The Workplace Mentoring Playbook

NDMC
National Disability Mentoring Coalition

The *Workplace Mentoring Playbook* offers strategies, tools and activities for employers and employees interested in establishing mentoring relationships. It is based on the *Workplace Mentoring Primer* developed in 2008 with the premise that workplace mentoring is an effective strategy for increasing the retention, job performance and career advancement of any employee, but is especially critical in supporting the inclusion of employees with disabilities.

This updated edition includes strategies for adopting a mentoring culture and implementing successful mentoring programs, as well as support for why investing in mentoring as part of an overall disability inclusion strategy makes good business sense.

This document was created in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the National Disability Mentoring Coalition (NDMC).

NDMC raises awareness about the importance and impact of mentoring in the lives of people with disabilities and increases the number and quality of disability mentoring programs around the country. Established in December 2014, NDMC transitioned in March 2018 to residing as an initiative of Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD).

Mentoring as a Disability Inclusion Strategy
A mentoring program is a talent development and retention strategy, one that uses the organization's human resources to improve employee satisfaction, develop leaders and teach new skills. Mentoring is also an effective tool for increasing and shaping an inclusive workplace culture.

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Introduction

Let´s face it - few, if any, people who become successful professionals and leaders in their chosen fields get there entirely on their own. Ask them how they achieved success and they will likely tell you about a person or people who helped them get their start, learn the ropes and develop and advance in their careers. Talent, creativity, hard work and persistence are essential ingredients in achieving one's goals, but the guidance and support of other professionals is also critical, especially for those new to the workforce and preparing to grow into positions with greater and more complex responsibilities.

Where do entry-level or rising professionals find the kind of guidance and support they need to grow and advance? Sometimes a supervisor or more experienced coworker may voluntarily mentor an employee, while other times mentors are found through formal programs. Formal mentoring programs typically assist junior or less experienced professionals to identify and develop a relationship with more experienced professionals, either in the same workplace or within a broad professional field. In addition to matching mentors and mentees, formal mentoring programs frequently offer training and structured activities and also utilize mentoring configurations other than traditional "senior employee mentors junior employee" arrangements. Non-traditional mentor configurations may include peer mentoring, group mentoring and reverse mentoring.

Mentoring plays an important role in employee engagement and retention, both of which contribute significantly to individual and organizational productivity and make employees feel valued. Without a formal mentoring program, new hires and less experienced employees may struggle to find other professionals to connect with who are willing to help them learn, grow and advance in the workplace. Employees who do not feel engaged or supported are less likely to stay with their employer. Mentoring may make all the difference in an employee's job performance and influence their decision to stay with a company, rather than seek employment opportunities elsewhere.

Formal mentoring programs also play an essential role in the broader talent development strategies of an organization. While most employees receive training and professional development through seminars, classes, conferences and written materials, these are typically discrete learning activities that don't often allow for opportunities to apply new knowledge and skills on a daily basis or receive feedback and encouragement from others. By adding mentoring to other professional development opportunities, companies can provide the support and guidance necessary for employees to take their skills and knowledge to the next level.

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NEED FOR FORMAL WORKPLACE MENTORING

Now is an opportune time for employers to adopt or expand mentoring as a part of their talent development strategy. Mentoring can help attract, develop and retain new employees at a time when a large segment of the workforce - Baby Boomers - is preparing to retire. In order to manage the anticipated wave of retirements, employers are focusing on succession planning and preparing the next generation of leaders.

As employers plan improvements to their recruitment and retention strategies, they can utilize formal mentoring programs to engage and support new hires and rising professionals with and without disabilities. By expanding workplace mentoring initiatives, companies can increase employee productivity and retention and foster professional development. Additionally, mentoring can encourage collaboration among employees from different generations and cultural backgrounds, thereby improving overall workplace productivity.

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Traditionally, mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between a younger protégé – the mentee – and an older mentor who meet regularly in-person; however, modern mentoring occurs in a variety of forms and may include peer mentoring, group mentoring, virtual mentoring and reverse mentoring (see "Approaches to Mentoring" for a full list of mentoring models).

To address increasing diversity among employees, some businesses have adopted cross-cultural, cross-gender and cross-generational strategies in their mentoring programs. Mentoring can happen in many ways, including through formal programs and day-to-day interaction with supervisors and fellow employees. In a workplace context, mentoring is a trusting relationship in which an employee receives guidance, support and encouragement from another employee. The mentor is typically someone outside the employee's chain of supervision. While mentoring relationships can develop and operate informally, a more formal and structured approach is often most effective. Successful mentoring programs involve thoughtful planning, dedicated resources and staff for implementation and evaluation to measure outcomes and inform program improvement.

While mentoring may take many forms, the following are common characteristics of successful mentoring relationships and programs that follow a traditional one-on-one format:

- Mentors and mentees make a long-term commitment to working together (generally for at least a year);
- Mentors take time to build trust and respect with their mentee;
- Mentees and mentors set high, clear, fair and positive expectations for themselves and their mentoring partners; and
- Monitoring of the relationship should be consistent and frequent over the course of the mentoring relationship. Regular contact between mentors and mentees (with program staff as appropriate) has been associated with longer-lasting mentoring relationships, as well as more frequent meetings between mentors and mentees and stronger mentoring relationships. (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter, & Tai, 2015).

Mentors can play many different roles in support of their mentees' professional development. While it is up to the employer to define specific roles and responsibilities of its mentors during program planning, some possible roles include:

- Orienting mentees to an organization or employer's structure and operational procedures;
- Helping mentees learn about and adjust to the culture of a new workplace environment;
- Introducing and connecting mentees to other professionals within and outside the company to expand their professional networks;
- Serving as a sounding board for and providing feedback to mentees during periods of learning, growth or change;
- Encouraging mentees to pursue their professional goals and persevere in the face of challenges at work;

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- Identifying committees or other opportunities for the mentee to grow their skill set and/or increase their network; and

- Assisting mentees with mastering a particular skill-set or gaining further content and subject knowledge required to maximize job performance and advance professionally.

Mentoring often delivers enjoyable and reciprocal outcomes if the mentoring partners establish trust at the onset. Trust is crucial to all mentoring relationships, not only in terms of mentees' ability to rely on their mentors for support and help, but also in their mentors' ability to trust their mentees to make decisions and take actions on their own behalf. Mentees may be less likely to trust mentors who try to cure or solve perceived problems, assume parental roles or who are judgmental or overly critical.

Typically, people being mentored want their mentors to be supportive, caring and willing to assist in achieving goals. Mentors who try to direct, evaluate or take control of their mentees' careers are likely to meet resistance. Trust will be difficult to build if either one of the partners in a mentor relationship – the mentee or the mentor – is reluctant to share personal experiences, interests and concerns with the other. Both the mentee and the mentor need to be willing and enthusiastic contributors to the partnership for mentoring to be successful.

WHY MENTORING MATTERS TO EMPLOYERS
Workplace mentoring has many benefits for employers as well as mentees and mentors. Mentoring can help employers who face competition for talent attract, support and retain employees at all levels. And companies are getting the message. In fact, about 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies offer mentoring programs to their employees[1].

In an age of rigorous performance standards and severe budget constraints, mentoring aids in improving employee performance, motivation and accountability. As masses of Baby Boomers prepare to retire, mentoring may be most valuable as a means of transferring knowledge from one generation to the next and preparing future leaders to fill the vacancies of retirees.

Mentoring can also help companies increase employees' cultural competence by expanding their awareness and deepening their relationships with other employees who differ from them. In fact, mentoring can be a key part of a company's diversity and inclusion strategy, particularly in relation to inclusion of people with disabilities. Lori Golden, Abilities Strategy Leader at EY, states that companies without a diversity and inclusion strategy that includes people with disabilities are "…missing out on the innovation, creativity, flexible thinking and problem solving of people who improvise every day."[2] Employers need a diverse workforce to appropriately respond to an increasingly diverse population, including people with disabilities. Offering mentoring for and between employees of diverse backgrounds and with various differences helps companies foster collaborative relationships and open communication among all employees.

