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Mentoring lets managers create a legacy of success

Sometimes key skills are best taught by superior taking a special interest

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I am a big believer in mentoring. It's important because organizations today have less management time to help support and develop talent. When I help organizations assess talent and put together development plans, I often recommend that a high potential leader be mentored.

(For managers) it helps to create a legacy ... a sense that they have been significant, not just successful. Usually, people have mentored them, and they need to pass on the gifts of that relationship. They need to become better mentors if they want to retain key talent (who) want to know where their careers are going.

Mentors help individuals get noticed and get on the fast track, and help them deal with the key skills that are often overlooked when you are working your way up the corporate ladder or expanding in your responsibility.

For instance, a mentor might advise that you could network better if you would go and play golf. Or a mentor might advise an employee to leverage their hobbies and personal interests to recruit new clients or expand sales connections.

Women mentoring other women often will point out that you shouldn't eat lunch at your desk. Go out and invite some key people you know to have lunch with you. They are the people who can help you in your current role or in your career.

Men tend to go out to lunch or go to the gym more easily. They tend to use their lunch activities more productively for networking.

Oftentimes, for women, that's the work and family challenge. A mentor can help women to sort that out.

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