Mentoring in the Remote Space

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In the spotlight: Making the Most of Your Mentoring Experience

Mentoring plays a key role in the development of talent within organizations, and is often overlooked or underutilized. Increasingly organizations are viewing mentoring as an important part of their succession and talent management process, in addition to being a useful approach during onboarding. While many mentoring programs focus on growing the next generation of leaders, mentoring programs can also support career transition across industries and diversity initiatives within organizations.

What's different about mentoring in the virtual space?

Many new to virtual mentoring wonder how to make it work. Some tips to keep in mind are:

- Have a plan – just like in the in-person environment, create a roadmap of where you want to want to focus each conversation.
- Ask for feedback as you go.
- Incorporate streaming approach if the works for both of you.
- Blend face-to-face and virtual meetings where feasible.

Successful mentoring partnerships benefit both the mentoring and mentee. It is an underutilized approach growth and development. Consider how you can expand mentoring within your organization or industry.

Core skills in the mentoring process – There are several skill areas that enhance the mentoring process. As a mentor, lead with core skills such as listening and asking powerful questions. Mentoring is not just about sharing your experience, it is also supporting the mentee with new insights and perspectives about tehri work. Listen closely for what they need. Do not assume that you know.

Mentoring is also a conversation to support the mentee in identifying what they know and where they want to go. In asking questions it is often useful to lead with a What? For example, *What's another perspective about that?* Or, *What did you learn from that experience?* What questions invite conversation and dialogue, whereas Why questions may put people on the defensive, and *How* questions often lead us into process and thinking about how things are done.

Other core skills that mentors may use include sharing observations and providing feedback. Sometimes mentees may also want you to be an accountability partner. Others may want to be acknowledged. Ask what they would like from the mentoring process and what role they would like to play. Finally, inquire about the approaches they would like you to incorporate – providing stories, leading them to resources and providing links to best practices.