

Implementing a Reverse Mentoring Program

The Idea, the Benefits, and the Challenges

David F. Smith, PhD  
Imxpro.com & oafound.org

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Learning Objectives

- You will understand WHAT Reverse Mentoring Programs are and WHY you might want one in your own organization.
- You will observe through group participation that implementing a program requires some brainstorming and planning.
- You will have started a tactical implementation for your own organization of a Reverse Mentoring Program if you believe it appropriate.
- You can use this planning process for many other projects in your work, avocations, and home.

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Reverse mentoring has been shown to be an effective organizational development tool

The idea must be fully explored

Implementation challenges must be addressed early on in planning for a program

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Brainstorming Result**

**Goal:** Organizational development based on a Reverse Mentoring program to engage and retain early career potential key contributors

**Key points of Reverse Mentoring:**

- Pairs a senior manager (senior) with an early career professional – usually younger (junior)
- Junior is in charge of the partnership regarding ideas, discussions, and structure (growth opportunity)
- Senior accepts that role in order to learn more about how Junior's generation thinks and acts regarding organizational challenges

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Benefits**

<b>Provide</b>	Provide the senior member with a source for insights into how the younger generation of worker and consumer think about things.
<b>Enable</b>	Enable the junior member to speak their mind and perhaps contribute to the organization with the next new idea.
<b>Learn</b>	Leaders can learn how to work the younger generation.
<b>Create</b>	Create a bond between the two participants that may last a career span much like non-reverse mentoring (double negative, I know).
<b>Allows</b>	Allows the junior member an opportunity to participate outside of their normal job function in perhaps high-level ways early in their career.

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Mechanics**

- Pair a senior and junior member
- Pairs meet regularly for a planned discussion
- The agenda is set by the junior member  
(If the pair is having a hard time producing discussion topics, they can adopt a business case to solve together)
- A program coordinator monitors how the pair is working together and helps when needed
- Lasts from six months and sometimes two years

6

---

---

---

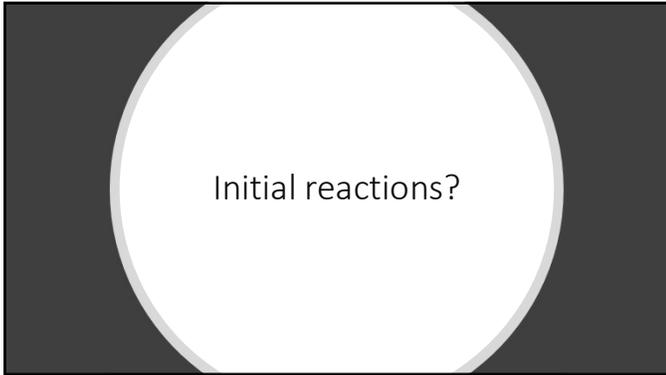
---

---

---

---

---



7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

To make this work!

-  Control the planning and implementation process
-  Be creative
-  Show optimism
-  Test your emotional response
-  Gather needed information
-  Be tough using "devil's advocate" thinking

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Six [colored] Thinking Hats: DeBono (1985)

- Blue: Control the planning and implementation process
- Green: Be creative
- Yellow: Show optimism
- Red: Test your emotional response
- White: Gather and analyze information
- Black: Be tough using "devil's advocate" thinking

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

• **White Hat:** with this thinking hat, you focus on the available data. Look at the information that you have, analyze past trends, and see what you can learn from it. Look for gaps in your knowledge and try to either fill them or take account of them.

• **Red Hat:** "wearing" the Red Hat, you look at problems using your intuition, gut reaction, and emotion. Also, think how others could react emotionally. Try to understand the responses of people who do not fully know your reasoning.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

10

• **Black Hat:** using Black Hat thinking, look at a decision's potentially negative outcomes. Look at it cautiously and defensively. Try to see why it might **not** work. This is important because it highlights the weak points in a plan. It allows you to eliminate them, alter them, or prepare contingency plans to counter them.

Black Hat thinking helps to make your plans "tougher" and more resilient. It can also help you to spot fatal flaws and risks before you embark on a course of action. It's one of the real benefits of this model, as many successful people get so used to thinking positively that they often cannot see problems in advance. This leaves them under-prepared for difficulties.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

11

• **Yellow Hat:** this hat helps you to think positively. It is the optimistic viewpoint that helps you to see all the benefits of the decision and the value in it. Yellow Hat thinking helps you to keep going when everything looks gloomy and difficult.

• **Green Hat:** the Green Hat represents creativity. This is where you develop creative solutions to a problem. It is a freewheeling way of thinking, in which there is little criticism of ideas.

• **Blue Hat:** this hat represents process control. It's the hat worn by people chairing meetings, for example. When facing difficulties because ideas are running dry, they may direct activity into Green Hat thinking. When contingency plans are needed, they will ask for Black Hat thinking.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

12

Small Group Exercise: Take a Hat!

- Five Groups (Moderator is Blue Hat)
- Each Group focuses just on one Hat color
- Discuss and record your input to the process based on your Hat color
- Produce at least five to share
- 10 minutes

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Sharing, Feedback, Questions

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

More on Reverse Mentoring

15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Steps to Plan and Implement

What do you think they are?

16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Individual Application

- For your own organization, note two or three points applicable to planning and implementing a Reverse Mentoring program in your own organization
- Blue: Who, how, and what of process control
- Green: How to create creativity
- Yellow: What's good about this idea
- Red: How do you feel about this, and how do you think others will feel
- White: What information do you need
- Black: What's wrong, why won't it work, what are the barriers

17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Tactical Plan

- Goal for your organization
- How the program works
- Benefits of the program
- Possible problems and solutions
- Measurement criteria
- Implementation plan: What is the SMART goal?

18

---

---

---

---

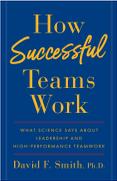
---

---

---

---

Questions? Comments? Follow-up?  
 Feel free to email me your questions and comments.  
 Thank you!



[DAVIDSMITH@OAFFOUND.ORG](mailto:DAVIDSMITH@OAFFOUND.ORG)    [LMXPRO.COM](http://LMXPRO.COM)

Subscribe to my FiveStar Blog at [LMXpro.com](http://LMXpro.com)

Special [lmxpro.com](http://lmxpro.com) offer on my book

19

---

---

---

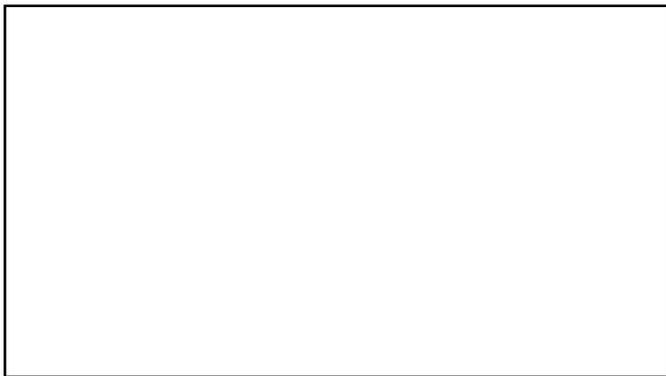
---

---

---

---

---



20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---