

Defining Your Future



Los Angeles and Orange Area Chapter

Mentoring Program

January 2011

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Dear Participant,

Moving up the career ladder is exciting and can present challenges beyond one's experience level. MSA believes that all individuals assuming a new position will need some form of guidance and support along the way. People perform better if they are nurtured, and therefore, MSA has developed a mentoring program.

Over the past several years, MSA has been faced with several issues. First, who will assume the responsibilities developed by our organization? Another issue is how MSA will find replacements for the growing number of retirees. Would these individuals have the knowledge, skills, and support needed to continue to provide leadership for the MSA?

As I look back over my career, I am reminded of several individuals who were responsible for my success. These mentors gave me the opportunity to train, grow, mature, and offer insight into a career that has been extremely rewarding and has continued in my personal development.

I trust each mentee will achieve success in their future endeavors and will be supported by a nurturing and caring mentor. Thank you to those of you who have agreed to serve as mentors. Your commitment makes their aspirations a reality.

Sincerely,

William Ornelas
Mentor Program
Los Angeles and Orange Area Chapter

Definitions of Mentoring

- A mentor is a kind of guide who, despite having been far enough to know something of what's down the path, comes back to walk with you and thus leads without leaving you to follow. (Boyd, 1988).
- Interaction between a knowledgeable, experienced, and supportive individual and an interested and motivated but less experienced person, resulting in transmission of skills confidence, and insights.
- A mentor is a guide who leads a traveler on a pilgrimage of discovery. (Harris-Schenz, 1990).
- A mentor feels like an advisor, someone on your side; loyal, interested, trusted, and most importantly, experience in areas that you may not be.
- A mentor leads by example and is a role model. They help you see the big picture and understand the politics of the organization you work for. (Impact Factory, 2007).
- The mentor is the person who assumes the role of both teacher and advocate for the mentee, using his or her knowledge to guide or shape the mentee's development (Williams, 1989).
- Good coaching is unbiased, objective support that sees and identifies the best of your qualities and abilities and helps you develop them it sees and identifies which hurdles are hard to get over and finds ways to get over them or circumvent them when appropriate. Good coaching comes from someone on the sideline that has your best interests as a priority.
- A mentor can be someone senior to you or on an equal footing, but who helps steer your career through both the good and difficult times. They provide motivation and inspiration and help you find ways to deal with immediate difficulties as well as helping you plan a long-term career strategy.

Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring benefits all: the mentee, the mentor, and the organization.

Benefits to the Mentee –

- First hand information, practical advice, and networking contacts
- New insight and personal development through feedback and reflection
- Opportunities to apply learning to day-to-day challenges
- Sounding board to develop new strategies
- Increased confidence through association with and validation of mentor

Benefits to the Mentor –

- Personal learning and reflection as a result of transmission of information
- Validation of one's role as an expert
- Satisfaction from promoting the growth of the mentee and the organization

Benefits to the Organization –

- Improved succession planning
- Increased motivation of mentee as an effective employee
- Generation of new strategies for performance
- Continuing professional development

Characteristics of a Mentor

What to look for in a good mentor:

- Role Model – demonstrates appropriate behavior and attitude and is well respected within the MSA. They have the experience to mentor other individuals.
- Knowledgeable – knows what they are doing. Has broad experience and knows the ins and outs of the organization. Understand your role in the organization. Makes you feel as though you'll learn a lot from them
- Teacher – is eager to help others acquire knowledge, information or new skills.
- Resource – provides opportunities to try new things. Introduce you to new people, places, interests or ideas. Suggests new sources of information and encourages you to approach other people as resources.
- Challenges – encourages you to set goals and to develop a plan to reach these goals. Pushes you to try new things and to assume increasingly complex tasks. Gives constructive criticism.
- Support – boosts your self-esteem in a caring manner. They have good listening skills and listens to your ideas and concerns. Makes time to support you. Expresses belief in your abilities. Builds in your abilities. Builds on your strengths and helps your weaknesses.
- Compatible – a mentor and mentee need to be able to work together. If someone else makes the assignment, it becomes a duty or simply 'going through the motions'.

Initiation

- Mentee decides what type of mentor would be appropriate, individual needs
- Mentor considers potential commitment and the existence of any conflict of interest with primary position
- Mentor decides if they have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience after evaluating mentee
- Mentee and mentor decide if they are compatible with each other with similar styles and approaches to situations and establish realistic goals in order to complete the mentoring program

Securing Agreement

- Mentor and mentee meet to discuss the mentoring experience and review strengths and weaknesses of the relationship with an emphasis on trust and compatibility
- Mentee shares the MSA Professional Development Plan with mentor identifying their goals for the next 12 months
- Both mentor and mentee commit to one-year mentoring program and sign letter of agreement

Identifying Needs of Mentee

- Mentee shares the MSA Professional Development Plan with mentor
- Mentor and Mentee identify additional skills needed by mentee related to current position and title
- Mentor and Mentee identify additional skills needed by mentee related to desired position (goal setting)
- Mentee shares new challenges they are facing in current position
- Mentee identifies conflicts in relationship or unresolved issues effecting work related issues
- Mentee addresses time management challenges
- Identify additional resources (including other college individuals) that can provide knowledge and skills related to mentee's needs