Mentoring is an integral part of developing and retaining a diverse workforce. Companies need managers and supervisors with the skills to manage and mentor diverse populations. Managing diversity within the workplace means creating an environment where everyone is empowered to contribute to the work of the team; it requires sensitivity to and awareness of the interactions among staff and between staff and leadership, and knowing how to articulate clear expectations. Effective mentoring in a multicultural setting involves understanding diverse learning styles and approaches to problem-solving, as well as other cultural differences, and appreciating how to use those to serve the organization's mission.

While employers primarily use formal classroom-based or online training and education to achieve talent development and performance improvement, mentoring complements these strategies by promoting continuous learning and skills development guided and supported by the mentor. Mentoring also fosters positive workplace relationships across generations of employees or among groups of peers. Employees who receive ongoing training, support and encouragement from a workplace mentor often report greater job satisfaction, an important factor when it comes to increasing employee

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1 From "Finding Anchors in the Storm: Mentors," by Toddi Gutner, *The Wall Street Journal,* January 27, 2009.
2 From "Lori Golden, Self-Advocate and Trailblazer in Disability Inclusion in the Workplace," by Samantha Stewart, RepectAbility, March 27, 2019.

retention and productivity. Mentoring is a common practice in many private sector workplaces for this very reason. Mentoring benefits for employers are outlined in **Table 1** (page 8).

While most mentoring research focuses on individual outcomes among mentees, some studies demonstrate tangible organizational outcomes. Most notably, a five-year research study of the mentoring program at Sun Microsystems found the annual job performance ratings of employees who received mentoring were 40 percent higher on average than the performance ratings of non-participants (Dickinson, Jankot, & Gracon, 2009). The study also found the job retention rate of both mentees and mentors was about 20 percent greater than the job retention rate of non-participants (Holincheck, 2006, as cited in Triple Creek Associates, 2010). Researchers calculated the return on the company's investment in the mentoring program to be 1,000 percent based on the higher rates of retention and job performance among mentoring participants (Dickinson, Jankot, & Gracon, 2009).

In October 2018, a review by Sally Lindsay of the University of Toronto and Michelle R. Munson of New York University examined research on mentoring for youth (ages 25 and younger) who have a disability, including physical, cognitive, learning and developmental disabilities. The report did not include youth with psychiatric disabilities, as that topic has been examined in another report.

Lindsay and Munson's research addressed four questions:
1. What is the documented effectiveness of mentoring for youth with disabilities?
2. What factors condition or shape the effectiveness of mentoring for youth with disabilities?
3. What are the intervening processes that are most important for linking mentoring to outcomes for youth with disabilities?
4. To what extent have efforts that provide mentoring to youth with disabilities reached and engaged targeted youth, been implemented with high quality, and been adopted and sustained by host organizations and settings?

The summary of findings from the full review is provided here:

The review found a total of 40 studies addressing these questions. Benefits of mentoring program participation for youth with disabilities include improved employment and career-related decisions, transitions to adulthood (as well as college and work), postsecondary education goals and independent living skills.

Although the research in this area is still relatively new, it suggests the following takeaways:

• Potential benefits of mentoring programs for youth with disabilities include several in the areas of academic and career development, employment, psychosocial health and quality of life, transition and life skills. Although various types of mentoring models were used in these studies, it is unclear which formats work best for youth with disabilities.

• Results suggest several potential processes occur between mentoring provision and ultimate outcomes (i.e., mediators), such as self-determination, and some factors could influence, or moderate, the effects of mentoring for youth with disabilities, including gender and ethnicity.

• The review concludes with insights for practitioners that highlight a number of factors to consider when developing and implementing mentoring programs for youth with disabilities.

This commentary suggests that programs looking to serve youth with disabilities consider accessibility factors that would better enable mentees to participate in activities offered, which may include not only physical access to facilities but also access to program materials in various formats. Furthermore, programs are advised to consider expanding the age ranges of youth they serve in order to meet the needs of youth with disabilities, who often need support during their transitions into adulthood (e.g., transition to independent living).[3]

It is possible to extrapolate a few connections to employers and mentoring through the above findings. First, improved employment and career-related decisions result from mentoring and these will benefit employers. Next, when mentoring interventions discuss work plans, mentee satisfaction increased. This highlights how employers can build from this proven model and continue leveraging mentoring models for disability inclusion and talent development programs.

Lastly, as social processes and emotional support are reportedly key for successful mentoring outcomes, it is possible to extrapolate that employee affinity groups, either employee resource groups (ERGs) or employee business groups, would be appropriate groups to tap for mentor recruitment and participation. These groups are well positioned and uniquely qualified, as they bring together people with disabilities to uncover social processes and other cultural dynamics regarding inclusion, accessibility, exclusion and ableism. For these reasons, it is important that mentoring be considered as a modern disability inclusion strategy for employers.

BENEFITS TO MENTEES
While mentoring can benefit any employee, it may be especially helpful for employees transitioning into a new job or workplace, or into a position with increased responsibilities. Transition is often confusing and stressful, and requires getting familiar with new expectations, policies and procedures; new people and personalities; and new daily challenges and expectations from coworkers and supervisors. Mentors can help entry-level or rising professionals through transition periods by acting as guides, sounding boards and confidantes. The input, support and encouragement of mentors during times of transition help transitioning employees process new information, manage stress, gain confidence and persist through challenges.

As guides, mentors can help employees choose the best paths or strategies to complete their work, thereby increasing their mentees' productivity. As sounding boards, mentors can help employees assess their interests, values and skills, but ultimately leave it up to employees to define their goals. Mentors can also help employees consider various options when faced with tough decisions and identify and remove potential barriers to success.

According to the report, *Why Mentors Matter: A Summary of 30 Years of Research*, mentored employees gain the following benefits compared to non-mentored employees:
- Enhanced career outcomes, including higher compensation, increased career satisfaction and commitment and believe they are more likely to advance in their career;
- Engaged at a higher rate and felt more positively about their organization and its future course;
- Reduced turnover intention and actual turnover; and
- Enhanced employee inclusion for minority employees.

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3 From "Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities: National Mentoring Resource Center Population Review," by Sally Lindsay and Michelle R. Munson, National Mentoring Resource Center, October 2018.

Bank of America's Commitment to Mentoring

One of Bank of America's (BofA) Core Values is to "Embrace the power of our people" with the understanding that diversity and inclusion are good for business and make the company stronger. BofA demonstrates this by being focused on creating an environment where all employees, including those with disabilities, have an opportunity to succeed and achieve their goals. Currently, BofA partners with various agencies geared towards the advancement of individuals that fit in this category such as My Possibilities, Marriott Bridges From School to Work and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Bank of America Support Services was formed in 1990 and employs over 350 people in Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts and Texas with intellectual disabilities who support every major line of business within the enterprise.

The Support Services Mentoring Program was launched in 2013, with the goal to partner employees from the Dallas Support Services team with other lines of businesses. To date, 25 successful mentorships were hosted over the last five years. Mentorship allows teammates to gain insight to other lines of businesses, build networks and develop the skills needed for advancement. This mentor/mentee relationship increases mentor awareness of people with disabilities while simultaneously promoting career and skill development from the Dallas Support Services team.

