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This month, our theme is about mentoring. Joe and I think it is an absolute crime to bring a new employee on board and expect her to perform immediately - or to believe a performing employee has the knowledge and resources to take his skills to the next level. Don't let them flail about; they need a mentor.

We all need this message this month. That mentor might be you - or you need to find a mentor.

Kristin

P.S. Don't forget to [register](#) for my webinar/virtual panel next Thursday on building emotionally intelligent teams - at no charge to you!

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HOW TO FIND A MENTOR AND MAKE A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP WORK

– by Joe Sherren

In response to [my post](#) a few weeks ago, several readers wanted to know how to make a mentoring relationship work more effectively, especially since we all have different communication styles, conflicting value systems, different priorities, and diverse personalities.

For organizations, establishing a mentoring process is even more critical today as companies develop their succession plan. In fact, highly successful people often use more than one mentor throughout their career.

The dictionary defines a mentor as "an experienced and trusted advisor, a trusted counselor, guide, tutor or coach," or a "person who imparts wisdom." The word "mentor" comes from the Odyssey of Homer when the goddess, Athena, assumed the form of Odysseus's friend, Mentor, who was entrusted with the education of Telemachus, the son of Odysseus.

So, how do you go about finding that trusted advisor? It is a little bit like dating. If you do not already have a relationship, just start with coffee or lunch. Determine if your personalities are a match and if they have the background and expertise best suited to help you achieve your objectives.

One of the main attributes of a successful mentoring relationship is trust. Are you sure the mentor you are considering has your best interests at heart? Are you sure that what you tell them will be kept absolutely confidential?

When looking for a mentor, consider the following:

1. Why do you want a mentor? Do you want specific advice on a particular decision? Are you looking for someone to help you gain access to people and places you might not otherwise achieve? Or, do you just need a sounding board?
2. Let the person know why you're asking them specifically and what you hope to gain from the relationship.
3. Look for an individual whom you respect and is living the life or has the career you want. Remember, this should be a person you truly admire, not just someone who is popular.
4. Begin with just a pilot that will be re-evaluated in three months. That gives each of you the opportunity to reconsider should either of you feel it is not a good match.
5. Always remember to be grateful. Do not let your mentor feel exploited. Give them feedback. If they suggested something that really worked well, let them know. Most people love hearing how they have been able to help.
6. Finally, is the person you are considering a happy person? Just because someone is well-liked and successful, does not mean they are happy. If a person is working at a job they secretly detest, that person is probably not your ideal mentor.

Everyone will reach a point in their life when they will ask - What am I doing for others? If you are considering becoming a mentor for someone, here are some thoughts for you to consider:

- The most successful relationships are driven by the mentee, not you. They do the work and make things happen, you are just the guide.
- Being a mentor can help you in a later phase of life, as you may be the mentee in your second or even third career.
- In the technological area particularly, often the mentor can be younger than the mentee.
- Don't wait for someone to approach you. Remember Yoda? Luke Skywalker didn't go looking for Yoda. It was Yoda who took the pro-active role in reaching out to Luke.

My question for those of you who are successful business managers: "Are you taking an active role in helping newer managers achieve success?"

MENTORING PROGRAMS: HOW TO SET UP NEW EMPLOYEES FOR SUCCESS

- by Joe Sherren

This past week I had breakfast with my friend, Charles Stout - a retired executive from Allstate Insurance, at a restaurant called "Egg N' Joe" in Scottsdale, Arizona. Two servers

approached our table and one said, "Hi, my name is Cheryl. This is my mentor Sam. I am new and in training to become a great server."

What a coincidence. Charles and I were discussing the topic of corporate mentoring programs. Before leaving, I asked to speak with the general manager where she explained the process of their "Buddy System." She said, "When a new employee is hired, they are immediately paired with a senior employee who becomes responsible for their success."

She continued to explain that becoming a mentor is based on performance and client feedback. Initially, the new server follows the mentor around. The amount of time is based on their past experience and learning speed. Then, the new server is shadowed by the buddy (mentor) to ensure all lessons have been learned and they are representing the Egg N' Joe service culture.

I find many companies invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in talent management recruiting programs - and stop there. They are missing the opportunity to get the best return on their hiring investment.

Mentoring is long term and creates a fully-developed employee by combining theory with on-the-job practice. Mentoring works either as a standalone process or as part of a formal orientation program.

