Building Bridges

Creating a Mentoring Program focused on Training and Retaining New Employees at General Mills’ Customer Service Center

A Leadership Action Project
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The Bridge
Our Journey Today

• What is mentoring?

• What are the benefits of mentoring?

• What are the qualities of a successful mentoring program?
Mentoring

• Multiple Forms
  – Formal Programs
Mentoring

“a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy, and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person”

~Gordon F. Shea
“Mentoring is like constructing footbridges. The mentor is the engineer, designing and constructing different bridges as people and conditions change. Sometimes mentors will need to construct wide, solid bridges with handrails and very limited risk to help mentees move towards new experiences. At other times their partners will be ready and only need a little encouragement to use a narrow suspension bridge swaying in gale-force winds—with planks missing and little or no handrails.”

~Kathy Lacey
Mentoring

• Multiple Forms
  – Formal Programs
  – Informally Built

• The Heart and Soul
Mentoring Benefits

• New Employee (Mentee)
  – Guidance and gain expertise
  – Sense of belonging
  – Perspective

• Mentor
  – Experience
  – Skill development
  – Connect with new techniques

• Organization
  – Reducing turnover
  – Productivity
  – Increase commitment, maximize development
Clear Goal

To build relationships, share knowledge and create a community of learning

Boils down to: LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS!
Mentor

• Volunteers to Help Others
• Experience and Knowledge
• Trust, Respect, Credibility
• “Clicks” with New Employee
New Employee

- Engaged in Learning
- Asks for Help
- Desire to Perform Well
- Solicits Feedback
Resources and Support

• Training
  – Roles and responsibilities
  – Roundtables
  – Mentoring resources

• Organizational Support
  – At all levels
  – Culture of learning
Successful Qualities

• Clearly defined goal
• Mentors as volunteers
• New Employee focused on success
• Resources available
• Environment of support and consistency
Success Building

• Give clear, specific, step-by-step directions
• Allow new employee drive the process
• Explain the big picture and why
• Answer questions, patiently
• Build confidence and be encouraging
• Advise on appearance, attitude, soft skills, culture
• Introduce to new team and others
I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

-Maya Angelou
It may not matter what an organization says to a new employee, it may not matter what the organization does for the employee in terms of benefits or opportunity, the new employee is most impressed by the way he or she feels when working at the organization.