Inspiring Excellence in Your NDT Mentoring Program

Donald Booth, CEO
Do you remember?

- Your first day on the job?
- Your first mentor?
- How did they impact the start of your career?
I remember….

- Being nervous
- Being excited
- And not knowing exactly what to expect
I remember two mentors

- They had completely different personalities,

- but they both had their own strengths,

- And they both took time to answer my questions.
Did you even have a Mentor?

- Lets be honest, not every new employee receives OJT/Mentoring
- Industry is production driven, production pays the bills
- Honestly 90% of the “true” training happens in the field
  - Real world situations
  - Practice not theory
- Only way to learn this efficiently is through Mentorship
  - Without, its trial by error
BENEFITS OF A QUALITY 
NDT MENTORING PROGRAM

Benefits for the Mentor:

• Helps keep the Mentor sharp, refreshing the basics

• Strengthens the mentor's interpersonal relationship skills.

• Reminds the mentor how to listen actively rather than passively.

• Prepares them for higher level positions
Benefits for the mentee:

• Increases the mentee's self-confidence

• Bridges that gap between theory and true craft of the trade

• Provides a clear path to milestones in their career
Benefits for the mentee:

- Encourages the mentee to ask questions and participate in active learning.
- Educates the mentee on how to accept feedback in important areas, such as communications and technical abilities.
- Improves the mentee's interpersonal relationship skills.
Benefits for the organization:

• Conveys to people within the organization that management is willing to invest in its members/employees.

• Identifies your trainees strengths as well as areas that need improvement.

• Fosters more loyal employees -- this can lead to reduction in turnover rates (which saves money on recruitment and training costs)
Benefits for the organization:

• Develops strong relationships with clients

• Sets your company apart from those without a mentoring program

• SAVES MONEY!!!
  • Reduces new employee turnover
  • Produces higher competency in entry level techs
  • Helps ensure they are prepared for certification
Key Components of a Mentoring Program

- **Purpose**
- **Process**
- **Progress**
- **Feedback**
Purpose:

• There should be a clear, strategic purpose that aligns with organizational goals and objectives of the company.

• Both the mentor and mentee must be committed to the importance of the mentoring process and make it a priority.
Process:

• Matching the mentor and mentee.

• Length of the mentoring process.

• In addition, both parties must be actively engaged to move at an appropriate speed.
Progress:

• A clear timeline should be established with check-in points (two months, four months, six months, eight months, etc....) to ensure that both parties are reaching their goals and milestones.

• Includes having metrics for measuring progress such as a “Competency Checklist”.

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A competency checklist to track progress

What should the checklist contain?

- Equipment familiarization?
- Calibrations?
- Interpretation?
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- Documentation?
- Acceptance criteria?
- Applicable code familiarization?
- Company procedure familiarization?

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Feedback:

Both participants must provide constructive feedback and be open to receiving feedback from each other.

- A weekly or monthly form for the mentor and mentee to be provided to their supervisor

- Rating
  - Mentor > Mentee
  - Mentee > Mentor
Creating a Mentoring Program Structure

Determine Objectives

Every organization has a different set of needs and your mentoring program should focus on your company’s specific objectives. List your goals for the mentoring program using the SMART acronym.
S.M.A.R.T

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

Keep these objectives in mind while planning, implementing and improving your program.

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Specific

- What does this mean to you?

- What industry are you in?
  - Oil/Gas
  - Infrastructure
  - Aerospace

- What are you examining?
  - Bridges – Fracture Critical?
  - Tanks – Process or Storage?
  - Landing Gears
Measurable

• How do we track progress?
  • Set Goals / Milestones
  • Competency levels

• Create a timeline of acquired skills
  • Where should your technician be in a week, two weeks, etc.
  • Method Dependent
Attainable

- It takes time to create a solid technician
- Be careful not to go too far down the rabbit hole
- Must grow the technician
- Remember, learning never ends
Realistic

• Be realistic, don’t overwhelm
  • Shearwave proficiency in a week?
  • RT film interpretation, how long?

• Don’t be afraid to adjust timelines
  • Recognize where you program works and doesn’t
  • Put yourself in the trainee’s shoes

• Profit and OJT
  • Fine line to walk between production and mentorship
We learn by failing, but do we have to?
- Mentorship can remove that failing element
- Lessons learned

Remove the stumbling blocks

Hard lessons are only hard when you are on your own
- Mentorship controls the situation
Thank You!