Charles, who was Territorial Claims Manager of Allstate Insurance in the Southwest Region, explained to me how he had once set up a "Buddy System" at Allstate. It worked this way:

1. Each claim representative had a "buddy" sales agent. They felt an agent who was versed in claims handling methodologies, paired with a claims employee would provide seamless service for the customer at point of loss.
2. Their managers would have a cross-functional relationship with leaders of other departments. These employees, who were often part of the company's "succession plan," found this broadened their knowledge and expedited their readiness to take on higher levels of leadership.
3. Moreover, this practice accelerated learning about the company, their products and services. It also created more engaged workers resulting in higher retention of high potential employees.

MacDougall Steel Erectors in Borden, Prince Edward Island, has an official mentoring program where each new employee's progress is monitored. As the new employee completes each task or category and is ready to move up to the next level, it must be signed off by their mentor.

The mentee is issued a card called an "Orientation Training Passport." At the completion of each step, or assignment, the card is punched which creates a record of the progress the employee is making.

Mark Quigley, HSE Manager says "This has reduced the time it takes to get an employee up to speed without the loss in quality that many companies experience when senior employees take the time to help a newer staff member."

A common theme I have found with all companies that have mentoring programs is improved employee satisfaction, increased retention, and enhanced on-boarding programs. This all results in making a company more appealing and creates a process to prepare future leaders. The best part is - it's free!

My question this week is: "Has your organization implemented a formal or informal process to set up new employees and prospective leaders for success?"

20 TIPS FROM 20 PROFESSIONAL PANEL MODERATORS

I inhale just about everything on the web about panel discussions - the good, the bad, and the ugly. With 197 million entries on "how to moderate a panel," I thought I would cull out the best advice from the top panel moderator/bloggers on the subject of panel discussions.

1. **Frame the Panel as a Debate with a Clear Question.** "Avoid panels with the title, 'What is the future of blah blah blah?' This rarely works. It's too vague. Instead the moderator should work with the panelists to frame a more definitive, and polarizing structure. 'Will blogging still be here in the year 2012?' Assign each panelist a yes or no end of that question. If they balk at this being artificial, ask them to propose a better question, or series of questions to frame the debate. Pick the right spine and many problems will take care of themselves." [Scott Burkun](#).
2. **Command the Space.** "The setup of the room is important. Do you want to be in the middle of the panel looking to either side like Tony Jones on Q and A? Do you want to be seated centrally in the middle of the audience, like Drew Carey on *Whose Line is it Anyway* or the moderators of the US Presidential debates? Or do you want to stand at a podium next to the panel? All of these will shape the way you can command the attention of panelists and audience. The setup gives you another secret weapon. It is hard to confront somebody who is beside you. Compare sitting at a dinner table to standing at the front of a classroom. You can engineer this so that the most combative panelists are defused by sitting next to each other, or - if you want fireworks, sit them opposite each other and they'll easily get into battle." [Claire Duffy](#).
3. **Choose Panel Members Carefully.** "Just as you would if planning the ultimate dinner party, you need the right mix of expertise, ability to express an opinion coherently and divergent points of view. If everyone is a senior vice president of blah-de-blah it won't be as interesting as if there's a customer or partner from outside the organization included. Research the panelists and know their points of view on the topic, as well as, as much as you can, about their interests and background. Look for diversity in backgrounds, opinions and vested interests. Be cognizant of the hidden agenda they'll each have for agreeing to be on the panel." [Ian Griffin](#).
4. **Don't Over-Prepare The Panelists.** "Talk to the panelists. I outline what I want to see happen on that stage and share my thoughts with the panelists, ideally in a conference call versus individual calls. This is about working together on stage, and a conference call starts it off as a team versus 'me.' On the call, we discuss the individual goals of panel members and how they all fit together to achieve the overall goal of the panel. I discuss their thoughts and concerns, emphasizing that the discussion will be about successes, challenges and the future. Then we go through the no-no's:
 - a. No use of slides. The only exception is if it's a photo that tells an amazing story that can only be captured through an image.
 - b. No sales pitches - including selling yourself.
 - c. No questions given to panelists in advance, except for the lead question. Overview category questions are OK to share. This keeps the panel from over-preparing." [Denise Restauri](#).

