

Mentoring in the Singapore QP ...

The fourth in this soft skill series, looks at the important role that a Mentor plays, inside an ATO.

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Why is a Mentor Relevant?

Are you an “Approved Mentor”, or considering becoming one? Have you thought through your role yet, and, the relevance in you being a Mentor?

Alternately, are you a [Singapore QP](#) Candidate? Have you thought through your responsibilities yet, and, how your Mentor can be relevant to you?

When I consider what Mentoring means in the context of the Singapore QP, there are two words that resonate. The two words with most relevance to me, are “**Guidance**”, and “**Growth**”.

Guidance is important, as it provides for safety. A Mentor’s presence curates a relationship within which their “Mentee” can find and follow the desired direction.

Growth is important too, as it provides for personal motivation. The Mentee acts out the choices they’ve committed to, moving from the person they are, towards the one they have chosen to become.

Beyond these two words, when training would be Mentors, two questions tend to surface rather quickly, and constantly. First, “What is a Mentor?”, and second, “What does a Mentor do?”

What is a Mentor?

Knowing with a little more precision what the term means can be confusing. There are many similar terms (e.g. Coach, Leader & Manager). Let's drill down to appreciate the differences.

A Manager usually has direct line responsibility for a person. The classical view is that of a person in authority, one who plans, organises, directs, communicates and controls. Their prime focus is on present performance, and they tend more toward the task, rather than the person.

A Leader may also have direct line responsibility. That said, they tend to be more of a visionary, setting direction, articulating needs, inspiring teams to act, and bringing about change. Their focus is on future change, and they tend more toward the people, than the task.

A Coach focuses on the development of specific skill sets or competences within a person. For instance, an athlete might need a fitness coach, or, a dietary coach. Someone in the media might need a communications coach, or, a voice coach.

Coaches have a future focus, and develop specific aspects using a strong questioning style that probes to elicit answers from within the person being coached. Their involvement tends to be quite specific, somewhat limited, and time bound.

A Mentor is usually someone who sets aside their time to cultivate a deep relationship with their "Mentee". Within that relationship, they bring their experience and wisdom to bear in support and guidance of that Mentee.

Like a Coach, a **Mentor** is future focused and concentrates on the development of another. However, it tends to be more of a long term relationship, within which the Mentor offers advice and provides guidance, in order to help their Mentee to grow.

What does a Mentor do?

There are two broad strands to the Mentor's bow. The first covers strong emotional intelligence (EQ) and communications skills. This is something they have in common with a Coach. The second revolves more about access to the wisdom captured in their business and life experiences, as well as in their connections.

As a strong communicator with great EQ, a Mentor needs to have strong listening skills, ask great questions, and be empathic to the core. That said, they also need to be clear where responsibility for action rests. They need to encourage their Mentee to become more self-aware, ensure that ownership of growth actions clearly rests on the shoulders of their Mentee.

Finally, they need to use all their social skills to build a lasting, durable relationship, one that honours and respects differences, yet at the same time, builds and deepens the trust.

The Mentor also provides a source of wisdom within the relationship. They can share personal experiences and recommend suggested options to their Mentee. Having social standing, a Mentor may be able to bring their connections to bear on projects, perhaps even open doors.

They may also provide some form of safety and act as early warning radar too, to notify the Mentee of possible dangers that might lie on the road ahead.

Personal Value in Becoming a Mentor

On the face of it, the benefits of becoming a Mentor seem to accrue more to others, rather than the self, don't they?

The Mentee who actively embraces their Menteeship, gains through growth. They progress toward becoming a Chartered Accountant of Singapore, with positive career progression.

The [Accredited Training Organisation](#) gains through a better trained workforce. They get a stronger talent pool, perhaps even an increased ability to attract and retain talent.

Clients gain too, getting access to a more professionally trained advisory pool, with potential to help them make better informed decisions.

Yet, the Mentor gains along the way too. But, as the saying goes, "There is no such thing as a free lunch". So the value that one derives in becoming a Mentor, requires a little investment of time on your part too.

To be an effective Mentor, means that you will have developed some crucial soft skills relating to Communication & Coaching. These are skills that will stand you in good stead as you walk your own Leadership journey.

You'll also gain deep, deep, satisfaction from seeing others benefit from your investment in them. As the research tells us, no one can put a price on the value of a well-intended, heart-felt, and personally spoken "Thank You".

Article by Patrick O'Brien, Chartered Manager and Managing Director of The Amanuenses Network Pte Ltd. Amanuenses help people bring about personal growth and organisational change through the delivery of soft skills training solutions. Connect with Patrick via the website www.Amanuenses.Net.