Brandon (mentor): "*The very first time visiting support services, I knew this was something I had to be a part of! These associates are dedicated to delivering for our clients and are so excited to have the opportunity to have a career at Bank of America. Being Mohammad's mentor has brought joy to me, as well as my team, showcasing why Bank of America scored a 100 percent in 2018 for disability inclusion.*"

Mohammed (mentee): "*Becoming a member of the Support Services mentorship program in 2016 was the best choice I made for my career growth. Throughout the years, I have had various mentors, for which I am grateful and thankful. In 2017, Brandon Owens, Senior Vice President from the Fort Worth site, became my mentor and since the very beginning, he taught me more than the lessons I needed in the banking industry. The exposure he gave me to the various lines of businesses, such as Fraud, Customer Service, Mortgage Collections and Preferred Sales, has been beyond my imagination. Brandon is always encouraging me to work hard to achieve my goals. Recently, he learned that I was being trained in reporting and immediately came up with the idea for me to work side by side with one of his managers so that I can learn and become proficient in Excel. Through him and his guidance, I know that I can conquer the world.*"

Aaron (mentee): "*I started in the Mentoring Program in 2013. My mentor at that time was Steven Arnold, and he was as fascinated with Global Technology just as much as I was. Through him, I gained knowledge and perspective in the role he played in his department. Unfortunately, due to his business schedule, the relationship lasted only 6 months. We continued to keep in touch, but over time, we ceased frequent communication.*

In 2016, Rosie Lucin took over the program and connected me with Jose Rios, who is a Senior Vice President for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in Global Technology and Operations (GT&O). Jose has had a huge impact on me professionally by challenging me and holding me accountable in moving towards my goals, both in life and my career. Jose spoke to me about his background and how he was born in Mexico in poverty, but did not let that stop him from achieving his goals and accomplishing his dreams. This gave me perspective on life and helped me see that regardless of your background or where you started, you can always be great.

I also had the pleasure to be indirectly mentored by Brandon Owens, Mohammed's mentor. Public speaking has been one of my challenges. Brandon allowed us to practice our public speaking by having us present a training course with one of his associates on the spot, and also allowed us to job shadow in his department. Thanks to Jose and Brandon, I feel much more confident speaking to large groups and being put on the spot in impromptu situations, as well as networking with different individuals."

BENEFITS TO MENTORS

Although the primary aim of mentoring is to support mentees, mentors also benefit in the process. According to a 2013 study, *Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Mentors*, published in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior:*

• Mentors were more satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organization;

• Providing career mentoring was most associated with career success;

• Providing role modeling mentoring was most associated with job performance; and

• Mentoring quality was associated with mentor's job satisfaction and career success.

In Fall 2016, Kaitlyn Conboy and Chris Kelly of Cornell University published a research paper titled, *What Evidence is There that Mentoring Works to Retain and Promote Employees, Especially Diverse Employees, Within a Single Company?* An excerpt from the report's abstract states:

Mentoring programs are increasingly prevalent in corporate America. Research has shown that 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies have some form of mentoring program.[4] While mentoring programs can have a variety of objectives – such as promoting and improving diversity, helping new hires adjust to new roles, or developing high potential employees – it is not always clear that mentoring programs achieve their objectives, particularly those related to promotion and retention.[5] In reviewing relevant research and company initiatives, we can see that mentorship programs – when properly implemented – do offer benefits for diverse populations.[6]

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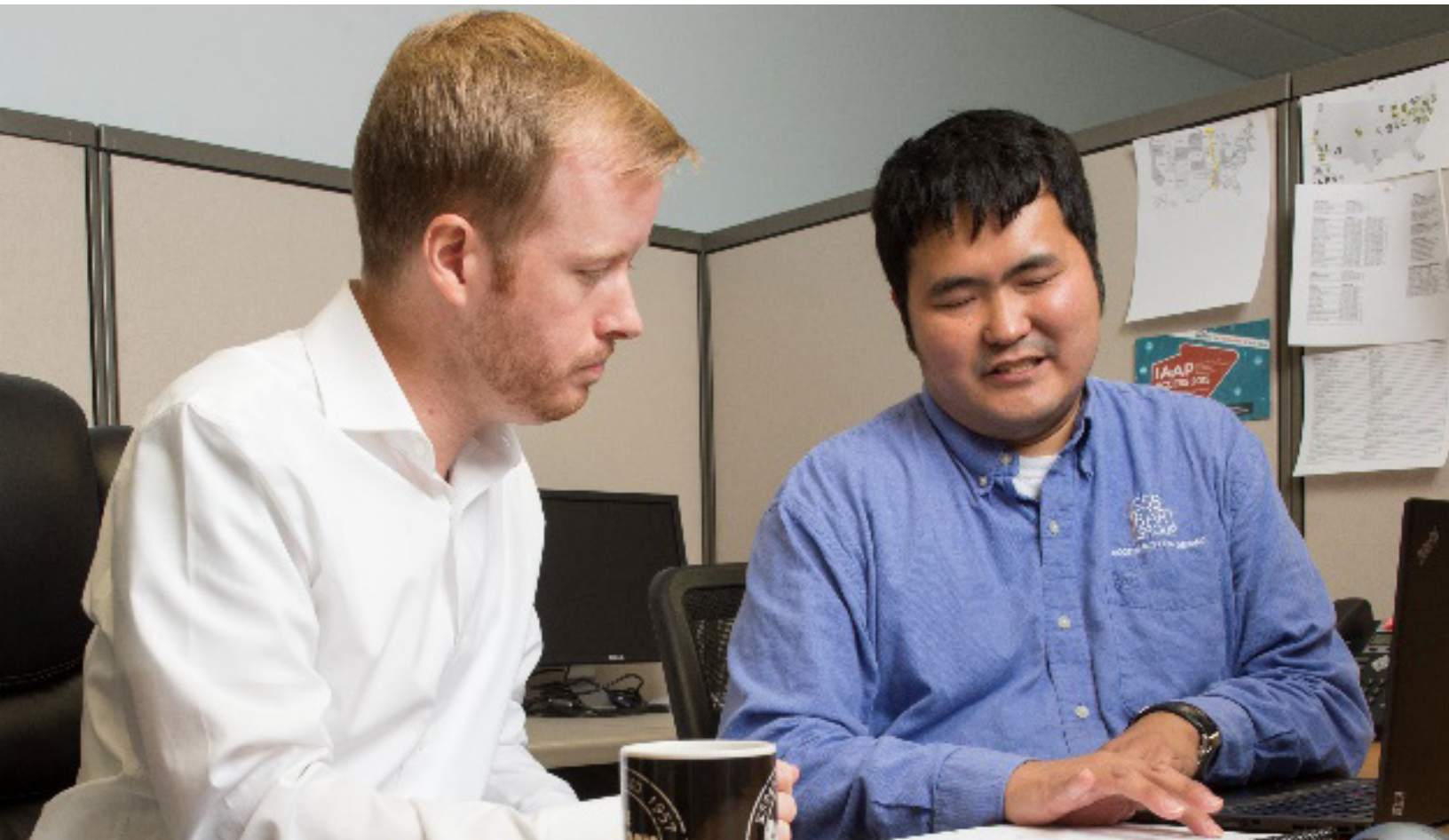
4 From "Business Mentoring provides coaching, sharing, and knowledge transfer" in *Drive Employee Talent Development Through Business Mentoring Programs*, by Claire Schooley, August 6, 2010, Cambridge, MA: Forrester Research Representatives.

5 From "Why Mentoring Programs Are on an Upswing" in *How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program*, by Horace McCormick, 2014, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, Kenan-Flagler Business School.

6 From "Why Diversity Programs Fail" by Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev, *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 2016.

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Table 1: Benefits of Mentoring

Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Mentees	Benefits to Mentors
Aids in new hire orientation or onboarding by helping new employees learn how the organization operates from experienced colleagues.	Helps new employees learn the ropes and navigate the terrain by having a guide who can explain the unwritten rules and how to maneuver through office politics and personalities.	Provides opportunities to pass on knowledge, demonstrate how to accomplish tasks and help someone else accomplish their goals.
Increases organizational performance and productivity by supporting employees' continuous learning and skills development, stimulating creative thinking and problem solving and fostering positive relationships among professionals at various levels.	Provides valuable support and a sounding board as employees adjust to new or changing responsibilities and expectations.	Provides personal fulfillment through nurturing professional growth in coworkers who demonstrate potential.
Improves an organization's ability to effectively serve diverse customers by increasing employees' cultural competence through mentoring partnerships with diverse colleagues.	Helps employees develop self-confidence, master new skills, solve problems, manage stress and overcome obstacles as they learn and grow in their professional role.	Deepens understanding of different perspectives by requiring mentors to view things from their mentees' positions.
Increases employee retention by providing employees with support and professional growth opportunities that lead to increased job satisfaction.	Assists employees to self-assess, set improvement goals and develop skills and knowledge needed to achieve maximum outcomes.	Presents opportunities to practice interpersonal skills critical to effective leadership such as listening, coaching and trust building.
Aids in succession planning by ensuring institutional knowledge transfer.	Helps employees preparing to advance to explore and decide upon a career direction, reevaluate strengths and professional development needs and pursue new opportunities.	Offers opportunities to be recognized, valued and appreciated for the knowledge, experience and guidance they contribute to others.

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Bender Leadership Academy

Bender Leadership Academy's mission is to change the career trajectory and increase long-term, competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities. Through a network of connected companies and partners, the Bender Leadership Academy's competency-building programs enable students with disabilities to achieve career success through a series of identified educational and work experience opportunities.

In 2018, the Leadership Academy's launch brought programs to market, based on Joyce Bender's 20-year history of delivering career success and leadership programs to high school students with disabilities. "I am thrilled to accelerate program scale and impact on the employment of people with disabilities by increasing partnerships, capturing data and documenting competency development, and celebrating work successes through the Careers2BTM workforce development approach."

The Leadership Academy has benefitted over 1,000 high school students with disabilities. Since the Leadership Academy's launch in 2018, 146 students have completed Career Success, Student Leadership and Business Technology courses.

Through the Academy, students with disabilities will:
- engage in educational and empowerment programs;
- build workplace and leadership competencies;
- develop real work experience;
- communicate and celebrate successes; and
- set and achieve career journey goals.

"Each year, the students who participate in the Bender Academy far outperform those who do not have the opportunity. Those who attend the four classes are better prepared, more confident, more relaxed, more natural. They see the benefit of preparing assignments, practicing presentations, answering questions, and bouncing ideas off their peers and they understand the importance of following the sound advice Bender Consultants and Co. offer."

– ERIN, TEACHER

"Under the guidance of Mrs. Joyce Bender, I've learned a great deal about what it means to have a disability, and that having a disability doesn't necessarily "disable" me. The most important thing I realized as I sat in a room with my peers and we engaged in conversation is that having a disability is by no means a bad thing. These kids know what their disability is, they accept it, they embrace it, and most importantly, they are NOT ashamed of it."

– JOSHUA, STUDENT

Approaches to Mentoring

As stated earlier, mentoring occurs in a variety of forms. Some of the approaches to mentoring include peer mentoring, group mentoring, virtual mentoring, flash mentoring and reverse mentoring (younger employees mentor older ones). Some businesses have also adopted cross-cultural, cross-gender and cross-generational strategies in their mentoring programs. The following is a brief description of these approaches, including links to more information and examples for each.

One-to-one mentoring is the traditional model of mentoring in which a more experienced individual is paired with a more junior individual in order to provide the less experienced person with guidance, support and encouragement. Formal mentoring programs using this model typically use an extensive matching process to ensure the pair has potential to form a strong, long-term relationship. A key advantage of the one-to-one mentoring approach is that it enables partners to develop trust and provides consistent support, provided the mentoring partners bond effectively at the onset and commit to working together for a significant period, such as one year or more.

Authentic/natural mentoring is a mentee-led process and relies on the decision-making power of mentee to identify their natural mentors. Natural mentoring puts control in the hands of mentees by allowing them to identify and approach a mentor they determine to be important to support career planning, learning, development or other related objectives.

Blended mentoring is a mix of on-site and online events that allow career counseling and development services staff the opportunity to integrate mentoring into their ordinary practice.

Business-to-business mentoring involves pairing a person from one division or department within a company, with a person outside their division or department. This approach is most commonly used in traditional one-on-one mentoring programs to provide junior level mentees with guidance and perspectives from senior level professionals outside their division. It is especially useful when a program aims to mentor junior level professionals from a particular under-represented group (i.e., people with disabilities, women, African Americans, Asian Americans, etc.) and senior level professionals from the same group are limited in number within the company. Another advantage of business-to-business mentoring is the ability for employees to gain new perspectives and learn about different practices from external mentors.

Critical mentoring is a framework that embeds critical race theory into mentoring; it openly considers race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality in the program design and mentoring relationship. Although mentors of all backgrounds can be valuable in growing the networks and skills of the mentees they support, critical mentoring asks mentors to think critically about context (Hare, 2008). For example, a mentor who intends to connect a Native American mentee to an internship or work opportunity should be aware that some of these environments operate within Eurocentric, white, middle-class culture and values that may not affirm the cultural context of Native youth. Although there is positive intent to build career skills and social networks, asking Native youth to do so in an environment that devalues their culture and identity or does not allow them to be their authentic selves can be deeply hurtful (Weiston-Serdan, 2017).

Cross-group mentoring involves pairing a person of one group or segment of the organization's employee population with a person of a different group. Employees may differ in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability or any other significant difference that can affect how employees interact and relate to one another. Cross-cultural, cross-gender and cross-generational (see below) mentoring are all examples of cross-group mentoring.

Cross-generational mentoring involves pairing a person from one generation (i.e., Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, Millennials) with a person from a different one with a goal of mutual learning and growth. In this way it is a two-way exchange between employees from different generations (Wills, Cokley, & Holmes, 2009). Whereas most of the research on formal reverse mentoring programs tends to focus on more junior employees teaching more experienced employees about technology, cross-generational mentoring recognizes that both older and younger generations have many things to teach and learn from one another. Cross-generational mentoring can benefit both individuals by helping them learn about their specific perspectives and experiences, thereby increasing their ability to work and communicate effectively with individuals of a different generation. For example, different generations can learn from each other how to effectively develop and market products and services to targeted segments of the population.

Electronic/virtual mentoring is mentoring using online software, email, instant messaging and/or video conferencing services, and is commonly used when face-to-face interaction is not possible or practical. Like traditional mentoring, electronic or e-mentoring approaches typically involve one-to-one matching, but can also include online group mentoring. Several organizations, including Partners for Youth with Disabilities' Online Mentoring Program and Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT) Mentors and Pals mentoring programs at the University of Washington offer e-mentoring platforms and models.

This method may be especially suitable for organizations that have offices and employees in different geographical locations. It also makes mentoring possible for employees who are unable to leave their workplace and those who work in rural or remote communities (OPM, 2008). As electronic communications replace face-to-face interactions more and more in the modern workplace, virtual mentoring is also becoming more commonplace; however occasional face-to-face interactions are advised, where possible, to develop a trusting, personal relationship.

Embedded mentoring involves experiences that are enhanced with an embedded mentor, often a peer mentor who has successfully transitioned from internship to employment. This model empowers younger adults in transition and aids in workforce preparedness. By working with peer mentors, interns find success in building confidence, developing workplace skills and transitioning to professional careers.

Flash mentoring is defined as a one-time meeting or discussion that enables an individual to learn and seek guidance from a more experienced person who can pass on relevant knowledge and experience. The purpose of flash mentoring is to provide a valuable learning opportunity for less experienced individuals while requiring a limited commitment of time and resources for more experienced individuals serving as mentors. While mentors and mentees can mutually decide to meet again after their flash mentoring session, the commitment is to participate only in the initial meeting. Typically, a more junior professional seeking leadership development is paired with a more experienced professional from the same or a similar field for a one-time coaching session (Wills, Cokley, & Holmes, 2009). Coaching sessions may be as brief as one hour long. This form of mentoring was developed for the purpose of connecting upcoming professionals with senior level professionals who have limited time to devote to mentoring. Read OPM's Flash Mentoring Toolkit to learn more.

Group mentoring involves one or more experienced professionals providing guidance and support to a group of more junior employees. Mentors and mentees typically participate in structured group activities. Group mentoring has become more common, especially in settings in which recruiting a sufficient number of volunteers for one-on-one mentoring is difficult (Timmons, Mack, Sims, Hare, & Wills, 2006). Unlike one-on-one mentoring, many group mentoring relationships focus more on peer interaction with a mentor acting as a group facilitator. Consequently, fewer group mentoring relationships result in a deep connection between mentor and mentee (Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002; cited in Timmons et al., 2006). The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) describes group mentoring as "one mentor teamed with several protégés who meet at the same time. As the mentor poses questions, listens and reflects, he or she engages all members of the group into the conversation. Each one has their own experience and insight to share and can draw their own learning from the discussion" (OPM, 2008).

