



Do you employ staff?

The Benefits of Employee Mentoring Schemes

National Mentoring Day takes place on 27th October 2019, the day usually focuses on the benefits mentoring schemes can offer teenagers and young adults, but mentoring can be beneficial to employees of all ages as well as their employers, so we thought this would be a good topic for our monthly HR Update.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring and Coaching are regularly confused or talked about as if they are one and the same, but there are clear differences between the two. Coaching tends to be a short-term process that focuses on one particular skill, for example, you may coach an employee on the appropriate way to respond to a query or deal with a difficult customer via the telephone. Mentoring, however, is a long-term on-going process that typically lasts a number of months. Mentoring can provide a learning opportunity for everyone involved where ideas, experience and knowledge is shared across different roles and levels of the Company. Typically, a senior employee will mentor one or more junior employees and over a number of months the mentor and mentee will have frequent one-to-one meetings to monitor the mentee's progress in the development of an array of skills that are relevant to the mentee's current role as well as their future aspirations.

Benefits for the Mentee

When an employee is mentored, they are given additional, personalised support and guidance. This provides them with a level of security, making them feel looked after, appreciated and hopefully more confident, as employers wouldn't invest in an employee if they didn't see their potential. Being mentored also helps employees to develop strong bonds with other people in the Company, perhaps people they wouldn't usually interact with on a day-to-day basis, which is good for skills sharing, networking, and inter-department relationships. Employees in receipt of mentoring get additional opportunities to ask questions, seek clarification and hone their skills, whilst also

developing an advanced understanding of the company culture and the “unspoken” rules within the Company, which can take time for most employees to learn and can also cause anxiety and nerves in the early days of employment. The one-on-one element of mentoring also benefits employees by enabling them to request what they want their mentoring to focus on (as long as it is applicable to their role), which allows them to take control of their career progression and professional development.

Benefits for the Mentor

Mentoring is not just beneficial for the mentee; mentoring offers reciprocal benefits. When the mentee shows development and succeeds in their role, this reflects upon the mentor. The mentee's success is the mentor's success. This can be a very satisfying experience for the mentor who can see a clear return on the investment of their efforts, as well as being able to take pride in their mentee's success, the mentor becomes recognised as someone who is succeeding in their own role and the skill of mentoring. Mentoring is something many employees become involved with later on in their career. The opportunity to mentor a colleague can provide the mentor with new responsibilities and the opportunity to impart their wisdom onto new people coming into the Company. Working closely with people who have a different level of experience, and a different professional background, can provide the mentor with a fresh perspective, access to new ideas, and an opportunity to assess their own working practices to see if there is room for change / improvement. One employee being the mentor, and one being the mentee, does not mean that knowledge is not shared in both directions. Mentors often benefit from mentoring by gaining skills and knowledge on new technology that they may have had less experience using in comparison to the mentee, so even though they are not officially in receipt of mentoring themselves, they do still benefit from a shared learning system.

Benefits for the Company

Mentoring is a cost-effective way of developing and engaging employees. By utilised experienced, in-house resources you are saving expensive training costs and also showing your experienced employees that they are considered knowledgeable, trustworthy and valuable. When mentoring goes well, employees involved will become more engaged in their role, due to the benefits stated above. This in turn benefits the Company because engaged employees tend to display more discretionary effort, job satisfaction and loyalty, thereby also saving you recruitment costs as your employee retention rates increase.

Investing in mentoring will also create a culture of learning and development, one that benefits employees from the start to the end of their employment, and it also demonstrates that you are an employer who values employees, who welcomes innovative thinking, and who encourages employees to contribute to the success of the Company as a whole. The sharing of knowledge and ideas within the Company will help to promote a sense of co-operation and teamwork and will help you to identify those employees who have leadership potential, which will help with future succession planning etc.

Mentoring schemes can take some experimentation to get right, as you need to ensure the match between mentor and mentee will work, you need to ensure the necessary resources are readily available, and that everyone in the Company understands what mentoring is and how it works, but the effort is regularly considered to be worth the reward.

How We Can Help

If you have any queries relating to the content of this newsletter, or any other HR related topic, please don't hesitate to contact us via hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk