

Look for Mentors Who Also Want to be Mentored

by Celeste Gudas, CEO, 24 Seven Inc.



If your office is anything like ours than you're probably sitting in an open floor plan next to co-workers who are in their 20's, 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's and beyond. Welcome to the cross-generational workplace.

It makes for interesting times—especially when it comes to managing your career and learning new skills that will enable you to advance.

In a recent study we conducted on job satisfaction, we found that one vital need unites cross generational employees working today—they all want to be relevant in the job market of tomorrow. Having lived through recessionary times, layoffs and lack of raises, all generational groups say they believe training and career pathing is the most important thing companies can offer today.

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Our Survey shows that today's work force is highly motivated by training and development opportunities—in fact, 54% say better growth potential is the main reason they consider new job opportunities. 63% say that access to professional development opportunity has a positive impact on their job satisfaction.

One thing many companies have endorsed to help its employees is mentorships. But we believe that the new workplace offers an even better option: cross generational mentorships, a relationship where the mentee and mentor help each other.

Closing the Skills Gap with Mentoring

Every career today requires employees to have digital skills—be it for marketing, communication, sales—you name it. Every employer we work with is looking for individuals across the spectrum who understands how to use new media and technology to communicate.

For employees, having the digital skills to succeed today is vital, BUT, it's even more important to learn the skills you will need for tomorrow. This provides an ideal intersection for cross generational mentoring.

Millennials and Gen Xers are digital natives but don't always have the level of experience to navigate the tricky depths of social media and corporate infrastructures. Boomers are less comfortable with some of the newer forms of digital communications but have the experience to rise through the ranks and to know what is appropriate to put out there in the digital space.

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Traditional mentorships were designed to pair up-and-coming talent with an executive partner who could impart corporate wisdom, career advice and guidance for moving up the corporate ladder. There's no better time than now for employees to look at mentorships as a two-way street.

Reverse mentoring—or cross generational mentoring—recognizes that there are skill gaps on both sides. By creating a mentorship relationship where both younger and older colleagues share experiences, skills and new ways of working, employees will be able to create a bridge to eliminate both the generation and skills gaps that exist. Building these relationships will also help employees foster a greater sense of community within the organization—another highly valued element in the workplace.

You should not expect a mentorship to take the place of more specific skills based training programs—and those who want to get ahead should seek out these kinds of training programs. But, a cross-generational mentorship can be a great way to take control of your future and build a relationship that will take you—and your mentor—far.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR Celeste Gudas is a leading authority on workforce strategy for creative-driven companies. A distinguished entrepreneur and recruiting industry innovator, Ms. Gudas has grown 24 Seven from a single New York office to 9 US locations and internationally to London and Canada, and has expanded the industries the firm serves. Today 24 Seven is the go-to talent source supporting the world's top teams in Fashion, Retail, Advertising, Marketing, Design, Interactive/Digital, Media, Beauty, CPG and Entertainment. A certified Women's Business Enterprise by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council, 24 Seven is also a recipient of the prestigious Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award. For more information about how you can create a successful workforce strategy for your company call your local 24 Seven office or email Celeste Gudas at cgudas@24seveninc.com. **FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 24 SEVEN, VISIT WWW.24SEVENINC.COM AND 24SEVENTALENT.COM**