Mentoring Circles can be defined as a group of individuals who regularly meet with one or two mentors. They generally meet once or more per month. Topics can be generated by the group or by the organization's strategic objective(s) for creating the group. Mentoring Circles can also be designed for peer, reverse and reciprocal mentoring experiences.

Peer mentoring is a form of mentorship that usually takes place between a person who has lived through a specific experience (peer mentor) and a person who is new to that experience (the peer mentee). In the workforce, peer mentoring is an approach to mentoring in which a professional who is new or less experienced is matched with a more experienced peer – someone whose job position is at the same level – who provides support and guidance to the mentee. Peers can be close in age or further apart, depending on the situation and goals of the mentoring relationship. OPM describes peer mentoring as "usually a relationship with an individual within the same grade, organization and/ or job series. The purpose of peer mentoring is to support colleagues in their professional development and growth, to facilitate mutual learning and to build a sense of community. Peer mentoring is not hierarchical, prescriptive, judgmental or evaluative" (OPM, 2008).

Professional networking is an important complement to mentoring. Professional networking is the act of connecting and interacting with individuals who share common interests, perspectives or experiences. While professional networking is not a new concept, technological advances have increased the ease with which individuals can identify and interact with individuals with common interests or experiences not just locally, but also nationally and globally. As a result, people are using online social networks to exchange ideas, share knowledge and make new professional and personal contacts relevant to their careers and personal goals and interests.

Reciprocal mentoring, according to the Mentor Leadership Team, is a relationship structure that harnesses the power of mentoring into a mutually beneficial relationship where each participant takes turns being the mentor and the mentee. Since much of the power of mentoring lies in the accountability and encouragement, both participants can be trained to be in both roles. This can double the potential for learning without doubling the number of participants. The mutuality of reciprocal mentoring breaks down barriers and prejudices, allowing mentoring relationships to cross generational, global and gender biases. Read this blog post from the Mentor Leadership Team to learn more.

Reverse mentoring is a mentoring relationship in which a more experienced professional is mentored by a more junior professional. This method is appropriate when the junior person has certain knowledge or skills that the more experienced person aims to learn. Reverse mentoring is commonly used to support older professionals in learning how to use new technology, a skill that younger generations tend to know or pick up on more quickly.

OPM describes reverse mentoring as "the mentoring of a senior person (in terms of age, experience or position) by a junior (in terms of age, experience or position) individual with the aim of helping older, more senior people learn from the knowledge of younger people, usually in the field of information technology, computing and internet communications." OPM emphasizes that the mentoring partners need to create and maintain an attitude of openness to the experience and dissolve the barriers of status, power and position in order for a reverse mentoring relationship to be successful (OPM, 2008).

Reverse mentoring has become a popular option for some of the country's leading companies. According to a July 2016 Star Tribune article, companies such as Target and UnitedHealth Group are turning to reverse mentoring to "tap millennials' knowledge." UnitedHealth began a reverse mentoring program in 2016 that paired senior executives in its insurance division with millennials deemed "emerging leaders."

Lockheed Martin also uses reverse mentoring as part of its Effective Leadership of Inclusive Teams summit "Keep Connected" sessions. The sessions are offered in an interactive reverse mentoring format guided by leaders from company ERGs. Jim Sheridan, Vice President and General Manager for Lockheed in Moorestown, NJ, shared the following in an article on the company's website, "I often ask the summer interns to come and meet with me. I call this meeting time a mentoring session, but, it's actually a reverse mentoring session because I learn so much from our interns. What they learn in school often correlates directly with our business' success."

Situational mentoring is a short-term discussion and happens for a specific purpose. This type of mentoring is often project-based and involves giving advice for a specific circumstance, such as preparing a project plan or deploying a new system. Situational mentoring is short-lived and is often limited to the time the individuals are brought together to work on a particular project. Unlike flash mentoring, situational mentoring is not necessarily limited to a one-time meeting or discussion between the mentor and the mentee.

It is important to note that mentoring may also occur in informal ways through peer counseling, apprenticeship, sponsorship and friendship. Although "mentoring" may not be used as a formal label in these instances, they still allow opportunities for mentoring that can enhance these experiences.

Federal Mentoring

On January 3, 2017, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued a final rule to amend the regulations implementing Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 501). The final rule says that agencies of the federal government must adopt employment goals for individuals with disabilities, with sub-goals for individuals with targeted disabilities; provide personal assistance services to certain employees who need them because of a disability; and meet a number of other requirements designed to improve the recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities in the federal workforce.

EEOC also released Questions and Answers: The EEOC's Final Rule on Affirmative Action for People with Disabilities in Federal Employment to assist organizations in understanding the final rule and changes to Section 501.

Mentoring and mentoring programs were highlighted as a disability inclusion strategy in the final rule to improve retention and advancement of federal employees with disabilities, as noted in the text below.

The final rule requires agencies to have sufficient opportunities for employees with disabilities to advance within the agency. Such activities might include specialized training and mentoring programs and strong enforcement against disability-based harassment. The rule also includes requirements for agencies to strengthen their programs for reasonable accommodations and ensure accessibility.

One example of mentoring in the federal space is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) mentoring program and online mentoring toolkit.

Pearson Legal Corporate Disability Mentoring Program

The Pearson Legal Corporate Disability Mentoring Program was established in 2016 with the goal of supporting college students and recent graduates with disabilities in their journey to choose, pursue and succeed in professional occupations. The program relies on a steady stream of volunteer and highly accomplished Pearson employees who willingly share their supportive energy, wisdom and networks in a three-month virtual mentoring experience with a young adult.

The mentoring program has established partnerships with entities that serve consumers, such as the National Federation of the Blind and the Saks Institute for Mental Health Law, Policy and Ethics at the University of Southern California. An advisory council comprised of leaders in the disability, education and diversity field provide ongoing guidance, support and connections to progressive disability communities.

The results from the mentoring experiences have been outstanding. Many mentees choose new and exciting career paths that are a genuine reflection of their interests and skills, while mentors develop a personal investment and newfound insights into issues facing promising young adults who, like everyone, deserve a chance to succeed in careers of their choosing. Pearson intends to take a leading role in scaling its concept of a disability mentoring program to other corporations.

Bjarne Tellman, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Leader of the Mentoring Program: *"At Pearson, our legal professionals are mentoring disabled young mentees to help them develop career plans that reflect their true interests and capabilities, without regard to their disabilities or others' perceptions of what is 'appropriate.' The model leverages our internal resources and is innovative, inexpensive and replicable. We decided to focus on the disabled community because they are highly marginalized, both within the legal profession and within the job market as a whole. Mentors can help talented young mentees realize that they are capable of incredible achievement because of, rather than in spite of, their disabilities. Our experience has convinced me that success can lie in such simple things as being authentic, challenging self-defeating assumptions, providing gentle encouragement and helping our mentees to discover and then harness the power of their own narratives."*

Johanne Peyre, Senior Counsel and Mentor in the Program: *"When first participating in this mentoring program, I tended to think that as a mentor my assignment was to guide mentees into my world. What happened was quite the opposite. From the beginning, what happened is that I was dragged into an unknown world. I realized that inclusion does not primarily happen via tech tools to decrease physical barriers for people with disabilities. To get things moving, it takes more proactive steps from people without disabilities towards people with disabilities. To 'include' people, you first need to get to know them and understand what they are going through; then you can identify what you must change or adapt in your own environment for this to happen. As counter-intuitive as it may sound, I am now convinced that mentoring plays a key role towards diversity and inclusion, not because it is providing some support to the mentees, but because it works as a real efficient wake-up call for the mentors. It changed how conscious I am in my daily life to issues of disability, and minorities in general. Developing and generalizing mentoring is no doubt a powerful tool to promote diversity and inclusion.*

I find striking that all the mentees I had the chance to mentor were already young, intellectual, tremendous achievers in terms of their diplomas, books written, etc., making me feel really humble in comparison, but still underestimating themselves in an incredible way, trying and feeling that need to achieve, always having more to prove to themselves and to 'us' that they are capable. They are struggling alone, and fighting, with their incredible intellectual capacities, but in deep need for guidance, in need for this extra help that could enable them to make this extra step into elevated career circles.

