re-engage the partnership for an additional year. This is done when both parties feel the partnership is beneficial and will continue to add value to the mentee. This process of re-engaging the mentoring partnership can be repeated at the end of every year. Likewise, the mentor/mentee may also choose to end the partnership. Some mentees outgrow the usefulness of the mentoring partnership; others end the partnership for personal or other business-related reasons. Mentoring partnerships are designed to have an end date, so deciding not to continue in the partnership should not be viewed as negative.

The mentor and mentee should also be given an opportunity to give feedback on the program. This allows them to reflect on the experience and to identify the strengths of the program as well as the changes they would like to see. An organization's mentoring program will need to evolve over time to fit the continued and changing needs of the work force. Feedback from the mentors and mentees will help to refine the program to ensure that it is achieving the desired objectives.

The final step of the mentoring program is for the program coordinator to collect the feedback from all mentors and mentees. They should also identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program and make the

Mentoring partnerships are designed to have an end date, so deciding not to continue in the partnership should not be viewed as negative.

necessary adjustments to the structure or characteristics of the program. A mentoring program needs to be adaptable and flexible, and should be altered based on the feedback received from the participants.

8 CHALLENGES OF MENTORING

This section will explain

- **Specific challenges and misperceptions organizations face that are holding them back from creating a mentoring program**
- **What upper management's role is in dealing with mentoring challenges**
- **The most common reasons for failed mentoring relationships**

While mentoring can be a powerful, effective means of developing people throughout the organization, there are inherent challenges to overcome to realize the full potential of the program. In such a time-sensitive, deadline-driven industry, many organizations wrongly believe that mentoring takes too much time and will not work for them. While it is true that an effective mentoring relationship takes an investment of time and energy on the part of both the mentor and the mentee, the return on the investment for the organization is multiplied. Many different companies have successfully implemented mentoring programs, including organizations in the construction industry.

The initial perception of what it takes to run a successful mentoring program may be one of the largest barriers to organizations implementing such a program. In the Survey, respondents answered that the reason they did not currently have a mentoring program involved lack of clarity around what it would look like, concerns about employees making the necessary commitments, not having a coordinator for the program, and time and interest concerns. Interestingly, all respondents saw value in such a program for the HVAC/sheet metal industry. Once the need for mentoring programs is established, organizations must work to overcome the challenges inherent in creating such a program.

One of the larger challenges organizations face when instituting a formal mentoring program involves the question of who to include. While the most effective mentoring programs are selective in whom they choose to serve as mentors and mentees, this can be portrayed as elitist to those not selected for participation. Upper management needs to communicate the reasons behind selectively choosing mentors and mentees in order to prevent misunderstandings and ill feelings in the organization.

While excluding certain employees from the mentoring program may have some negative results, it is important that upper management communicate the reason for not being all-inclusive. First, most organizations have a limited number of experienced employees who would be strong mentors and are willing to devote the required time and energy. Second, as mentioned above, being chosen for mentoring should be seen as an honor, not a

> The best mentoring programs create a desire throughout the organization to work harder and smarter in an effort to be seen as having high potential and being selected for the mentoring program.

given. Considerate selection acts as a reward for those employees selected—they have high potentials and are possibly future leaders of the organization.

The best mentoring programs create a desire throughout the organization to work harder and smarter in an effort to be seen as having high potential and being selected for the mentoring program. While some employees may be discouraged at leaders overlooking them for the program, it will create an incentive for the more determined employees to improve their performance and earn selection as mentees.

Despite the best efforts of upper management, it is likely that certain mentor/mentee pairs will simply not work out. Identification of these pairs needs to happen as early as possible, so the situation can be remedied. If the problems that arose were due to a bad pairing, both the mentor and mentee should be assigned a different partner. If the behavior of one or the other suggests he or she will not be a good fit in his or her assigned role (i.e., the mentee clearly is not open to mentoring), he or she should be removed from the program and allowed to continue to operate in his or her regular position without any penalty.

The Survey asked what barriers are preventing a mentoring program from being implemented in the respondents' organizations. Varied responses were collected with the results shown in Exhibit 4 on the next page.

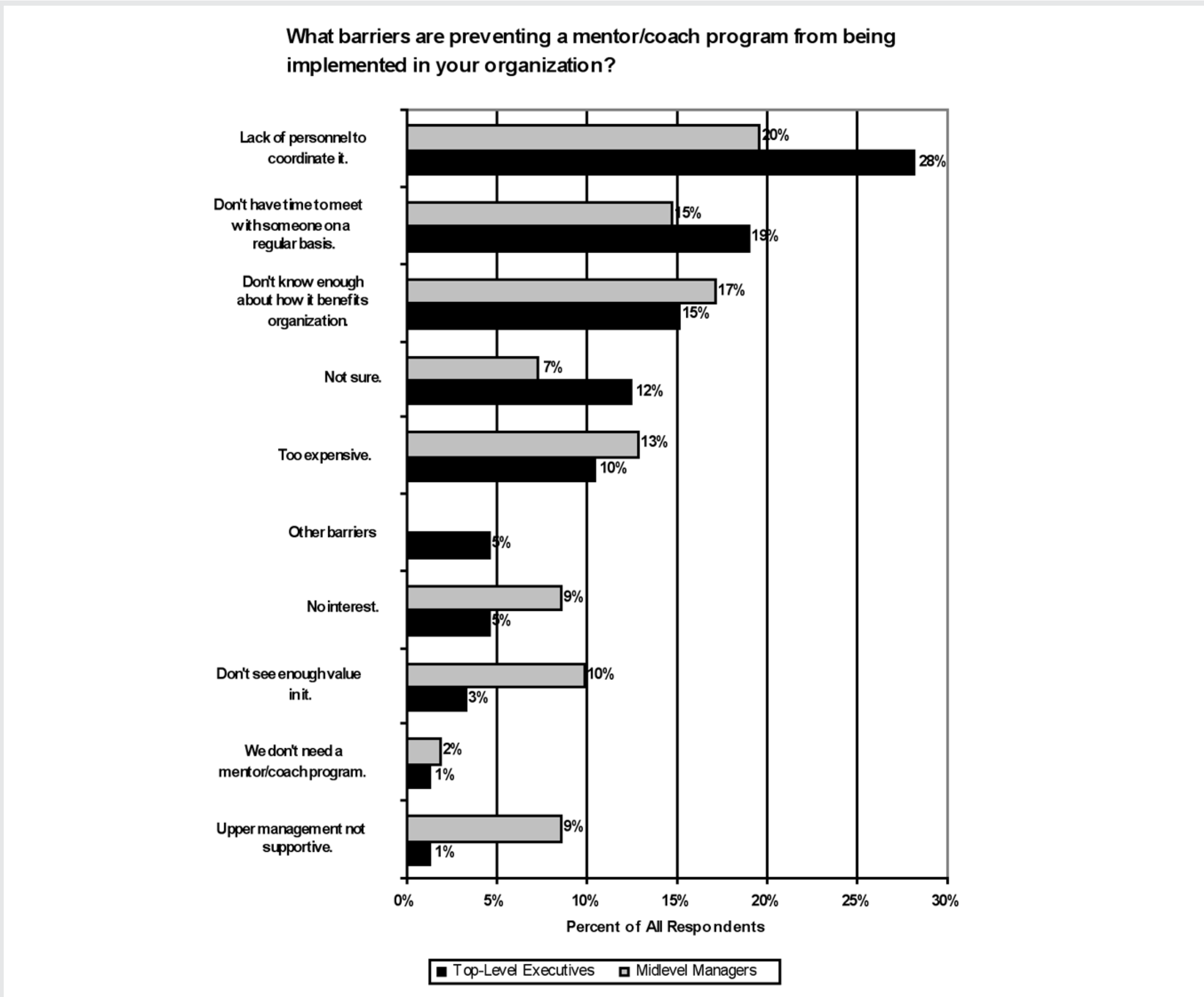

Exhibit 4: Barriers to Mentoring/Coaching Programs

Most respondents believed the organization lacked the personnel to coordinate the program. This is a commonly heard challenge to implementing a mentoring program. For the program to succeed, there needs to be a coordinator with responsibility for the success of the program. Many respondents also believed the time constraints of the process would be too constricting. Others thought the program would be too expensive or were unclear about how it would benefit the organization. Interestingly, the Survey showed that only 2 percent of midlevel executives and 1 percent of top-level executives believed their organization did not need such a program. This list is an appropriate look at some of the challenges organizations face in implementing a mentoring program. While responses are varied, few fail to recognize the importance mentoring can play in an organization's success.

