

NAVIGATING YOUR CAREER

Sharing Organizational Knowledge

Produced by:



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INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is an important element of a sound career development plan for all employees.

- If you are early in your career, a mentor can help focus your vision for future opportunities while providing sound advice and guidance for maximizing your impact in your current role.
- At midcareer, a mentor can help in assessing your skills acquired through varied experiences and create a meaningful plan for your next steps in the organization.
- Late in your career, a mentor can help you review your accomplishments and assess and plan the legacy you wish to leave behind.

Although “formal” mentoring programs are common in many organizations, most employees find that their opportunities for mentoring occur through a more “informal” process of selecting and engaging in a mentoring relationship outside of a formal organizational program.

This series has been designed to provide all employees, regardless of their participation in a formal program, with a framework for establishing and getting the most out of their mentoring relationships. Each module provides you with suggestions for organizing your plan for mentoring and suggestions for conversations to have with your mentor, as well as practical steps to take to develop your skill set.

Other modules in this series include:

- **Building Working Relationships**
- **Increasing Visibility**
- **Influencing Others Through Leadership**
- **Learning Partner Toolkit**
- **Your Career Journey**

Each module provides a framework for self-paced reflection with prompts and suggestions of areas you may wish to talk over with your mentor. The prompts are designated by this symbol: 



SHARING ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

You are fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a mentor—a relationship that can provide more than the “nice to know” facts about your organization. Your mentor can provide insights and knowledge that can really make a difference in your ability to navigate for success.

This module is different from the others. It relies on your ability to interview and probe in order to learn from your mentor. You will be provided with suggested questions to trigger your conversation, but feel free to delve into other areas.

You are encouraged to wonder out loud, to question “why,” and to identify other places where you can learn more.

Don't let the conversation end here. Set up a mutually agreed upon process to continue this information sharing.

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GOALS OF THIS MODULE

Through your dialogues with your mentor, you will explore:

- Ways to become organizationally savvy by understanding the culture.
- Techniques to gain knowledge about the business you are in.





YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY

Culture *n.* *The ideas, customs, skills, arts, etc., of a people or group, that are transferred, communicated, or passed along as in or to succeeding generations.*



Ask your mentor to share what about the organization's culture is important for him or her and what will be helpful for you to know. Consider topics similar to these:

Daily work
Meetings
Client interactions
Travel
Social settings
Appearance
Communication
Technology/email
General etiquette

1. What are your organization's/department's cultural norms and values regarding the above items? Do these change in the midst of conflict, risk, hierarchy, or status?
2. What are the unwritten codes of behavior or rules (for example: taboos, symbols and quirks, organizational politics)?
3. How do these norms/values and codes of behavior fit with your beliefs? What could be challenging to adjust to? Are you willing to adjust? What are the trade-offs if you choose to reject any of these norms or codes of behavior?



THE PEOPLE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. What is the “real” organization chart? Where are the power centers?

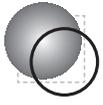
2. What are the expectations of individuals who are identified as “high-potential” employees?

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3. How do managers and employees interact and relate to each other?

4. What do you need to know about your manager?

5. Are there issues around respect and honoring differences?



BEYOND THE BASICS OF YOUR BUSINESS

- What else should you know about your business?

Its purpose

Its products/services

Your customers

Your industry

Other

- What else should you know about business **opportunities**?

Growth potential

New products

Marketplace

Other

- What else should you know about business **challenges**?

Competition

Economy

Customer demands

Production

Other



PERSONAL REFLECTION: SHARING ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Think about increasing your ability to share organizational knowledge.

1. Think about your conversation with your mentor. What else do you need to know?

2. What opportunities and barriers do you anticipate from this information?

What will you:

Change?

Modify?

Stop doing?

Start doing?

3. List other questions that you have for your mentor or other resource people within your organization.



Be prepared to talk to your mentor about these items at your next meeting.