

The Mentor

Μέντωρ

- Πιστός φίλος του Οδυσσέα του οποίου την μορφή έπαιρνε η Αθηνά για να βοηθήσει τον ίδιο ή τον Τηλέμαχο
- Το πρόσωπο που καθοδηγεί και συμβουλεύει κάποιον ώστε να κάνει σωστές επιλογές

Mentor

- Trusted friend of Ulysses whose form was taken by Athena in order to help him or Telemachus.
- The person who guides and advises someone so as to make the right choices.

***«Συμβουλή ιερόν χρέμα είναι»
Πλάτων***

Η Συμβουλή είναι πράγμα ιερό

***Advice is a sacred thing
Plato***

The Mentoring Concept

The Purpose of Mentoring

The purpose of mentoring is to share wisdom gained from experience and learning.

Another reason for seeking a mentor is the alleviation of the loneliness and isolation of the entrepreneur.

The Mentoring Concept

The Nature of Mentoring

Mentoring is distinguished from advising, counselling, coaching and training:

- **Advising** is directed at helping the subject decide on a course of action.

The Mentoring Concept

- **Counselling** deals with particular aspects of performance, personality or career in a non-judgemental way. It has been defined as a non-directive process (the counsellor does not advise or suggest a specific course of action) by which a counsellor helps an individual to overcome problems or come to terms with feelings. He sees what options are open and chooses between them by tapping into their own inner resources. It is a neutral process. Some people see mentoring as a subsection of counselling when it refers to short-term counselling.



The Mentoring Concept

- **Coaching** involves teaching specific skills, training in those skills and monitoring subsequent performance with a view to improving those skills. The term is usually applied to training in the sporting world.
- **Training**, a term more common in the commercial sphere is directed at improving skills and comprises instruction, demonstration and supervision.



The Mentoring Concept

- **Mentoring entrepreneurs** deals with management and business processes. It involves vision (referring to a future state better than the present), mission (the timeless nature and purpose of an enterprise), listening and debating. But mentors do not have all the answers. That is why a mentor's focus is on asking questions to assist and challenge the entrepreneur in his journey of discovery.



What is a Mentor?

A mentor is many things, including:

- Friend
- Philosopher
- Guide.

Friend

A business friendship, between the mentor and the mentoree, based on trust is essential. Without it, the mentoring assignment will not achieve the best result.

Philosopher

“A 'philo-sopher' really means 'one who loves wisdom'.

...A philosopher knows that in reality he knows very little. That is why he constantly strives to achieve time insight”

Guide

The mentoree's nature, expertise, values, motivation, ability to achieve and ambition to succeed at his business, all temper the mentor's approach.

The mentor's role is not a form of instruction. But it is more than a counselling or training role. It is a shared mentoring experience with a guide, philosopher and friend.

What does Mentoring Involve?

Values

Mentoring is concerned with values. It is impossible for a mentor to work with an entrepreneur whose values are different, or even opposed, to his own.

The values in question are, for example, compliance with the law, honesty, treatment of employees, customer relations, and social altitude. The mentor should adhere to a strict Code of Conduct.

What does Mentoring Involve?

Role-modeling

Role-modeling is a useful method of highlighting problems and stimulating the consideration of available options. It impels both parties to examine a situation from disparate points of view. It is also an effective way of introducing a possibly unpalatable conclusion to a mentoree.

What does Mentoring Involve?

Goals of Mentoring

The goals of a mentoring assignment should be agreed at the beginning of the process. By beginning is meant after an assessment by the mentor of the business and its stage of development.

What does Mentoring Involve?

Cultural Differences

It seems obvious that extreme imbalance in education and culture contrast should be avoided.

These differences, if handled tactfully, need not be a barrier to communication.

What does Mentoring Involve?

Concept of Excellence

The mentor helps the mentoree to develop a concept of excellence. This should be a continuous theme in the mentoring process. It is important that the mentoree is made aware of the desirability of striving for excellence, in every aspect of his business.

What does Mentoring Involve?