I personally have been lucky to benefit from informal guidance from professors and bosses who helped me to navigate into professional circles that were unknown to me or my close personal network. We all can use this help, but these mentees did not have it before. As a mentor, I see my role as a duty to help bridge that gap. For example, in addition to

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lending an ear and giving advice, I try the best I can to connect mentees to those in my personal network who can make a difference to them, such as professors, colleagues and law firm partners. My experience so far is that my network contacts have valued the introduction and are now also actively mentoring the mentees and, thereby, opening-up chances."

Avesta Alani, Second Year Law Student and Mentee: *"My mentor/mentee experience with Pearson was invaluable and beyond expectation. From my mentor relationship, I was able to extract more confidence in myself and my abilities, and build networking relationships that assisted with career opportunities. I was able to learn about practical skills and tips from my mentor about how to enter the legal field as a lawyer, as that is my pursuit, and even more so, create a long-lasting genuine relationship with my mentor.*

Pearson took it one step further by allowing me to be a summer student with their legal team, allowing me to get a foot in the door for future employment, and furthermore, manifesting their belief in my potential. Because of my experience with the Pearson Mentorship Program, I have received the confidence and experience to be able to publish my book 'Diffability: The Liberation of Potential,' which is a reflection of how I see the capability of people with disabilities today, and am working with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, the largest law firm in Canada. Endeavors I would have not felt the confidence in pursuing without the guidance and support of my mentor.

Mentoring is key, practically and spiritually, in order for youth to learn and grow from another's experience, and to assist in providing the support and confidence for them to shape their own paths. I look forward to continuing my relationship with my mentor, and one day becoming a mentor to another, in order to share my experience and assist by using my resources for those who come after."

Practices & Tools

This section of the *Workplace Mentoring Playbook* provides information on adopting a mentoring culture, implementing successful mentoring strategies and some basic tools to aid in launching workplace mentoring programs.

ADOPTING A MENTORING CULTURE

A Diversity Best Practices survey[1] found that 80 percent of companies surveyed either had formal diversity mentoring programs or were in the process of establishing them to positively impact recruitment and retention. In the disability inclusion space, more and more employers are coordinating or participating in mentoring programs to improve recruitment, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities, facilitating their success during their early years with an organization. In short, these organizations are adopting a mentoring culture. To join this movement, the following steps are recommended:

Step 1: Conduct a mentoring needs assessment

Diversity, equity and inclusion and/or ERG officials initiate the project and conduct an assessment to clarify the appropriate mentoring program model. This assessment will collect insights from key stakeholders and inform the next step.

At this stage, activities should include:

- Determining mentoring program team members;
- Identifying methodology and questions for assessment;
- Identifying key stakeholders for surveys and in-depth-interviews; and
- Conducting mentoring needs assessment and collecting input.

Step 2: Lay the groundwork and set the mentoring program objectives

Once the assessment data is available, appropriate mentoring program team members will collate and analyze data. The data should be mapped to thematic needs - programs, models, desired outcomes and overall impact. Once the themes are captured, formal mentoring program objectives should be drafted and provided to mentoring workgroup members, diversity, equity and inclusion and/or ERG members and other key stakeholders.

At this stage, activities should include:
- Developing program objectives;
- Receiving feedback from team and stakeholders from assessment phase; and
- Beginning the development of the mentoring strategic plan.

Step 3: Align the mentoring program with organizational mission, goals and strategies

Since the mentoring program should align with overarching business objectives, it is important to take the assessment findings and the program objectives and produce a formal mentoring program strategic plan. This document will serve as the charter agreement when presenting to senior leadership for approval.

At this stage, activities should include:
- Aligning program objectives and overarching business objectives;
- Defining measurements for performance indicators; and
- Continuing to further develop the mentoring strategic plan.

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1 From "Diversity Primer," by Diversity Best Practices, 2009. Available to Diversity Best Practices members at https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/publications/diversity-primer

Step 4: Select the mentoring model or approach and develop the mentoring program
Based on the previous groundwork, determine which mentoring model and approach will help achieve your desired objectives. This is a key choice that may include one-on-one, group, circle or other forms. Furthermore, this process may help determine ways to work disability inclusion into other mentoring programs and/or whether to use multiple models of mentoring.

At this stage, activities should include:
• Determining mentoring model(s);
• Determining if the program will connect with other mentoring programs or be a stand-alone program; and
• Continuing to further develop mentoring strategic plan.

Step 5: Develop a mentoring program roadmap
Developing a roadmap, strategy map or logic model to support a written strategic plan will help convey to decision makers how mentoring program objectives will support talent development while also meeting overarching business objectives. Showcasing how specific mentoring activities will achieve desired outcomes will also assist in explaining to senior leadership and other key stakeholders how mentoring can act as a disability inclusion strategy.

At this stage, activities should include:
• Deciding what graphic representation (i.e., roadmap, strategy map, logic model) to use;
• Working with a graphic artist (paid or volunteer) to create the graphic;
• Creating alternate text for describing graphic(s) for people with visual disabilities;
• Adding graphic(s) to mentoring strategic plan created in previous steps;
• Producing mentoring plan in order to brief senior leaders; and
• Requesting meeting to secure leadership buy-in.

Step 6: Gain senior leadership support
Brief senior leaders to gain support. After discussion and filling information gaps, request approval to proceed with a supporting budget and staffing resources.

At this stage, activities should include:
• Briefing senior leaders on development model and assessment findings;
• Highlighting program objectives and project outcomes for mentees and mentors;
• Showcasing mentoring as a disability inclusion strategy attached to return on investment and support of overarching business needs; and
• Requesting budget and staffing approach to proceed with plan.

Step 7: Recruit a mentoring program manager
Once approval is received, return to the mentoring program workgroup and identify the mentoring program manager. This person is likely to arise during the previous six steps, and will likely come from diversity, equity and inclusion departments or from an ERG. In some organizations that already have mentoring programs, it may be appropriate to have that department operate the disability mentoring initiative and provide insights and assistance.

At this stage, it is important to:
• Determine which person has the knowledge, skills and community understanding to successfully implement the new program.
• Decide if the program manager merits a full-time position or if is it possible to operate the initiative along with other inclusion, mentoring and talent development efforts.
• If a person with a disability is not identified as the program manager, ensure an advisory committee is established to have the community perspective included in decision-making.

Step 8: For a formal program, train the participants

Before recruiting mentee and mentor participants, it is important to design a comprehensive training program to ensure mentees, mentors and other company officials impacted by the program are appropriately trained on expectations and prepared for activities and timeframe requests.

The training program may include:
- Overview of the program;
- Reasonable accommodations;
- Disability disclosure and self-identification;
- Mentee expectations;
- Mentor expectations; and
- Specific activities, such as career planning, company culture discussion, functional business unit discussions, etc.

Step 9: Create a steering committee, or enlist an ERG to participate

Depending on the model and approach that was selected, this steering committee or ERG may already have been formed or assigned responsibilities. If not, it is important to enlist ongoing assistance for feedback from employees with disabilities and other allies in diversity, equity and inclusion work.

Step 10: Launch the mentoring program

With a final mentoring strategic plan and roadmap, along with a comprehensive training program and supportive steering committee, it is now time to officially announce and launch the program! Once applications are received, utilize match criteria to place mentees and mentors together and inform the participants. Conduct training and introduce mentees to mentors and begin the cohort for the pre-determined program length.

For this stage, the following activities are suggested:
- Develop and post mentee and mentor applications;
- Develop and prepare pre and post surveys for mentees and mentors;
- Develop and utilize match criteria for placing mentees and mentors together;
- Inform mentees and mentors of their match or matches (depending on mentoring model selected); and
- Conduct training and begin the mentoring cohort.

A mentoring program can have a positive impact on an organization, improving employee retention and engagement and enriching workplace culture. It can also serve as an organizational strategy towards disability inclusion and diversity success.