In addition to program challenges, individual mentoring relationships can fail for a number of reasons. Some of the most common are as follows:

- Poor matching of mentor/mentee
- Mentor/mentees may have felt obligated or pressured to sign up

- Individuals never establish a strong relationship
- Time constraints prevent adequate time to mentor
- Relationships may feel forced or uncomfortable
- Mentors with low self-esteem or a negative outlook may not be a good fit
- Infrequent mentoring sessions can break down the relationship

If the pairing does not work out, then it is the responsibility of upper management in charge of the mentoring program to monitor and evaluate the reasons for the failure. A failed relationship does not necessarily mean the mentor or mentee is not fit for the role. There is no guarantee two people will work well together in this relationship even if all evidence suggests they would. Those beginning a mentoring program in their organization must keep this in mind and not let a failed relationship doom the entire mentoring program. However, it is important for upper management to understand the reasons for the failure and to determine whether it was simply a bad match, or if adjustments should occur to the mentoring program as a whole.

8.1 How to Create a Mentoring Program

The process of implementing a new mentoring program initially overwhelms some organizations. Creating a formal mentoring program is not a light undertaking, but it is a critical one to the long-term success of the organization. This section outlines the process for starting a mentoring program with specific questions to ask, best practices, and the order in which events should occur. Many organizations find following a detailed plan helpful as they work to create a mentoring program that will work for their culture and objectives. An organization desiring to create a mentoring program should adhere to the following steps:

Step 1. Perform an organizational analysis to determine the feasibility of a mentoring program.

- Will mentoring help achieve organizational objectives?
- Will mentoring work with the culture of the organization?
- Are employees open to serving as mentors and mentees?
- Does the organization have the necessary resources to start a program?
  - Buy-in from upper management
  - Executive sponsor willing to take ownership and responsibility for the mentoring program
  - Sufficient number of potential mentors
  - Employees willing to dedicate time to the program
  - Adequate financial resources
- Will the mentoring program be informal or formal?
  - Formal is recommended

A failed relationship does not necessarily mean the mentor or mentee is not fit for the role. There is no guarantee two people will work well together in this relationship even if all evidence suggests they would.

Step 2. Identify mentors and mentees.

- Is participation voluntary or mandatory?
  - Voluntary is recommended
- How many mentors are required?
  - Each mentor should have three to five mentees
- How many mentees will participate?
  - Should be a select number of employees who fit the right criteria
  - Should not be open to all employees
- Identifying mentors
  - Seniority in the organization
  - Able to draw upon knowledge and past experiences
  - Understand the culture of the organization
  - Know what it takes to be successful in the organization
  - Willing to serve as a mentor
  - Willing to commit the time and energy to serve as mentors
- Identifying mentees
  - High potentials, new employees, new hires from other industries, first-time supervisors, women, minorities
  - Desire to advance in their career
  - Willing to be a mentee
  - Willing to make the commitment to learn and develop as a result of mentoring

Step 3. Match mentors and mentees.

- Allow mentees to select three possible mentors
- Upper management assigns mentors and mentees based on
  - Personal values
  - Work ethic
  - Skills and experience
  - Career goals
  - Personality
  - Different departments, functions, work areas

Step 4. Train mentors and mentees.

- Mentor training
  - Clarification of roles
  - How to build a successful mentoring relationship
  - Qualities of an effective mentoring relationship
  - Active listening
  - Giving effective feedback
  - What mentors do and what mentors do not do
  - Program expectations
- Mentee training
  - Expected roles
  - Developmental objectives
  - Benefits of mentoring
  - Active listening

- Identifying potential challenges
- How to terminate the mentoring relationship
- What mentees do and what mentees do not do
- The four phases of mentoring
- Program expectations

Step 5. Determine frequency and duration of the mentoring program.

- Mentoring program should last one year
- Mentor and mentee should meet a minimum of four to five times per year, although more frequent meetings are encouraged

Step 6. Implement the mentoring program.

- Mentors and mentees can begin to meet and work on establishing a relationship. Initial meeting topics can include
  - Getting to know each other
  - Examining areas of strength
  - Exploring areas for development
  - Learning about personal history
  - Setting boundaries and barriers
- Mentors/mentees should set specific goals and expectations for the mentoring program. These may include one or more of the following topics:
  - Leadership
  - Strategic planning
  - Customer relations
  - Human resources
  - Operations
  - Information systems
  - Knowledge base for the HVAC and sheet metal industry
  - Business results

Step 7. Monitor the mentoring process.

- Establish checkpoints to monitor mentee progress
  - For the first quarter, monthly phone call check-ins to ensure that the mentor/mentee relationship is effective and healthy
  - Evaluations to track progress made by mentees—three months, six months, one year in
  - Mentees take a 360-degree assessment at the start of the program and another at the end of one year to monitor the progress

Step 8. Evaluate the mentoring program.

- Should be done quarterly, with a more extensive evaluation at the completion of one year
- Quantitative
  - Turnover rates
  - Employee satisfaction
  - The number of mentees promoted
  - Increased skill levels
  - Performance evaluations
- Qualitative
  - Evaluation forms
  - Feedback from mentor/mentee

Step 9. Conclude the mentoring partnership.

- Identify next steps at the conclusion of the mentoring partnership
- Choose to re-engage as mentor/mentee for one additional year (and continue the mentoring partnership)
- End mentor/mentee relationship
- Provide opportunities for mentors/mentees to give feedback and reflect back on the experience
- Submit final evaluations and make any necessary changes to the mentoring program for the next year

Example Case 2
Coaching: The CEO of the Future

Joe is a 45-year-old vice president of a midsized HVAC construction company. He has worked for the company for the last 20 years achieving a great deal of success in his career. He is known as an expert in the company in both operational and strategic matters. The CEO, age 66, has been thinking about retiring and has identified Joe as one of his possible successors. However, one big issue has been holding Joe back. Throughout his career, Joe has had a tendency to play his cards close to his vest. He refuses to share information unless it is on a must-know basis. Others in the organization see him as being untrusting and lacking in communication skills. Many of his peers and direct reports have expressed frustration about being kept in the dark on certain issues.

Over time, Joe has become aware that others think these things about him, but he shrugs it off as just office talk. But now that he has learned he is being considered for the CEO position, he is concerned that these perceptions might keep him from a promotion that he has been working for his whole career. However, he did not know how to address the issue. He could not just come out and tell people they were wrong about him, could he? When the CEO suggested that he should work with an executive coach, Joe jumped at the opportunity, and the CEO gave him a firm to contact.

After discussion with the coaching firm, Joe decided to work with Adam, an experienced executive coach. Adam coached many clients in different industries, but he had spent most of the last decade working exclusively with construction industry leaders. Joe felt that Adam's experience and industry knowledge were a good fit, and he genuinely enjoyed talking to Adam. Although he was not yet certain about what he had signed on for, Joe was cautiously optimistic about the process.

