

Mentoring and Retention Tips

Mentoring is the cornerstone to a successful apprenticeship program: it is the time-tested feature which sets apprenticeships apart from other training models.

Unlike traditional supervisory management arrangements, mentoring creates a climate of support, guidance and teaching which boosts apprentice engagement, productivity and retention rates.

Mentoring has been shown to have a formative impact on the thinking, attitude, abilities, and work ethic of apprentices, as they make the important transition from school to work.

A well-planned mentoring program will not only help your organization attract, develop and retain apprentices (and staff members), but enable you to unlock a range of cultural and innovation benefits in the process.

So what are the essential elements of successful apprentice mentoring?



Personal commitment

The mentor must commit to the mentoring process, and to be regularly available to the apprentice on a formal basis, and as the need arises.

Clear expectations and boundary setting

Having the mentor and apprentice collaborate on a development plan defining the commitment and initial scope of the relationship is an effective way to establish trust.

Facilitating a positive and constructive relationship

Apprentices are going to make mistakes as they develop their skills. When they do, an engaged mentor who can discuss, empathize and re-frame the event as a challenge to learn and improve is going to compel the apprentice to persevere and succeed.

Confidentially

As they adjust to world or work, apprentices will also experience and range of workplace issues and personal challenges. Access to a mentor with whom they can speak openly about workplace experiences without fear of judgment will improve understanding and engagement.

Accountability

Both mentor and apprentice need to believe the other will say what they will do and do what they say. Being accountable to each other is central to successful mentorship, as it enables each member to challenge the other to grow and improve.



How workplace mentors can improve organizational outcomes

Workplace mentors play a pivotal role in preparing each apprentice to succeed. Through meeting regularly with apprentices and their supervisors during in the early stages of their employment, workplace mentors ensure the apprentice remains motivated, supported and valued in the workplace, and develop the ability to proactively detect and address potential sources of workplace stress or disengagement.

The workplace mentor's ability to be the 'honest broker' and act early to resolve challenges before they become issues, reducing the risk of attrition or sudden disengagement, is a key factor driving the superior workforce retention outcomes registered apprenticeship programs enjoy.



The Ready, Willing & Able team have successfully delivered mentored apprenticeship programs for employer partners across a range of sectors and can help you forge a customized mentoring program, as well as a personalized mentoring plan for each apprentice including how to:

- Establish clear standards and expectations of behavior
- Provide regular, constructive feedback, mentoring methodologies and strategies
- Facilitate a stable mentoring relationship with each apprentice
- Develop a coaching capacity within employer partner organizations
- Monitor the mentoring relationship to provide regular, constructive feedback
- Promote diversity awareness among employers
- Manage, measure and report on the effectiveness of the mentoring process
- Identify early warning indicators for at-risk apprentices
- Free up the Human Resources to focus on implementing core strategies