INCLUSION TOOLS TO HELP LAUNCH AN ACCESSIBLE MENTORING PROGRAM
Several organizations provide guidance and manuals to help organizations build more inclusive mentoring practices and programs. Although some of the materials are designed for providing services to youth, the principles are extractable for all mentoring programs.

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth

- *Paving the Way to Work: A Guide to Career-Focused Mentoring*: This guide is intended for individuals designing mentoring programs for youth, including youth with disabilities, in the transition phase to adulthood.

- *Guideposts for Success*: Helps guide families, institutions and youth themselves through the transition processes. Guidepost 3, Youth Development and Leadership, emphasizes the importance of mentors and roles models, including people with and without disabilities, for youth transitioning from school to work or higher education.

Partners for Youth With Disabilities

- *Expanding Access Inclusion for Youth with Disabilities* (requires site registration): Offers inclusion strategies for individuals working in the youth programming arena, including tips on inclusive communications, Universal Design for Learning, inclusive marketing and more. It also provides hands-on activities for staff and volunteers to practice what they have learned. Thanks to Liberty Mutual Foundation for funding the development of this resource.

- *Best Practices for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities* (PDF): Helps organizations start their own mentoring program or expand a current program in order to include youth with disabilities. This was published by Partners for Youth with Disabilities and funded by the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation.

- eMentoring Platform: A new, inclusive online mentoring platform available for use by organizations that would like an accessible, online platform to host their mentoring programming.

RECRUITING TIPS
Companies frequently target a specific segment or level of employees to receive mentoring. These may include all new hires or rising professionals identified as potential supervisors or leaders.

To meet the intended goals for a specific group of mentoring program participants, it is helpful to use a targeted recruitment strategy. Targeted recruitment is focused on identifying and enlisting individuals with specific attributes, experience, skills or knowledge that align with the mentoring recipients' needs and goals. It may be most appropriate for formal mentoring programs that have small cohorts of mentees and aim to support development of specific skill sets such as supervisory skills, leadership skills or technical knowledge.

Whether recruitment is targeted or not, it is important to define and communicate essential characteristics the program seeks in mentors. Some of the characteristics of effective mentors include:

- Willingness to commit time to mentoring responsibilities. Be specific about how much time mentors must commit in recruitment materials, i.e., four hours per month.

- Sincere interest in helping another employee grow professionally and accomplish goals. Mentors should regard the role as an opportunity rather than an assignment.

- Strong interpersonal communication skills including the ability to listen and respond thoughtfully to others' concerns and questions.

- Willingness and patience needed to provide guidance, coaching and constructive feedback as well as praise and encouragement.

- Sensitivity to cultural diversity and personal differences.

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Each program should define the desired mentor characteristics that match its goals and objectives. Recruiting volunteer mentors is a critical step in starting and sustaining a mentoring program. To attract mentors, it is important to clearly communicate the program's goals, the potential benefits for all participants and what is required of mentors. Being honest about expectations helps overall participation and improves mentor retention. Recruitment activities present an opportunity to increase the mentoring program visibility while fostering employee and employer support to expand and sustain mentoring throughout the organization.

Other strategies for mentor recruitment include:

- Soliciting individual recommendations or nominations from leaders and employees.
- Sending emails explaining qualifications and expectations along with a mentor application to all employees.
- Strong interpersonal communication skills including the ability to listen and respond thoughtfully to others concerns and questions.
- Holding an informational meeting or conference call for anyone interested in learning more about becoming a mentor.
- Asking individuals who have served as mentors before to speak or write about their experience and the rewards of participating.

EmployAbility Dallas

EARN has partnered with EmployAbility Dallas, formerly the Dallas Mayor's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities, for the past two years through the EARN Inclusion@ Work Intermediary Network. In April 2019, EmployAbility hosted EARN for a "Developing Mentoring Cultures" workshop and panel as part of their broader 2019 Educational Seminar.

"Mentoring is a key component of a rewarding and fulfilling career experience. A mentor can help remove some of the barriers employees with disabilities face while making a positive impact on their organization and their own professional lives. Because we recognize how mentoring can positively benefit both the mentor and mentee, we focus on mentoring in our education series and are proud to highlight the success stories we have seen here in Dallas."

- TONYA SHADDUCK, EMPLOYABILITY DALLAS BOARD MEMBER

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CHECKLIST FOR WORKPLACE MENTORING

> ✓ *Does our organizational needs assessment and mentoring program evaluation ask about issues of diversity & inclusion?*

If not, consider adding a few questions related to issues of diversity and inclusion planning to employee and program surveys, questionnaires or focus groups and then evaluate the results.

For example, you may want to ask employees a multiple choice question about what factors influence their decisions for participating as a mentor, some potential reasons to include are:

- "The opportunity to be matched with someone who is similar to me culturally (i.e., shares my experience as a woman, a minority or a person with a disability or otherwise similar to me)."

- "The opportunity to be matched with someone who is different from me culturally (i.e., has had a different experience, from whom I can gain a different perspective)."

Why Diversity Matters to Southwest Airlines

Southwest

"At Southwest Airlines, diversity means having a modern and multi-faceted workforce, which gives us a key competitive advantage in the national marketplace. Our network is comprised of employees representing a variety of backgrounds whose individual experiences help form our unique corporate culture. Fostering an environment that encourages diversity of ideas, knowledge and actions is paramount to our operational excellence."

In order to gauge how accessible your program is for all employees, consider asking a question such as:

- "Is there anything about the program that makes it challenging for you to participate fully? If yes, please explain and suggest any ways we could make the program more welcoming and accessible for all employees?"

> ✓ *Does our program advisory board or planning committee include diverse representatives?*

Consider whether the individuals serving on your program's planning or advisory committee or board represent the full range of cultural differences and perspectives of the company's employees. If the group lacks diversity, identify potential members that represent different cultures and experiences.

> ✓ *Do we make it a goal to engage and support professional growth among a diverse segment of the company's employees?*

Having an explicit goal of promoting employee diversity and inclusion will expedite program efforts to reach and engage all employees while reducing barriers to participation among typically underrepresented groups.

An example program goal is: "The Mentoring Program aims to engage, support and develop the potential of a diverse group of agency employees."

> ✓ *Is our program information accessible and widely available to all employees?*

Make sure all information is readily available and accessible to individuals with disabilities. For guidance on making online information, documents and materials accessible, see the Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology (PEAT), which promotes the employment, retention and career advancement of people with disabilities through the development, adoption and promotion of accessible technology. Read PEAT's 10 Tips for an Accessible Website to learn more. For suggestions about appropriate accommodations for specific disabilities, search Job Accommodation Network's (JAN) Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) system.

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> ✓ *Are employees invited to self-nominate or apply for mentoring opportunities?*

Limiting mentoring opportunities to nominated employees may unintentionally create a barrier to participation for women, minorities and persons with disabilities if managers have any biases or misperceptions about their capacity or potential for growth. It is preferable to allow employees the choice to self-nominate or apply to participate in formal mentoring programs to reduce any barriers. If the program requires supervisors to approve the employees' participation, consider requiring the manager to provide a clear, written justification for disapproving an employee's participation.

> ✓ *Does our application ask about match preferences and accommodations?*

If it's not already included, consider adding a question such as:

• "What, if any, preferences do you have regarding specific mentor/mentee characteristics or experience?"

While the pool of potential mentors may or may not make it possible to respond to all preferences, asking applicants what they prefer gives them the opportunity to voice any specific preferences ranging from having a mentor or mentee of a particular gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability status, to being matched with someone who shares a particular interest or has prior experience in a specific job role or field. It is also essential to ask participants an open-ended question such as:

• "Please describe any reasonable accommodations or other needs that can be met to help you participate fully in the program." This will ensure the program plans to accommodate employees who make specific requests, such as requests for assistive technology to effectively communicate with their mentors or mentees.