Mentor's Career to Date

The mentor must have enjoyed at least a modicum of success in his business career. The definition of success in the context of a qualification for mentoring is difficult.

The Role of the Mentor

A question often asked is whether the role of the mentor is diagnostic or dynamic. Dynamic in the sense of being active technically, applying common sense or, perhaps, something more. The answer is not easy because the mentor brings a complex set of skills to an assignment.

In General

- A mentor presents the big picture.
- He is, usually, future-oriented.
- The mentor convinces by his presence that he has belief in the mentoree's ability to achieve his goals.
- The mentor should be visible. He should actually spend time at reasonable intervals in the mentoree's premises.
- The mentor must be accessible.

Mentor Activity

Mentoring is active:

- The mentor must be **competent**. He must have a transferable skill that is relevant to the mentoree's needs and is up to-date.
- The mentor should be an **eager learner** and ask for specifics". This questioning approach stimulates the mentoree to clarify his thinking - something the average mentoree rarely has time to do.
- The mentor is **opportunistic** in a positive way. He is well-read and takes advantage of opportunities in a non-threatening way.



Mentor Activity

The mentor is aware of the mutual win – the mentor **wants to learn** too. Mutual learning is the key. Asking for explanations from the mentoree about courses of action contemplated is not necessarily seeking justification.

Analysis

The mentor has to fully understand the assignment.

1. What does the mentoree **want**?
2. What does the mentoree **need**?
3. What is the **mentoree's perception of his needs**?
4. How does his perception compare with the **mentor's perception of his needs**?

The reconciliation of the answers to these four questions is the starting point for the mentor's activity in the assignment.

Listening and Questioning

The mentor encourages the exploration of options by asking questions. It is important to make clear to the mentoree that the questions do not imply criticism of the mentoree's opinions.

The use of the word "**Why?**" is one of the best ways of provoking detailed examination of a proposed course of action.

Listening

- Active Listening
- No Interruptions
- Seek Clarification
- No Distractions
- No Staring
- Note-taking
- Closed-end Questions and Open-ended Questions



Listening

- Frankness
- Time-saving
- Mentor's Phraseology
- Learning from Listening

Searching

At all times during the assignment, the mentor searches for the capabilities and potential of the mentoree and the possibilities available to him.

The focus is always on the number and nature of options available to the mentoree.

The mentor and the mentoree share the search. The mentoree always makes the ultimate choice.

Supporting

If, in the mentor's view, the mentoree is about to make a hasty decision, because of perceived pressures on him to do so, as his guide, the mentor's support and calm demeanour in the period of adversity may encourage the mentoree to pause for mature consideration - perhaps simply by asking whether there are reasons for pause to take stock of all the possibilities before making decisions.

Supporting

A positive attitude, however, is indispensable when facing adversity the use of encouraging words and phrases are preferable to noncommittal or negative statements, without appearing to advocate complacency.

What the Mentor's Role is not

It should be equally clear what the mentor's role is not:

- Mentors should not see their role as one of **criticism**, even if it is constructive criticism.
- Nor is it the function of a mentor to **assess the performance** of the mentoree or give judgments on his achievement.
- The mentor's role is not one of **rescue**.
- The mentor is not in any position to **provide a quick fix**, nor should he attempt to do so.
- He is not the **decision-maker**.



Mentor Characteristics

The characteristics of a successful mentor include:

- Abilities
- Qualities
- Attitudes
- Ethics/Values.

Abilities

- Listening Skills
- Asking Questions
- Leadership
- Ability to Empower
- Ability to Network
- Empathy

Qualities

- Experience
- Passion and Enthusiasm
- Time Efficiency
- Sense of Humour
- Capacity for Enjoyment
- A Sense of Equality
- Ethical Conduct
- Humility



Attitudes

- Respect for the Mentoree
- Willingness to take criticism
- Honesty
- Caring
- Supportiveness

Ethics/Values

- Reporting to the Programme Director (CyEC2006)
- Conduct Self Assessments
- Abide by a Code of Conduct and Ethics (self imposed if needed)

For more see

**Mentoring Entrepreneurs
Shared Wisdom from Experience**

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