

MENTORING: A PANACEA FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mentoring is a long standing form of training, learning, guidance, encouragement, support and development and an increasingly popular tool for supporting personal development through giving help and guidance in a non-threatening way, in a manner that the protégé will appreciate, value and will empower them towards achieving their goals. Mentoring could affect the protégé in a positive or negative way; Positive mentoring involves impacting good values while negative mentoring involves driving the protégé into cherishing vices, acknowledging them as acceptable norms thus, deploying all the vital resources of the society. Being mentored by the right person is an important and viable bridge to success.

The mentor guides his or her protégé in developing skills, methods and work habits that took the mentor a long period of time to develop. A mentor is distinct from a role model. The mentor may not in all cases be a role model in all its ramifications, bearing in mind that the mentor may have had negative experiences and passed through some challenges in life. The mentor also becomes, in effect, the gateway to the business experts and resources his or her protégé will need to succeed. There basically three types of mentoring namely, career /business, personal development and educational mentoring.

Career mentoring involves helping the protégé develop the necessary skills to focus on a career path that will be beneficial to both the protégé and the society as a whole. It involves pooling of talents for management and technical jobs, hence shaping future leaders. Through mentoring, the people with the most experiences can also effectively pass down knowledge to their protégé. This will help the protégé reach their goals faster by providing a consistent structure of support and offering innovative strategies to reach their goals.

A mentor who is someone that has been where the protégé is trying to reach but because of the benefit of then length of job duration and resulting experiences, has valuable information that the protégé can use reduce the unnecessary delays and fill in the pot holes/challenges that might otherwise trip and obstruct the protégé up on the way through their career path. This is a major advantage for the protégé as the mentor's experience prevents one from going through all the trials and errors of learning the same lessons over again; time being compressed helps in reducing re-occurring mistakes thus valuable lessons, knowledge, attitudes are passed on.

Personal development, a key component of mentoring involves character building such as ethics, values and integrity, career exploration, communication and leadership skills. This distinct activity has become a widespread development tool for young people. A mentor can help the protégé see things that they might ordinary miss out miss on their own, thus improving their self-awareness, self-confidence and self-discipline as well as correcting areas of their characters that could stand in the way of making them achieve their goals. The mentor guides his/her protégé in developing skills, methods and work habits, which the mentor developed painstakingly over her entire career.