Establishing Ground Rules

- Establish the frequency and duration of meetings – minimum of once a month per agreement
- Schedule topics from Professional Development Plan to be covered over the next twelve months and secure input from mentee
- Establish boundaries. Agree on face-to-face meetings, email and telephone communication.
- Identifying mutual expectations of mentor and mentee. Humility and maturity go hand in hand. Assume responsibility for your own mistakes

Stages in the Mentoring Relationship

- Open Communication and Acceptance – both mentor and mentee must be honest. Meetings focus on assisting the mentee to meet identified Professional Development Goals. Mentor allows mentee to make own decisions but provides emotional support
- Mature Relationship – both mentor and mentee have positive feelings about the mentoring process. The process meets the needs of the mentee while providing satisfaction for the mentor

Managing the Relationship

- Mentoring relationships can exist as long as both parties experience mutual benefit and sense of accomplishment
- Be aware of the possibility that things can go wrong in a mentoring relationship. Some common causes include: poor time management, decline in commitment and of progress by the mentee
- Ending the relationship should be an honest admission that the objectives have been met or that it simply is not working

Mentor Program Responsibilities

Mentor:

- Clarifies expectations from Mentee including setting realistic goals for the year
- Establish a schedule of meeting times with Mentee over the twelve months
- Review Mentee planner on a regular basis to ensure beneficial progress
- Meet with the Mentee at least once per month for a face to face and discuss problems and/or progress
- Provide written feedback on successes with challenges of the program
- Review the Mentoring Handbook and MSA's Code of Ethics
- Recommend other sources that can assist the mentee meet their goals and serve as a liaison for mentee
- Engage in discussion with mentee topics related to the knowledge and skills needed to be developed in Professional Development Plan as well as other areas identified for growth
- Maintain confidentiality, practice behavior that ensures the mentee trusts you with confidential information

Mentee:

- Select a mentor that best meets your individual needs
- Develop a Professional Development Plan as part of the Workforce Leaders Institute and share with the Mentor at initial meeting
- Discuss additional areas for professional growth with mentor and incorporate into Professional Development Plan
- Develop a meeting schedule for the next twelve months
- Attend all scheduled meetings on time, be respectful of the time commitment of your mentor
- Come prepared for scheduled meetings
- Utilize mentor according to mutually established boundaries including appropriate use of e-mail and telephone communication
- Complete the Mentee Planner after each mentor session and share with mentor on a regular basis
- Accept suggestions for improvement in a professional manner

Code of Conduct

Do:

- Invite joint decision making
- Always give constructive feedback
- Believe in the mentee's abilities and encourage them to take on challenges
- Provide positive reinforcement and encourage self-motivation
- Introduce the mentee to perspectives and share experiences where appropriate
- Listen actively and carefully to the mentee's concerns and problems before responding
- Help the mentee to make the most of opportunities and to find solutions to problems
- Develop action planning but keep the emphasis on the process rather than the task
- Develop a relationship that provides enjoyment
- Maintain a relationship of equality

Don't:

- Tell the mentee what to do or do things for him or her
- Attempt to be an expert in everything or create false expectations
- Get too emotionally involved
- Make assumptions or adopt a judgmental attitude
- Involve the mentee in your own problems or situations

MSA's link to Code of Ethics: www.gomsa.net

For Members of the Maintenance Superintendent Association

The Board of Directors of the Maintenance Superintendents Association advocates the following Standards of Professional Conduct to guide its members in the conduct of their business. The Board of Directors encourages its members, whether individual or organization, to apply these standards to every aspect of their professional life.

As a member of the Maintenance Superintendents Association, I am dedicated and committed to maintaining the following standards of professional conduct:

- I shall keep the public trust and will not take personal advantage of privileged information or relationships that affect our lives.
- I shall put public interest above individual, group or societal interest and consider my chosen occupation as an opportunity to serve society.
- I shall encourage sustainability through wise use of resources; whether they are natural, financial, or human resources.
- I shall consider public health and safety in every aspect of my work insuring a safe environment by creating a sense of awareness.
- I shall conduct myself with personal integrity in a manner that enhances and honors the reputation of the profession, my employer, my community and the Maintenance Superintendents Association.
- I shall ensure that the work for which I am responsible complies with all legal requirements of the local interest, state, county, or federal governments that may apply.
- I shall strive to plan, design, build, maintain and operate public infrastructure in a manner that respects the environment and the ability of government to adequately preserve public assets for succeeding generations.

Mentor / Mentee Agreement

The MSA Mentoring Program, Defining Your Future, has been created to facilitate an on-going development of future MSA leaders.

I have reviewed the characteristics of a successful Mentoring Program and both mentor and mentee have met and agreed to participate in this program. Recognizing that a twelve month period is recommended, I agree to meet a minimum of one time each month, for a minimum of two hours per session, for one year, a total of 24 hours. I will also utilize the agreed upon communication vehicles including face-to-face meetings, telephone, and email.

I agree to all established boundaries between mentor and mentee and will utilize other MSA professionals to provide additional knowledge and skills related to the MSA Mentoring Program for the mentee.

Should either party find that the mentoring experience has achieved its goals and objectives, or that the relationship between the mentor and mentee is not satisfactory, either party can terminate their participation. I agree to notify the partner of such intent.

At the completion of the Mentoring Program, I agree to provide feedback as requested to the MSA Mentoring Committee regarding the successes and challenges of the program.

This Agreement is entered into on _____

Date

Mentee:

Print Name

Signature

Mentor:

Print Name

Signature