5. **Open Smartly.** “Grab the attention of the audience with a relevant fact, statistic, quotation, anecdote or joke. Then welcome the audience, thank panelists, link the opening line to the purpose of the panel, and preview how the panel will unfold. Be explicit about when and how audience members can ask questions. The opening sets the tone for the entire panel; carefully craft and rehearse it until your delivery is smooth and enthusiastic.” [Christine Clapp](#).
6. **Moderator Intros Each Person.** “This is one of my personal pet peeves. Either each panelist is allowed to tell the room about themselves or the moderator reads out the pre-written bio. The issue is, given an open window, panelists can talk about themselves for 3 to 5 minutes each. Doesn’t seem like much, except with 4 panelists and a moderator that can last anywhere from 15-25 minutes! Most panels last for an hour. I’d prefer the moderator, who sometimes picks who goes on the panel, to introduce each person with the reason they picked the person, one minute each, tops. I realize a lot of people speak on panels to get exposure for their company, but the best way to do this is to get into the meat of the panel topic and share great info.” [Scott Stratten](#).
7. **Keep the Conversation Moving.** “If you have prepared the panelists appropriately, and you kick off the discussion with a few good questions, the conversation will start to flow on its own. Encourage each panelist to comment on particular parts of other panelists’ statements. Be flexible about following the natural conversation path, as long as it is interesting and the audience is engaged. You may, however, need to interject a follow-up question here and there to keep the conversation moving at a brisk pace. Probe deeper, make bridges between ideas, present opposing views, catch contradictions, test the unsaid, shift gears, create transitions and intervene firmly and respectfully to keep everyone on track.” [Kristin Arnold](#).
8. **Microphones.** “Microphones can be a real pitfall for a panel. Panel members are most often not professional speakers, and usually a microphone intimidates them. If panelists don’t use the mic, they won’t be heard—which means the audience will become bored. Make sure you have at least one microphone per two panel members. Show panelists how to use it in advance. Encourage them to move it closer or take it in hand each time they speak. If they forget, stop them in their presentation to remind them. (Do not be afraid to interrupt panel speakers to correct logistical problems.) The audience will thank you for it.” [Mary McGlynn](#).
9. **Periodically Poll the Audience.** “One fun improvisational tip is to leverage a yes or no topic. Ask the audience: 'Let's pause and see what our audience thinks of that. Raise your hand if you would have taken action. Great. Now raise your hand if you would have waited without taking action.' That involves the audience, and gives you fodder to comment on the panelist's story. 'Wow, John, less than half of our audience would have taken action as you did. Tell us how you summoned the courage to do so.'” [Karen Hough](#).
10. **Don't Forget Audience Q&A.** “My belief about panels is that the moderator can easily spend the entire time asking questions that she believes the audience cares about... or she can actually let the audience ask questions that it cares about. I can't emphasize enough how important a Q&A period is; without one (or with an abbreviated one), it sends the message that the audience is there to be passive listeners, rather than active participants.” [Scott Kirsner](#).
11. **Know the Impact of Body Language.** “I’ve studied this a few times, when I moderate, the body language I give off will be echoed by the panelists. If I sit up

straight, or if you fidget, they will follow, the same happens when you speak. Look at the panelist when you ask a question, then look at the audience (they will follow suit). If you look at the panelists after you've asked a question, they will instinctively look back at you, an odd site to the audience. Unless responding to another panelists, the panelist should be addressing the audience so keep your attention on the customer." [Jeremiah Owyang](#)

12. **Stand Up for the Audience.** "Making panelists look smart does not mean letting them bull shitake the audience. My theory is that the moderator is called the moderator is because her role is to ensure that there is only a moderate level of bull shitake and sales pitches. A good moderator is the audience's advocate for truth, insight, and brevity—any two will do. When a panelist makes a sales pitch or tells lies, you are morally obligated to smack him around in front of the audience." [Guy Kawasaki](#).
13. **Make Sure Everyone Has a Chance to Talk.** "Pay attention to who is contributing and how long. Take active steps to balance this out. This can mean asking quieter panelists whether they have anything to add before you move on to another question, addressing new questions first to people who have spoken less, figuring out when quieter panelists are trying to interject and facilitating their interruption, specifying that you'd like someone to keep their answer or interjection brief (or to hold it entirely) for the sake of time, or cutting someone off if they're taking over. I know it can feel rude to signal to a speaker that they're talking too much, but it's also rude to your other panelists and to your audience to let one or two people dominate the discussion. People committed their time to your event expecting a panel, not a speech." [Al Franken](#).
14. **Prepare Your "Cutoff Phrases" Ahead of Time.** "Be prepared to cut off long-winded panel members or those who ramble off topic. Having some pre-planned cutoff phrases helps. For example, if someone goes off on a tangent that is not useful to the overall topic, you could interrupt and say, 'You have an interesting point there, but we want to know more about _____. ' Likewise, if someone is dominating the discussion, watch the person's natural breathing rhythm and then interject between breaths, 'Thank you, Julie. Now let's hear Bob's perspective on this topic.' It's always best to ask the panel members what "cutoff phrases" they respond to. Tell them you will use this tactic for keeping the discussion focused and on time." [Angela DeFinis](#).
15. **Ask What If Questions.** "Moderators can push envelopes with 'what if' questions, taking panelists beyond their prepared remarks. 'What if you had....started sooner or later? Not doubted yourself? Won the lottery? Had no customers? Kept your job? Could only use one hand? Were trying to do this in 1985? Heard about a better option?' Plenty of room here to get creative." [Denise Graveline](#).
16. **It's All About the Audience.** "You must never, ever forget that they are the folks who (one way or another) paid to be there. If a panelist veers off-topic, or starts into a sales pitch, I am merciless. Absolutely merciless. Never be afraid to cut off windbags and quickly ask another panelist to take a different tack. Your audience will love you for it, and it is the single biggest source of positive reviews/comments I get on panels I moderate. You are not there to make friends with the panel. You may already be friends with the panel. I am not antagonistic, but I make it very clear to conversation dominators that off-topic excursions will be halted pretty quickly. Generally, the folks who are likely to do this are pretty self-aware and will quickly recognize that they are dominating and will back off,