> ✓ *When recruiting, do we cast a wide net to ensure a diverse pool of mentors?*

Mentoring programs may find it challenging to recruit a diverse pool of mentors if the demographic composition of the company lacks diversity. Programs may need to take a two-pronged approach to recruiting a diverse group of mentors, combining general company-wide appeals with targeted outreach. General recruitment appeals should be made to all employees, where appropriate, to ensure all segments of the company's workforce are encouraged to participate. If any employee seeking a mentor has specifically expressed a preference to be matched with a mentor from a similar background or cultural perspective, targeted outreach may be needed to ensure employees from underrepresented groups have received the recruitment message and understand how participating as a mentor could benefit another employee.

> ✓ *When matching, do we protect the employees' confidentiality and respect their right to self-disclosure?*

Mentoring staff should not share any demographic information or medical information with other employees, including mentors or mentees of the employee. This includes not sharing disability-related information pertaining to an employee. Decisions about whether and what information to disclose is very personal and can have negative repercussions in the workplace; therefore, always protect the privacy and confidentiality of any personal information pertaining to mentoring participants (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, 2009). Let all employees know it is up to them to decide what, if any, personal information to share with their mentors/mentees.

In order to build confidence and trust for disclosure, providing a specific disability disclosure training for all participants is recommended. This training will aid mentees and mentors in gaining new tactics for communication regarding disclosure. For federal contractors who need to comply with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, the mentoring program registration is another opportunity for employees to self-identify. When designing this process, it is important to only gather necessary data and to file any medical documentation separately from human resources or mentoring program records.

> ✓ **In our training, do we provide opportunities for participants to discuss cultural differences and how they may impact mentoring relationships?**

Cultural differences may or may not impact the success of mentor-mentee relationships. Some employees may find it easy to learn about differences and partner effectively while other employees may struggle with differences. If the company already offers diversity awareness training and resources to employees, consider using some of the same training content or materials to briefly address diversity awareness and cultural differences in your mentoring training. Additional online diversity awareness training resources include:

- U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
- DiversityCentral: Resources for Cultural Diversity at Work
- Diversity, Inc
- Cornell University K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability

> ✓ **Do we encourage participants to learn more about their differences by talking to one another and using various resources for self-education?**

While training for mentors and mentees may only briefly address diversity awareness and cultural differences, consider providing a list of resources to both mentors and mentees to research different cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Helpful resources include:
ADA National Network
SHRM's Global & Cultural Effectiveness Resources

For guidance on disability etiquette, visit EARN's Disability Etiquette webpage or read the ODEP fact sheet, Communicating With and About People with Disabilities.

Appendix A: Mentee Application

First Name:

_____

Last Name:

_____

Company/Department:

_____

Title:

_____

Office Address:

_____

Email Address:

_____

Phone number(s):

_____

How long have you worked in your current position?

_____

How long have you worked at the company?

_____

Describe your current and prior professional experience and responsibilities:

_____

What are your short-term professional goals?

_____

What is your long-term career goal or aspiration?

_____

Describe your educational background (What, if any, degrees do you have? Name of education institution(s) and/or certifications?):

_____

What are your main interests and passions outside of work?

_____

Why are you interested in working with a mentor?

_____

Have you had a mentor before?

_____

If yes, what did you like and dislike the most about the experience?

_____

What are two traits (skills, knowledge, experience, attributes) you would like your mentor to have?

_____

What, if any, preferences do you have regarding specific mentor characteristics or experience?

_____

Please describe any reasonable accommodations or other needs that can be met to help you participate fully in the program:

_____

Appendix B: Mentor Application

First Name:

_____

Last Name:

_____

Company/Department:

_____

Title:

_____

Office Address:

_____

Email Address:

_____

Phone number(s):

_____

How long have you worked in your current position?

_____

How long have you worked at the company?

_____

Describe your current and prior professional experience and responsibilities:

_____

How would you describe yourself in terms of personal attributes as well as professional knowledge and skills?

_____

Describe your educational background (What, if any, degrees do you have? Name of education institution(s) and/or certifications?):

_____

What are your main interests and passions outside of work?

_____

Why are you interested in serving as a mentor to another professional?

_____

Have you served as a mentor before?

_____

If yes, what did you most like and dislike about the experience?

_____

What are two primary things you would like to help another professional accomplish through mentoring?

_____

What, if any, preferences do you have regarding specific mentee characteristics or experience?

_____

Please describe any reasonable accommodations or other needs that can be met to help you participate fully in the program:

_____

Appendix C: Helpful Resources

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)
- Disability Mentoring Day (DMD): Coordinated by AAPD, this is a large-scale national effort that takes place the third Wednesday of every October. Employers may participate in DMD and also consider using October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), to launch a mentoring program.

Catalyst, Inc. Report: Making Mentoring Work

Center for Mentoring Excellence
- Articles
- Blog

Disability:IN
- Mentorship Exchange: A six-month career mentoring opportunity for college students and recent graduates with disabilities participating in Disability:IN's NextGen Leaders program. Mentees are paired with business professionals from Disability:IN partner companies and have the opportunity to meet and interact with other professionals in their field of study or area of interest.

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN): A free resource funded through the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) that educates employers on the value of hiring, retaining and advancing people with disabilities and helps them tap the power of disability diversity.
- Mentoring webpage
- Fostering Disability-Inclusive Workplaces Through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

Job Accommodation Network (JAN): Funded through ODEP, JAN is the leading source of free, expert and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.
- Blog post: Workplace Mentoring: It's All Good!
- On-Site Mentoring

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership: Works to improve the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships for America's young people and to close the mentoring gap for the one in three young people growing up without this critical support.
- Mentoring Connector: Free service that helps youth mentoring programs across the country recruit local volunteers and increase their visibility.
- Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™: Research-based and practitioner-approved standards for creating and sustaining quality youth mentoring programs.
- The Mentoring Effect (PDF): Report informed by the first-ever nationally representative survey of young people on the topic of both informal and formal mentoring, as well as insights from key leaders in business, philanthropy, government and education.
- Mentoring: at the crossroads of education, business and community (PDF): This report examines how top U.S. businesses collaborate with the public and nonprofit sectors to connect youth in their communities to transformative mentoring relationships and the value gained by businesses and employees.
- Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series
- Video: Jessica Cox: Mentor In Real Life

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth): A source for information about employment and youth with disabilities.
- Blog post: The Power of Mentoring Relationships
- Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP)™
- Paving the Way to Work: A Guide to Career-Focused Mentoring

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National Disability Mentoring Coalition (NDMC): Nonprofit membership organization that brings together more than 40 organizations focused on improving the awareness, quality and impact of mentoring for youth and adults with disabilities. Members include nonprofits, employers, higher education institutions, foundations and government agencies. NDMC supports member through disability and inclusive mentoring resources, training and an e-mentoring platform.
• Susan M. Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame
• Dinah F.B. Cohen DREAM Fellowship Program
• Blog Post: Mentoring and Diversity

National Mentoring Resource Center (NMRC): Resource for youth mentoring practitioners interested in incorporating evidence-based practices to support positive youth outcomes. Offers mentoring tools, program and training materials and no-cost technical assistance. Funded through the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
• NMRC Blog
• Webinars
• Online Training: Starting a Youth Mentoring Program

National Organization on Disability
• Campus to Careers connects students and recent graduates with disabilities to meaningful internships and careers by training participating employers on proven disability recruitment strategies, coaching campus disability and career services offices on effective collaboration models, and facilitating relationships between companies and student service offices to build a talent pipeline.

OPM Mentoring Webpage

Pearson Disability Mentorship Program for Students and Young Professionals with Disabilities: Program provides guidance, support and advice from experienced professionals working in a variety of legal-related positions to students and recent graduates with disabilities.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) TARGET Center Mentoring Toolkit: The USDA Office of Operations TARGET Center partnered with the National Disability Mentoring Coalition (NDMC) to create this online mentoring toolkit. The toolkit is a central hub for USDA, other federal agencies and others interested in leveraging mentoring to support the recruitment, placement, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities and disabled veterans in the workforce.

U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP): The only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities. ODEP's mission is to develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
• Fact Sheet: Cultivating Leadership: Mentoring Youth with Disabilities
• Fact Sheet: Career-focused Mentoring for Youth: The What, Why, and How

Appendix D: References

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