Joe and Adam set up regular meeting times and identified specific goals for the coaching sessions. Joe wanted to change the perception that he lacked communication skills and gain the trust of his co-workers. With each coaching session, Joe's personal challenges became clearer. While at first he believed others simply did not understand him, he soon realized that he was contributing to their negative views. He began to understand how others felt about his tendency to keep important information to himself until it was necessary to share it with others. Joe had learned to like being seen as an expert who knew things others did not. In fact, he had always thought this was beneficial to his career, not a characteristic that would hold him back. With this problem area identified, Adam coached Joe on ways to build a path forward.

Joe came to realize that sharing information was the true mark of an expert who achieved the added benefit of helping others better understand their own work. Ultimately, withholding information had made Joe look shifty, secretive, and distrustful. Joe knew these weren't good qualities for the future CEO. He went to work on changing his behaviors. While it was not easy, he made a concentrated effort to include more people in decisions, to keep others informed and to show that he trusted those around him. As part of his coaching, he listed the tasks he currently performed that could be delegated to others. This would further show that he trusted those around him enough to give them more responsibility.

Example Case 2, continued

Working with Adam, Joe identified that he needed to encourage those around him to give him feedback on how he was doing. That way, if he began to revert to his old behaviors, he had several trusted peers who would let him know he was not being open enough with information.

After six months of coaching, Joe saw big changes in how others perceived him. However, he knew that the problem had not been completely solved and found other things that he could improve that would make him a better future CEO. Adam acted as a sounding board when difficult situations arose. Joe quickly became the leading candidate to replace the current CEO, and a year later, when the CEO did indeed decide to retire, Joe was chosen to take his place.

9 COACHING

This section will explain

- **The different types of coaches that exist for different personal needs**
- **Why executive coaching is the best coaching option for many organizations in the construction industry**

Organizations interested in coaching for key leaders have to navigate a wide variety of different types of coaches. Today, there are "life" or "personal" coaches, career coaches, financial coaches, health and nutrition coaches, fitness coaches, and many more. Each of these coaches specializes in a different field. For example, a personal coach may help resolve behavioral, spiritual, or lifestyle issues. A career coach may help with a career change or career advancement. The specific needs of the individual will dictate the type of coach needed. Roughly half of all coaching is performed for life, vision, and personal enhancement, while the other half focuses on business, organizational, executive, and leadership aspects.[14] With so many options, it can be difficult to know the right type of coach not to only get the desired outcome for the individual, but also to achieve business results for the organization.

Some organizations believe coaching is something that all of its employees can do for each other. In many instances, a more experienced employee will be told to "coach" a less experienced one. This can often include acting as a role model; creating opportunities for challenging stretch goals for the younger employee; delegating challenging tasks; and encouraging, motivating, and inspiring workers.[15] Although these behaviors are crucial and should be encouraged in all leaders, it would be a mistake for an organization to think this level of coaching is the most effective means of developing individual leaders and helping them to achieve bottom-line business results.

However, there are benefits to this peer coaching approach. In the Survey, 81 percent of top-level executives and 53 percent of midlevel executives rated their time as coaches as either "excellent" or "enjoyable." (See Exhibit 5.) This suggests that a number of individuals are open to the concept of coaching. Some organizations have found

> Often, peer coaches are given responsibilities without being given the necessary training. While peer-centered learning is encouraged if it meets the objectives of the organization, this type of learning should not be considered true "coaching."

some success with peer-centered coaching as a leadership development tool. While this is active learning, it is not the same as executive coaching. This often involves monthly training sessions where participants design and implement capacity-building projects focused on critical issues in their organization.[16] In a recent study, only 32 percent of respondents considered peer-centered coaching to be "very effective" or "extremely effective" because of the high variability of quality.[17] Often, peer coaches are given responsibilities without being given the necessary training. While peer-centered learning is encouraged if it meets the objectives of the organization, this type of learning should not be considered true "executive coaching."

For organizations in the construction industry, one specific type of coach helps professionals produce business results—the executive coach. While there are tremendous benefits of executive coaching, the main distinction of executive coaching is that it helps clients achieve bottom-line business results.[18] Many leaders throughout the construction industry have used executive coaching to help achieve individual and business objectives that support the long-term vision and goals of the organization. Executive coaching is not a "rehabilitative" process, but one used to further develop leaders.

Exhibit 5: Coaching Experience

9.1 Executive Coaching

As noted above, executive coaching is defined as a one-on-one collaborative relationship between a paid professional coach and client that is focused on equipping the client to more fully develop himself or herself and to facilitate a shift in his or her knowledge and behavior.

Executive coaching seeks to achieve visible results. It is a confidential, individually tailored engagement designed to meet the needs of both the leader being coached and the organization paying for the service.[19] Executive coaching is a powerful process because of the relationship created between the coach and client. In a trusting relationship with good rapport between the coach and client, the client generally feels comfortable discussing strengths and weaknesses while working towards improving his or her knowledge and self-awareness. The ultimate goal is for the client to change his or her mind-set and behavior. This process creates powerful results for individuals who are open to change.

In the second example case, others recognized that Joe had some apparent issues centered around trust and communications. Joe was mostly oblivious to these issues until it was clear that he might have some behaviors that needed to be changed before he could become the next CEO. Fortunately, the current CEO understood these challenges and wanted to help. Importantly, Joe was open to looking more closely at his weaknesses and ready to make changes.

Leaders in the industry unfamiliar with executive coaching may think back to experiences they have had with coaches, most likely, a sports team coach. While there are some similarities, executive coaching is fundamentally different from other types of coaching. Executive coaching takes a unique approach—assuming an equal relationship between the executive and the coach, with the aim of helping the client to discover his or her own path toward optimal performance in an organizational context. Many other coaches take a different approach—the "expert" approach, telling the client what he or she should do, because the coach is the expert. However, coaching that takes the perspective of a relationship built on equality is much more likely to create trust and the perception of confidentiality in the professional relationship. Coaching is not a process by which the coach "tells" the client what do to, but one where the coach helps the client discover the answers for himself or herself. For example, instead of a coach telling a client the five keys to delegating, the coach helps the client uncover the way his or her views and attitudes prevent him or her from delegating effectively. This approach is much more effective and longer lasting.

Another important distinction between executive coaching and other forms of coaching is the focus on the organization in addition to the individual. Involving management in goal setting improves alignment between the client and the organizational value system. Coaching does not exist in a vacuum; it takes into consideration the specific values and culture of the organization while using specific goals to guide the process. These goals are determined by both the client and upper management. Evidence suggests a willingness

Coaching that takes the perspective of a relationship built on equality is much more likely to create trust and the perception of confidentiality in the professional relationship.

to implement executive coaching in the HVAC/sheet metal industry. The Survey of industry leaders found that 80 percent of top-level and midlevel executives thought such a program would be beneficial for their organization.

9.2 Purpose of Executive Coaching

What would have happened if, using the example above, Joe were not interested in addressing his issues and making the necessary change to improve? For one thing, the CEO who was late in the game planning for his reluctant retirement might find that he had no good successors prepared to take his place. Likely, he had assumed Joe would be ready to take over when the time came to retire. But if he didn't have any other good candidates, would he be ready to trust the fortunes of his family and his company with someone whom others found it difficult to trust?

Executive coaching can help to create sustainable leadership growth and development. For instance, in FMI's recent study for the New Horizons Foundation on Exit Strategies for HVAC/Sheet Metal Contractors, it was found that 64 percent of the owners in the industry were older than 50, and 38 percent of that group plan to sell all the stock in their company in the next five years.[20] Many organizations throughout the industry struggle with leadership succession and filling their pipeline with enough effective leaders to adequately run the business today and into the future. Executive coaching is a powerful process not to only help leaders develop greater self-awareness, but also to put a plan in place to leverage their strengths and improve areas needing development. Leadership can often be a lonely position; leaders are less likely to have someone who is willing to give them honest, specific feedback. An executive coach comes alongside the leader and helps guide the leader as he or she works through the issues and challenges that come with being a leader in such a fast-moving industry.