and the other panelists will also appreciate the gesture and do a better job of "moderating" themselves. Early in my career I would just let these people finish, until I realized that many of them had enormous breath control :). A firm, but polite interruption is just the ticket." Tom Webster.

17. **Don't Offer Your Own Opinions.** "Sad, but true. The audience is there to see you moderate, not be a panelist. If you offer your own opinions, you look like you're trying to hog time from the panelists. Do this only if your panel consists entirely of unbelievable bores, and you can bring down the house with your impromptu comedy routines. And certainly, never offer your opinion or tell a panelist they're stupid. Let another panelist say it instead." [Steven Robbins](#).
18. **Allow for Final Comments.** "Allow each panelist a minute or two to respond to a final 'big picture' question. Some options: 'Are you optimistic about the future?' 'Where do you think we will be in five years?' 'What one point or theme should we take from this conference?'" [Steve Abudato](#).
19. **Share a Recap.** "After an on stage discussion, it is really important to recap the key messages that were shared during the panel and what the big takeaways should be for audience members. This is ideally done at the end of your panel, but can also be done through some sort of recap after the event itself (I love to do blog posts as recaps of events)." [Rohit Bhargava](#)
20. **Say Thank You.** "As soon as possible after the conclusion of the event, send thank you notes to the individual panelists, event coordinator, and others involved in planning. For the speakers, include feedback you received either informally from attendees, or that which is relayed to you by the program chair that has received the evaluation forms." [Mitchell Friedman](#).

If you like these ideas, you might want to check out our video tips with a plethora of professional panel moderators over at our [YouTube Channel](#). But then again, you won't want to miss my free [online video training](#), either! I hope this all helps you as you prepare to moderate a lively and informative panel discussion!

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: Mentoring: The Most Obvious Yet Overlooked Key to Achieving More in Life than You Ever Dreamed Possible

By Floyd Wickman & Terri Sjodin

[This book](#) has been on and off my bookshelf and loaned to countless "potential proteges." Over the years, I have bought several copies because they never seem to make it back onto my bookshelf! Even though it is out of print, you can still buy a used copy.

Once I decide to mentor someone (usually another professional speaker or facilitator), I'll buy them a copy and say, "This is everything you need to know about making our relationship work." I ask them to read the book and we discuss it. If they are willing to do the work, then I'll mentor them. If not, we amicably part ways. No harm no foul.

Why do I love this book and recommend it to anyone who is a mentor or being mentored? Because it clearly shares the process on how to successfully mentor and be mentored. Expectations are set on what each person needs to do, and both parties can get out of the relationship. I also love the fact that the book is peppered with insightful stories that illuminate each point the authors make.

If you want to have a successful mentoring relationship, then I highly recommend this timeless primer.

UPCOMING WEBINAR/VIRTUAL PANEL

Building an Emotionally Intelligent Team

Thursday, March 24, 2016

Team emotional intelligence is more complicated than individual emotional intelligence because teams interact at more levels. You may have a team with emotionally intelligent members, but that does not necessarily make for an emotionally intelligent group.

In this virtual panel webinar, professional panel moderator and team expert, Kristin Arnold, along with [Scott Halford](#), an expert in emotional intelligence, and communications skills expert [Pamela Jett](#), will discuss what it takes to build an emotionally intelligent team.

If you have a good team and want to take them to greatness, then this webinar is for you!
[Register here](http://www.ExtraordinaryTeam.com/webinar-series/) today at www.ExtraordinaryTeam.com/webinar-series/

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