While coaching relationships may focus on improving weaker areas of the client, the primary focus of executive coaching is not to "fix" problem behaviors but to enhance the performance of valued leaders in the organization.[21] Executive coaching should not be seen as a punishment or a last resort for "problem" employees. Coaching helps leaders work on areas in which they need to develop and should be seen as an honor, not a penalty. Coaches are an essential part of the leader's learning process, not a quick fix for difficult employees.[22]

There are many reasons why an executive coach is engaged. According to a study by the *Harvard Business Review*, the top three reasons are

1. To develop a high-potential employee or facilitate a leadership transition (48 percent)
2. To act as a sounding board (26 percent)
3. To address derailing behavior (12 percent)[23]

As in the second case example, most of the time, executive coaches are used to develop high-potential employees or to help employees

Leadership can often be a lonely position—leaders are less likely to have someone who is willing to give them honest, specific feedback. An executive coach comes alongside the leader and helps guide the leader as he or she works through the issues and challenges that come with being a leader in such a fast-moving industry.

When a leader switched from one position to another, it is usually difficult to let go of what allowed the leader to be successful in his or her former position and adopt different behaviors that better fit his or her new position.

make a transition from one position to another. Coaching is invaluable to employees who have already achieved some success in the organization and want to continue to learn and grow. These employees are often ambitious and open to coaching. In the case example, it does not appear that Joe meant to be distrusting and secretive. Rather, is appears he had simply formed some work behaviors that he thought were part of his personal success. In order to achieve his goals, it was important that Joe come to realize what others thought of him and, with the help of his coach, develop ways to make permanent changes in the way he worked and looked at his relationships with others. Employees making a transition to a leadership position in their organization are prime candidates for coaching. When a leader switches from one position to another, it is usually difficult to let go of what allowed the leader to be successful in his or her former position and adopt different behaviors that better fit his or her new position. Many employees stumble when they make transitions—especially if the transition involves taking on management and leadership responsibilities for the first time. As individuals move up in an organization, they need new skills—the ability to create a vision, set direction, delegate, develop talent, and align resources. Employees in these situations benefit greatly from a coach who can help them as they work through these periods of transition.

Many leaders engage an external executive coach for the purpose of acting as a sounding board. Frequently, leaders find it difficult to find the right people inside the organization with whom they can speak frankly about ideas, strategies, concerns, or problems. Executive coaches often work with clients who simply need someone outside the organization with whom to engage in pointed conversation. Whether the conversation involves weighing the different options of a difficult decision, making hard personnel decisions, or simply obtaining a unique viewpoint on a particular issue, having a coach external to the business is often of extreme value to a leader.

Some organizations will also engage an executive coach to address derailing behavior. This approach is typically used when an employee is a high performer and possibly a high-potential employee but has one or more particular behaviors that are holding him or her back. Often, leaders achieve a great deal of success because of the specific behaviors, attitudes, and values that they hold. However, sometimes their strengths can also turn into weaknesses. For example, a leader with an incredibly strong work ethic is a great benefit to the organization. If this work ethic leads him or her to create an unhealthy balance between life and work, threatening burnout, that strength can also be preventing him or her from reaching peak potential. Executive coaching would be a valuable option in this situation.

While there are countless reasons why an organization would need to engage an executive coach for one or more of its leaders, there are specific objectives that many clients hope to achieve during the coaching process. Although this is not an exhaustive list, many organizations use executive coaching for the following reasons:

- Personalized leader development
- Improve communication skills
- Talent development
- Managing different generations
- Succession planning
- Team building
- Achieving strategic goals
- Work/life balance
- Derailment issues
- Stress management
- High-potential employee development
- Behavioral issues
- Self-esteem/self-confidence
- Delegation
- Tension between the organization and the leader
- Leader unwilling to look inward

Executive coaching is a worthwhile tool for companies to use because it is immediately customizable to the specific needs of the individual and the organization. No two coaching relationships are the same because the executive coach tailors the conversations and the focus to fit the specific needs and desires of the individual. In addition, each organization has its own unique culture—strengths as well as challenges—that will change the focus of the coaching process. Executive coaches who have been trained and certified are able to shift their process to fit the situation. For this reason, many organizations across all industries have found executive coaching to be a valuable tool in their own leadership development efforts.

While some organizations in the HVAC/sheet metal industry have instituted executive coaching, many more industry leaders would like to participate as well. The Survey found that 88 percent of top-level and 87 percent of midlevel leaders responded that they would "yes, definitely" or "yes, possibly" participate in such a program. The survey results are clear that leaders in the industry see the need and the benefits of executive coaching.

9.3 Benefits of Executive Coaching

The benefits of executive coaching are numerous and have been supported in various surveys and studies. Executive coaching increases the awareness of the client's leadership and management style as well as his or her strengths and weaknesses. Very seldom do leaders have the opportunity to think critically about their own leadership style and explore ways to shift their behavior to create a greater impact. Coaching gives those leaders that rare chance to do so. It also creates a higher degree of commitment to improve in the areas identified for development. While leaders may often commit to making changes, it helps immensely to have an executive coach serving as an accountability partner to ensure that those changes are made.

Executive coaching has been shown to have a positive, visible impact on the clients and the organization. Coaching can be expected to

- Improve management performance
- Help executives manage business complexity
- Accelerate leadership development
- Replace in-house mentors who also perform the coaching function[24]

In addition, many of the most significant business-related benefits of coaching include

- Providing clients with an objective and confidential ear
- Offering a time and place to reflect on work
- Helping in problem solving and accountability
- Providing an opportunity for assistance with managing work/life balance issues
- Increasing job satisfaction
- Furthering the organization's mission by identifying resources that could be better leveraged
- Enhancing application of learning from training[25]

Coaching is a powerful process that benefits both the individual and the organization. Clients often gain greater self-esteem and self-confidence in their abilities as leaders. They are able to build healthier relationships and improve their ability to communicate and to work smarter and more efficiently than before.[26] However, it should be noted that not every client will see the full extent of these benefits. Coaching requires an investment of time and effort and a willingness to be open and honest about developmental areas. Clients who are closed off or unwilling to invest fully in the coaching process will see diminished returns.

9.4 Internal Executive Coaching

Some organizations have an internal executive coach—an in-house resource employed by the company—dedicated to providing executive coaching to employees throughout the organization. However, there are a number of limitations in pursuing this form of executive coaching. Internal coaching requires a heavy investment of resources, capacity, and training. Executive coaches should be certified, which is a costly and time-consuming process. Internal executive coaches should also not split their time between executive coaching and what some might perceive as their "real" job. Employees who are "part-time" executive coaches are rarely effective, because the demands and needs of their primary responsibility are very often overwhelming, and coaching quickly falls to the wayside. While it is true that an internal executive coach knows the company culture, the client may be more reluctant to full self-disclose out of fear that it may negatively affect his or her career path, even in spite of the confidentiality agreement. In addition, internal coaches could potentially have biases toward fellow employees, which would present even greater challenges to the coaching process. Few organizations in the HVAC/sheet metal industry have the resources to keep a full-time, internal executive coach on staff. Therefore, organizations needing executive coaching are highly encouraged to seek external executive coaching.

9.5 External Executive Coaching

External executive coaching occurs when an organization partners with an external coach or coaching organization to provide one or more leaders with coaching. The coaching process does not necessarily rely on the coach's experience of being in the same industry or profession, although knowledge of the industry will be a large advantage. Instead, the coach guides the client on a unique path in order to help the client meet his or her goals and objectives.[27] There are many benefits of having an external coach—an increased sense of confidentiality, having a different and unique perspective, ensuring the coach has been professionally certified, and working with someone whose chief responsibility is coaching others. In the example case, it

The coaching process does not necessarily rely on the coach's experience of being in the same industry or profession, although knowledge of the industry will be a large advantage.

is unlikely that Joe could have opened up confidentially with anyone inside his company acting as his coach. If he was secretive and had difficulties with communication, speaking with anyone within the company would likely be guarded. Fortunately, with the blessing and encouragement of his CEO, he found an executive coach who was a good match and started open communications.

In external executive coaching, three parties are involved: the coach, the client, and the sponsor. (Frequently, the human resources director or manager represents the sponsor in larger firms).[28] It is critical for senior management to be involved and invested in the engagement. Coaching should be a part of a larger leadership development effort, one that takes into consideration not only the needs of the individual but also the needs of the organization while aligning with the company vision and strategic direction. For this reason, a representative from upper management should be involved in the process. In addition, it will be beneficial for the sponsor to communicate information about the systems and culture of the organization to determine the depth and duration of change in the coaching process.[29] This will ensure that the coach can deliver targeted coaching to maximize the use of the client's time. It is recommended that HVAC/sheet metal firms interested in coaching look externally for certified executive coaches.

10 EXECUTIVE COACHING REQUISITES FOR SUCCESS

This section will explain the requisites for success

- **Clear internal communication**
- **Coachable leader**
- **Good chemistry between coach and client**
- **Support from top management**

Communication between the manager and the potential client is critical. In many situations, a potential client is recommended for coaching by someone else in the organization, typically the client's manager. The manager must communicate why coaching will be beneficial for the individual as well as for the organization. If the client does not clearly understand the reasons behind the coaching, he or she may misinterpret coaching as a sign that he or she is underperforming or not valued by the company.

The client needs to understand that coaching is a positive undertaking—that the organization would not invest the time or funds for coaching unless it saw great potential. When a new client understands this, he or she typically approaches coaching in a much more enthusiastic manner, which gives the engagement a strong foundation upon which to build success.

Coaching should be a voluntary choice. Leaders should not be forced into having a coach, as their initial unwillingness will likely create greater challenges for the coaching process to generate positive returns. According to the Survey, 60 percent of top-level executives and 43 percent of midlevel executives believed a voluntary program would be more successful than a mandatory program in their organization.

In the case example, the CEO did not make it mandatory that Joe see an executive coach, although he was encouraged to do so. If Joe was not ready to work on his own improvement, there would have been no point in engaging a coach. At the same time, it was important that Joe come to his own realization that he had areas to work on. If the coach or anyone else had said, "Joe, you need to stop being secretive and communicate better," Joe might have been resistant and would never have truly understood what was at the root of his problems.

Typically, those ready to be coached should be highly motivated and prepared to make necessary changes in their thinking and behavior to improve their results. Clients must also enter into the relationship understanding that they are responsible for creating their own results.[30] Some leaders enter into executive coaching expecting the coach to give answers and solve their problems. These unrealistic and misguided expectations typically end in disappointment. Executive coaches help their clients discover the right answers and insights themselves; they will not solve issues for the client.

An individual needs to have a general idea of what he or she wants to accomplish with an executive coach.[31] Clients need to know what their individual goals are for the coaching sessions.

After initial conversations with their sponsor and coach, they need to know how those individual goals align with the overarching organizational objectives. Without a clear goal in mind, it will be difficult to ensure progress.

Leaders must be willing to devote the necessary time and energy to the developmental process. This involves setting aside time to meet with the coach and making time to work on any assignments the coach may recommend between sessions.[32] Coaching sessions need to be focused, uninterrupted time to work on making progress on the client's goals.

Leaders with significant character flaws or deep-seated behavioral problems are poor coaching candidates.[33] Coaching is a process whereby the client must be willing to look inward and examine the internal views, attitudes, values, and beliefs that may be preventing him or her from reaching his or her full potential. For this reason, people with deep resentment, severe narcissism, ironclad beliefs, or a victim mentality are unlikely to benefit from coaching.[34] It is critical to identify the good candidates at the outset to ensure that departmental resources are properly used. If an individual is unwilling to examine his or her behaviors and actions and is not open to making changes, the benefits from executive coaching will be minimal.

While some employees will be unwilling to be coached, many employees are coachable. Some of the major characteristics of coachable leaders are as follows:

- Change readiness
- Active engagement
- Clear goals
- Emotional intelligence
- Courage

- Sense of psychological safety
- Humility
- Ambition[35]

These characteristics are not a checklist for potential clients, where one missed characteristic would automatically result in disqualification from executive coaching. However, the more of these characteristics an individual possesses, the greater the likelihood of the coaching process delivering positive results.

The coach and client need to have good chemistry. Both the coach and client are human beings, with their own beliefs, values, attitudes, thoughts, and characteristics. Ideally, the coach and client will match up well and establish a sound partnership. However, there are times when the coach and client do not align based on one of the above traits. Both the coach and client must be able to terminate the coaching relationship at any time and the client assigned a different executive coach with whom he or she more closely aligns.

There needs to be a strong commitment from top management to develop the client. Coaching is an intense process that takes an investment of time from the client. For this reason, the client's managers need to be aware of the time requirements and support the client's time investment. Top management should work to give supporting, positive feedback to the client and remove obstacles that would prevent the client from implementing his or her coaching plan. In organizations without commitment from top management, many clients have felt like their managers have either not understood or did not support them taking the time during the day for coaching. These clients in turn must deal with added frustration and the lack of support, which tends to make coaching more difficult. It is no surprise that these unsupported clients tend to see minimal returns from coaching.

There are additional reasons why support from top management is critical for successful coaching. External coaching requires a monetary investment, so top management needs to support the organization using resources in that manner. Clients who have gone through the executive coaching process have seen returns many times higher than the initial investment, but they should not have to continually defend the use of organizational resources in that way. The primary responsibility of the client should be to use his or her coaching to leverage his or her strengths and improve in developmental areas—not to defend himself or herself against his or her managers.

Finally, leaders going through the executive coaching process focus intently on making changes to their thoughts, actions, behaviors, and beliefs. This is not an easy process, and it helps immensely to have top management recognize, accept, and support those changes in the client. The changes made are often part of a gradual process, so it may not be immediately clear to the client the extent of

It greatly helps to have the client's managers supporting those behavioral changes and encouraging him or her to continue to improve in those developmental areas. While coaching occurs between the coach and the client, the greatest returns on investment occur when the client's managers are also involved as supporting, encouraging members.

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11 EXECUTIVE COACHING BEST PRACTICES

This section will explain the following best practices

- **The importance of confidentiality in coaching**
- **Informing managers/sponsors of coaching progress**
- **Ensuring quality of executive coaches**
- **Frequency and duration of the engagement**
- **Effective coach selection**
- **Creating a coaching development plan**
- **Measuring executive coaching effectiveness**
- **Cadre coaching**

Organizations looking externally to find executive coaches will meet with a wide variety of different coaches with different backgrounds, skill sets, and experiences. Often, this search can be bewildering, as the organization attempts to find the right coaches for its particular needs and goals. Organizations interested in taking on coaches for their leaders would do well to use the following best practices as a guideline when searching for executive coaches.

A critical aspect of executive coaching is confidentiality. Coaching sessions must be completely confidential. This allows the client the freedom to speak more candidly and, in turn, gives the coach more information with which to help the client. Executive coaches should hold confidentiality in the strictest regard. Coaching where confidentiality is not clearly adhered to is often very ineffective. The client will not openly discuss the issues with true honesty, instead choosing to sidestep or deny the root of the problem. External executive coaches must hold confidentiality as a cornerstone of their executive coaching practice.

Organizations looking to engage executive coaches for their leaders also need to have a system in place to ensure that the client's manager or the coaching sponsor is informed of the progress being made by the client. This is important so that the manager understands what the client is working on and can provide outside feedback in the areas of development. With the strict confidentiality inherent in executive coaching, this informing process needs to be intentionally planned at the beginning and openly communicated to those involved.

Coaching where confidentiality is not clearly adhered to is often very ineffective. The client will not openly discuss the issues with true honesty, instead choosing to sidestep or deny the root of the problem.

Organizations have three main options when examining ways to keep the client's managers involved and informed of progress made. There are three levels of options, from the most basic to the most involved. The option chosen will depend on the individuals involved and their level of comfort with information about the coaching process being shared with others. While the most involved option is the best practice and the ideal choice, organizations can choose between any of the following three:

- **Option 1** involves the coach sending a short update to the manager, informing him or her of the number of coaching sessions completed and the level of engagement on the part of the client.
- **Option 2** involves the coach providing the manager a short written update on some of the areas the client is working on and a high-level view of the progress made.
- **Option 3** involves the client and his or her manager directly communicating about the progress being made either in a phone conversation or face to face.

The most basic option is also the least recommended. In this scenario, every two months the coach would provide the manager with basic information about the progress made during coaching. The coach would provide the number of sessions completed and a very high-level ranking of the client's engagement level. This can range from "very disengaged" to "disengaged" to "engaged" to "very engaged." The ranking simply lets the sponsor or manager know whether or not the client is invested in the process and spending the necessary time to make executive coaching worthwhile. For example, an update that outlines only one coaching session having taken place over a two-month time period with the client very disengaged during the process lets the manager know that there is an issue that needs to be addressed. This allows the coaching process to be examined and potential issues to be resolved early in the engagement.

The second option includes more detail as to the progress made on the part of the client. This usually involves a short, higher-level description detailing the client's progress. This short paragraph would typically include some of the goals or action items the coach and client have discussed. To protect the strict confidentiality of executive coaching, the coach needs to show the client this update before sending it to the client's manager. The client would then have the option to approve or disapprove of any information contained in the update. This ensures that only what the client feels comfortable sharing is sent to the manager. This is a more detailed option than the previous one, as the coach and client can share some of the specific action items that have come out of the coaching process. This option allows the client's manager to be more informed and involved in support of the client.

The final option is the best practice. This involves the client and manager/sponsor having a short discussion every two months about the progress made during the coaching engagement. This option allows the client to talk directly about the progress and build the relationship with his or her manager. This conversation would involve discussing the specific goals and action items emerging from the coaching and allow the client and manager to engage in discussions about the value, challenges, and progress made during executive coaching. In most cases, this option does not involve the coach directly except to help the client prepare for the meeting. On some occasions, a client will not feel completely comfortable meeting with his or her manager one-on-one to discuss coaching. In this situation, the executive coach could be asked to facilitate that meeting.

This third option is considered the best method for keeping the client's manager informed, because it is the only one that involves direct communication between the two parties. This does require that the client is willing to be open and honest about what issues and development areas have come out of his or her executive coaching. In situations where the client feels less comfortable, the other two options could work as well. However, it is important that the manager stays informed of the client's progress on some level.

When organizations look externally to hire an executive coach, they need to ensure that the coaches hired have a track record of successful coaching engagements and that they are properly trained. Organizations should ensure that the executive coaches they hire have a certification from an accredited coaching program. While there are various types of certification, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) is the leading global organization dedicated to advancing the coaching profession by setting high standards, providing independent certification and building a network of credentialed coaches. Companies should look for coaches who have a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) or Master Certified Coach (MCC) credential from the ICF or an equivalent certification from an accredited coach training school. These certifications are important, because they help differentiate trained, professional executive coaches from other types of coaches selling their services. There is typically not a requirement for someone to call himself or herself a "coach," so being sure the executive coach is trained and certified will increase the chances that an organization will get the best coach for its needs.

Organizations should also look for an executive coach who has prior experience coaching in a similar setting or firsthand knowledge and background in the construction industry. While executive coaching applies similar principles regardless of industry, it is most beneficial to have coaches who have some experience working in the industry and who understand the unique challenges and issues facing construction leaders.

Finally, the executive coach should use proven coaching methods. Although this is not a comprehensive list, many of the following methods, designated as core competencies by the ICF,[36] should be used by the coach:

- Setting goals
- Actively listening
- Creating awareness
- Communicating directly with the client
- Challenging the leader with powerful questions
- Asking the client for commitments
- Designing action items
- Managing progress and accountability

Executive coaches, regardless of their background, should use all these competencies in some variation in their coaching process. These methods have been proven and tested with thousands of clients and have shown

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to be the most effective means of coaching individual leaders.

Organizations need to ensure that the executive coach adheres to a code of ethics for his or her coaching. While codes of ethics may vary, many executive coaches follow one similar to the ICF's Code of Ethics. The ICF Code of Ethics contains 25 statements that govern the behavior of executive coaches to ensure that they always act in an ethical manner.

These statements are important to serve as a guide for coaches and their behavior. For example, "I will be aware of any issues that may potentially lead to the misuse of my influence by recognizing the nature of coaching and the way in which it may affect the lives of others." This statement acknowledges the influence that a coach can have on an individual leader and helps ensure that the influence is always used in a positive, helpful way for the client. Likewise, another statement reads, "Whenever any actual conflict of interest or the potential for a conflict of interest arises, I will openly disclose it and fully discuss with my client how to deal with it in whatever way best serves my clients." Again, this acts as a guideline for the coach's behavior, ensuring that the good of the client is put before any personal agenda or gain.

Certified executive coaches take the responsibility of their position seriously and will adhere to a code of ethics to help govern their behavior. Organizations looking to hire an executive coach would do well to ensure that he or she follows a code of ethics and can provide documentation as to what is included in that code.

Executive coaches should have a set of attributes that allows them to be successful in coaching. Organizations should look for the following attributes:

1. Personal compatibility
2. Personal rapport
3. Effectiveness of coaching process
4. Confidence[37]

Coaching requires personal compatibility between the client and the coach. Not every coach will be compatible with every prospective client. The better the compatibility at the outset, the better the result. Coaches also need to have personal rapport with the client; the relationship should be an open, trusting one. Relationship issues between the two parties will seriously limit the effectiveness of the coaching engagement. Coaches also need to have an effective coaching process. While every coaching engagement will look different depending on the client's situation and challenges, coaches should have a set process in place and be able to communicate how their process works. This foundation ensures that the process moves smoothly, while coaches are able to make changes and adapt to fit the specific situation. Finally, coaches need to have confidence, both in themselves as executive coaches and in their own coaching process. Coaching is not easy or simple, so having experienced, confident coaches is essential to its success.

Coaching frequency and duration must be established. Coaching engagements should last between 6 and 12 months, with approximately two 1-hour sessions each month. There should

Not every coach will be compatible with every prospective client. The better the compatibility at the outset, the better the result.

be enough time between sessions for the client to work on action items that the coach may suggest. These action items may include

- Reading suggested articles or books
- Keeping a journal
- Developing a personal mission statement
- Creating a development plan
- Setting aside time for creating a vision or strategy
- Prioritizing values
- Meeting with a direct report or manager for a specific purpose

These action items are examples of what a coach may recommend a client do between coaching sessions to progress toward the goals discussed in the coaching session. The bimonthly coaching sessions need to be spread apart so that the client has adequate time to work on these action items.

While duration will depend on the specific organization and the needs of its leaders, many executive coaches follow certain best practices. It is recommended that clients start with six months of coaching (two 1-hour sessions each month). This allows the coach and the client enough time to begin to build a trusting, open relationship and to see progress made on the client's goals and development areas. If, at the end of that period, there are more issues that can be addressed, it is recommended that the coaching relationship continue for another six-month period. This second set of six months would function similarly to the first with two 1-hour sessions each month. If the client wants to continue the coaching partnership after the second set of six months, the engagement can continue for six additional months, but it should be scaled back to only one 1-hour session each month. While the numbers may look different depending on the organization, 75 percent of top-level and 76 percent of midlevel executives believe clear guidelines about frequency and duration are a critical part of executive coaching. However, when leaders whose organizations implement executive coaching were surveyed, 74 percent stated that their organization had no requirement for the number of meetings.

On some occasions, clients with the same coach for longer than two years can become overly dependent upon the coach. While this is not the case for all coaching partnerships, it is a legitimate concern to consider. Coaching engagements will vary in length depending on the needs and goals of the client but are typically scaled back after the first year.

When selecting an executive coach, organizations should allow the client some freedom in choosing who will coach him or her. Many organizations give the client the opportunity to choose between two to five qualified coaches. This gives the client more ownership and buy-in to the process, rather than having a coach assigned to him or her. As has been mentioned, compatibility and rapport are two of the most critical elements for a coaching partnership to be successful. It is significantly more difficult to establish a strong relationship when a coach has been assigned without any input from the client.

The client should be provided both the coach's biography and resume to give him or her an opportunity to review the coach's credentials and experience. However, asking a client to select a coach based purely on written documents is not ideal. The client should have the opportunity to briefly interact with the possible coach through either a phone call or face-to-face meeting. Only the client will be able to determine a good personality fit—a sense of trust, respect and the ability to connect—which is fundamental to a good coaching relationship.

While allowing the client to select his or her coach requires more time and effort than simply assigning coaches to clients, the extra time and effort on the front end will greatly enhance the possibility of a strong, effective coaching partnership. Many organizations find allowing clients to select coaches to be a valuable and essential piece of the coaching process. In a recent ICF study, 72 percent of respondents said they were solely responsible for selecting their coach.[38] However, this was not the case in the Survey, where 61 percent of respondents answered that, in their organization, a leader assigned the coach to the participant. While this may work in some instances, allowing the individuals to choose their own coach will generate better results.

Early in the coaching engagement, a development plan should be created for the client. This development plan brings increased structure, focus, and accountability to the coaching engagement. The development plan looks different based on each client but typically covers the following:

- Specific client strengths
- Specific client growth areas
- Specific explanation of the desired changes or new behaviors to adopt
- Detailed plan for development
- Timeline for changes

By writing a coaching development plan, the client makes a commitment to the direction of the coaching process and to submit the required time and energy to accomplish the changes outlined. Each subsequent coaching session should support the execution of the development plan in some way. Of course, coaching sessions may occasionally veer from the development plan due to unforeseen events or circumstances, but this is typically the exception and should not happen on a normal basis.

The coaching development plan allows both parties to have clarity around the objectives and goals for the coaching process. In the Survey for this report, 74 percent of top-level and midlevel executives believed clear objectives and goals would be necessary for the program to be successful in their organization. The coaching development plan is a vital element of the coaching process.

Although the results of executive coaching are difficult to measure, organizations must find ways to measure the success and effectiveness once they have instituted executive coaching for their leaders. The Survey results found that 78 percent of top-level executives and 74 percent of midlevel managers believe monitoring the progress of clients is a critical component of a coaching program in their organization. Qualitative conversations are the most commonly used means of measuring the effectiveness of the coaching program. The client's manager or the program sponsor should have conversations with the client about the value of the program—was it worth the cost, what progress do they see in themselves, did the process help them achieve their goals, and in hindsight, would they do it again?

As previously discussed, it is best for the client to have these conversations directly with his or

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her manager, due to the coach's confidentiality agreement. This is much more beneficial than expecting the coach to report on the progress made, for the following reasons:

- The client knows himself/herself best and can relay specific examples of progress made.
- The coach would only be able to offer progress made at a very high level, without giving particulars of the relationship, due to the confidentiality agreement.
- This type of candid conversation between the client and the manager is necessary for continued development after the coaching engagement is over.
- This type of conversation can strengthen the relationship between the manager and client, if done appropriately.

Interviewing the client or having the client take a survey at the end of the coaching program is another method of determining effectiveness. Were visible, tangible changes made? Would he or she recommend executive coaching to other leaders? What impact did executive coaching make in his or her work life? Will he or she be able to make a greater contribution to his or her company as a result of coaching? How often does he or she use the skills and insights gained from the coaching program?

Another possible option for measuring the effectiveness of the coaching program is having the client take a 360-degree feedback assessment at the beginning of the coaching program and then again at the end. In order for this method to accurately capture a true shift in perception as a result of executive coaching, the questions on the 360-degree survey need to be written specifically for the client and pertain only to specific goals or development areas that will be focused on during the coaching process. The same 360-degree survey should be used at the end of the coaching program and must be completed by the same group of raters in order for the comparative results to be valid.

In many situations, an organization wants to have multiple leaders go through executive coaching. In this situation, cadre coaching may be used. Cadre coaching involves leveraging an entire network of coaches and clients to make systemic and cultural shifts in the organization.[39] This is a powerful tool that many organizations have used not only to develop the individual leaders taking on an executive coach, but also to ensure that the coaches are addressing a shared set of organizational objectives. Cadre coaching is most effective when leaders on the same team or in the same organization want to implement changes that will affect the entire team or the entire organization.[40] Organizations wanting to develop individual leaders often use executive coaching. Organizations wanting to develop individual leaders, but also shift the culture of the company, will often use cadre coaching.

12 EXECUTIVE COACHING ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section will explain

- **The different types of coaching sessions available**
- **How assessments can be used in executive coaching**

Organizations seeking executive coaching should consider some additional options about the type of executive coaching it wants for its leaders. It is important to note that these are preferences and do not impact the quality of coaching.

The first consideration is whether the coaching will be done via the telephone or in-person meetings. While 75 percent of coaching interactions are done face to face, there are advantages and disadvantages to both.

The advantage of in-person sessions is that they are often perceived as more personal. The coach can use nonverbal communication as an additional source of information to be more in touch with the client's true thoughts and feelings. In addition, there is the potential for the coach to meet the client's peers, direct reports, and managers if the session is held on-site. Some clients like the personal interaction that occurs face to face.

However, there are also disadvantages to in-person sessions. The most visible is that the coaching fee is often higher for in-person sessions, especially when the coach is not in the same city as the client. Even if the coaching fee itself is not increased for in-person sessions, the client may have to reimburse travel expenses for the coach to make the trip. This can add up to a substantial sum, considering that the coach and client should meet twice a month. Some clients have also found the in-person meetings to be more inconvenient to schedule., whereas a phone call is much easier to change if there is a last-minute problem that prevents the client from attending. An in-person meeting features less flexibility.

To keep costs down and provide greater flexibility, some clients choose to do coaching over the telephone. The advantage is that it is much more convenient — sessions can be held practically anytime or anywhere. In addition, this gives the client more options of choosing a qualified coach. Rather than having to choose a local executive coach, the client can choose a coach from anywhere in the country or in the world. This improves the chance that a compatible coach will be found. In addition, some coaching fees are lower for telephone sessions.

The disadvantage for telephone sessions is that it can be perceived as less personal, so it may take longer for a sense of trust to develop, especially if the coach and client have never met in person. To circumvent this problem, some clients choose to bring the coach in for an in-person initial meeting, and then switch to telephone sessions for the remainder of the engagement. Another disadvantage to this form of coaching is that it may take longer for the coach to "read" the client without the benefit of nonverbal communication. While experienced coaches will be able to work around this, it is important to acknowledge that it may take more time to gain a sense of trust.

12.1 Assessments

Many executive coaches use assessments as a tool to help the coaching relationship develop at a much faster rate. Assessments serve two purposes—to help the client increase his or her self-awareness and to help the coach obtain some insights into the client. For these two reasons, assessments are often an important piece of starting a coaching partnership.

According to the 2010 Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey,[41] while executive coaches use a wide variety of assessments, many of the most commonly used assessments are as follows:

- 29 percent of respondents use a 360-degree feedback assessment
- 18 percent of respondents use the Myers-Briggs type indicator
- 18 percent of respondents use the DiSC Personality Profile
- 8 percent of respondents use "no assessment"

26 percent of respondents use a combination of more than 100 other assessments

The type of assessment used will depend on the executive coach and the needs of the client. Many organizations have found that using assessments at the beginning of the coaching process can help create results faster due to shortening the ramp-up time needed for the coach to get to know the client.

12.2 Challenges of Executive Coaching

As noted above, finding the right executive coach for an organization is not an easy task. FMI recommends that organizations work primarily with accredited coaches to ensure that the coach has the proper experience and skill set. If a coach does not have formal accreditation, he or she should have training and experience similar to that required for accreditation.

Another coaching challenge involves the difficulty in measuring performance. Most research on the effectiveness of coaching is anecdotal or subjective. The clients have expressed the benefits received and the impact coaching has made, but it is significantly more difficult to quantify the performance measurements to track this.

Coaching does on occasion have the potential to cause some conflict between the interests of the coach, the client, and the employer who is paying for these services. Coaches cannot always predict the length of an engagement, especially if they develop a unique, organic process for each client.[42] What takes one client and coach 3 months to work out, may take another client 12 months. The coaching process is so adapted to fit the needs of the individual client that it is often difficult to accurately predict the length of time needed to solve the issues and achieve the client's goals. Employers need to know how long and how much time is necessary before they commit the firm's money and the client's time.[43] However, employers need to recognize the organic, unpredictable process that often happens and allow some flexibility in the plan.

In the HVAC/sheet metal industry, top-level and midlevel executives were asked what barriers are preventing a coaching/mentoring program from being implemented in their organizations. Most respondents believed the organization simply lacked the personnel to coordinate executive coaching. Indeed, executive coaching needs someone within the organization to oversee the process and maintain responsibility for it. However, by using external executive coaching, much of the legwork is done outside of the organization. Many respondents also believed the time constraints of the process would be too constricting. Executive coaching does indeed take an investment of time and energy for it to be successful. Others thought the program would be too expensive or were unclear about how it would benefit the organization. However, only 2 percent of midlevel executives and 1 percent of top-level executives believed their organization did not need such a program. While there are certainly challenges and barriers to implementing executive coaching in the HVAC/sheet metal industry, leaders throughout the industry have acknowledged that, despite those challenges, executive coaching would benefit the organizations.

12.3 How to Institute an Executive Coaching Program

Organizations interested in executive coaching for its leaders are often unsure of the specific steps to take to get the program off the ground. They want to ensure that their leaders have qualified, experienced coaches that will help generate results, but they often face difficulty in navigating the wide-range of coaching options. In this section, the process for finding the right executive coaches is outlined, as well as the necessary internal actions needed to ensure the clients' success. Many organizations find following a detailed plan helpful as they work to get executive coaching for their leaders. An organization seeking out executive coaching should adhere to the following guidelines:

Step 1. Determine if there is internal support for executive coaching.

- Top management
  - Understands value of executive coaching
  - Is willing to invest the necessary financial resources for coaching
  - Understands the process
  - Understands that results will not be immediate
- Clients' managers
  - Understand value of executive coaching
  - Are willing to allow the client to invest the necessary time for coaching
  - Understand the executive coaching process
  - Understand that results will not be immediate

Step 2. Determine if the potential client is a good coaching candidate.

- Is the client coachable?
  - Does he or she want an executive coach?
  - Is he or she highly motivated?
  - Is he or she willing to make necessary changes to his or her thinking and behaviors?
  - Does the client recognize that he or she is personally responsible for his or her own coaching results?
- Does the client have specific ideas about goals or changes he or she wants to make?
- Is he or she willing to invest the time and energy necessary to making coaching a success?

Step 3. Determine the individual and organizational objectives for executive coaching.

- Some possible factors include
  - Developing high-potential employees
  - Facilitating a leadership transition
  - Acting as a sounding board for key leaders
  - Addressing derailing behavior
  - Personalizing leader development
  - Improving communication skills
  - Developing talent
  - Understanding and navigating generational differences
  - Planning for succession
  - Team building
  - Developing strategic goals
  - Creating a work/life balance
  - Dealing with burnout
  - Managing stress

  - Working on behavioral issues
  - Building self-esteem/self-confidence
  - Learning how to delegate
  - Reducing tension between the organization and the leader
  - Leader unwilling to look inward

Step 4. Decide between an internal or external executive coach.

- External executive coaches are recommended for most organizations within the HVAC/sheet metal industry

Step 5. Hire qualified executive coaches.

- Industry experience
- Proven track record of successful coaching partnerships
- Compatibility with the client
- Coaching certification
  - Minimum of 125 hours of professional executive coach training
  - Confidentiality agreement
  - Adhere to a code of ethics

Step 6. Determine coaching duration.

- Coaching should last 6 to 12 months, with two 1-hour sessions per month.
- Clients should have the option of continuing coaching longer than the initial timeframe, but with one 1-hour session per month.

Step 7. Select a coach.

- Clients should choose between two and five qualified executive coaches.
- Clients should be provided with coach's background and given the opportunity to meet/speak with him or her before selecting.
- Client can choose the coach with whom he or she feels most comfortable and compatible.

Step 8. Consider additional factors.

- Determine how the manager or sponsor will be informed of progress made during the engagement.
- Will executive coaching be done face to face or over the phone?
- Discuss the use of assessments with the coach to determine which assessments, if any, will be administered.

Step 9. Measure executive coaching effectiveness at end of engagement.

- Manager or the program sponsor should have conversations with the client about the value of the program.
- Interview/survey client
  - Were visible, tangible changes made?
  - Will he or she be able to make a greater contribution to his or her company as a result of coaching?
  - Would the manager recommend executive coaching to other leaders?
- Client takes a customized 360-degree feedback assessment at the beginning of the coaching process and again after the coaching engagement to track progress made.

Step 10. Decide on next steps.

- At the conclusion of the coaching term, determine whether to end the engagement or extend it for an additional period.
- What rituals or action items does the client need to take in order to sustain the growth and development gained during coaching?
- Are there any lessons learned from this engagement that will benefit other partnerships (if any) in the coaching program?

13 CONCLUSION

Informal practices of mentoring and coaching have been in use for centuries. The recognition of the benefits that individuals and organizations gain from the use of these practices has led to more formal and professionalized processes in order to make mentoring and coaching a part of the organization's strategy. HVAC/sheet metal contractors and fabricators working in an increasingly complex and competitive environment have realized that it takes time to train and prepare its workforce to work safely, accurately, and professionally. This has helped to provide a more stable and skilled workforce. However, such ideas need to be extended to the management and executive levels in order to ensure the continuity and growth of the organization as well as attract top talent to the industry. Formal mentoring programs help to guide employees with potential for promotions and preserve the knowledge and experience of senior managers within the organization. It is not only a way to pass on the company culture; it is a way to assure individual growth as well as strategic growth.

Mentoring and executive coaching programs must be supported by top management and seen throughout the organization as an honor for both those chosen to enter the programs and those who act as mentors or coaches. To preserve the status of mentoring and coaching programs as desirable, it is not recommended that these processes be used to correct problem employees.

Like mentoring, executive coaching has also been formalized and professionalized to ensure that individuals and future leaders receive good counseling in a professional, ethical, and effective manner. Executive coaching provides the client with someone who will listen to the concerns of the client and help him or her discover areas of performance that need improvement. It is both a systematic and personalized process that challenges the client to look inward at behaviors and beliefs and changes how those behaviors and beliefs affect outward performance. Executive coaching is geared toward those who want to improve, whether preparing for higher positions within the organization or achieving personal and departmental goals. For the organization, the use of executive coaching helps to provide well-balanced and insightful leaders who are better prepared to handle the complex challenges of leading and growing top-performing organizations.

13 ENDNOTES

[1] Randy Giggard and Sabine Hoover, "The Next Big Threat … And It's Probably Not What You're Expecting," FMI Corporation, 2010.

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