

Why do you need a mentor?

There are all sorts of theories about whether people are smarter today than they were 50 or even 100 years ago.



Some argue that because of the internet, people have learnt to assimilate information faster and in greater quantities. Others believe that greater access to education has meant more people are given the opportunity to develop their minds.

Recent studies also seem to indicate that people are getting smarter over time. An [analysis](#) conducted by researchers at Kings College London found that on average intelligence had risen the equivalent of 20 IQ points since 1950.

The researchers harvested IQ test data from more than 200 000 participants, captured over 64 years and from 48 countries.

However, having a high IQ does not always translate into success in the workplace.

“An IQ score doesn’t measure your practical intelligence: knowing how to make things work, Richard Nisbett, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, told [CNN](#). “It doesn’t measure your creativity. It doesn’t measure your curiosity.”

In today’s work environment, the components Nisbett mentions are crucial. They fall into the categories of emotional and social intelligence, and in a world in which communication and immediacy are dominant, it is arguably the latter that are more the measure of an employee’s success.

Highly intelligent people are certainly valued for their ideas and creative input, but it is important that a business makes use of [coaching and mentoring](#) programmes to help them understand the roles of others within the company structure.

Ideally, the business owner or manager would want mentors who are on the same intelligence level as their mentees, as they themselves would have learnt the finer points of company structure and EQ and SQ but will still know how to relate well to their young charges.

Here are some reasons why a mentor is important:

- **Experience**

Those in mentoring positions have oodles of experience, and have literally seen and done it all. For mentees, the “elder statesmen” are not only the perfect people to show them the ropes, but will school them in issues that can help them grow in the company. Personal ambition is natural, but a mentor will help to harness this ambition so that enemies are not made along the way.

- **Accountability**

As Lisa Quast, the founder of Career Woman Inc. explains: “A mentor brings accountability and this breeds responsibility. I’ve found that within a very short period of time, my mentees fall into the habit of holding themselves accountable for completing their action items. They learn from me, as their mentor, and then the excitement of completing tasks and seeing the results motivates them even more to hold themselves accountable and strive for achievements they previously thought were impossible.”

- **A ‘lifelong’ ally**

Mentors by their very nature want to see their charges succeed, not only because it is great to see youngsters succeed, but because it is a good reflection on their own abilities and teachers. Because of that, mentors tend to support their mentees no matter what. That kind of relationship naturally breeds trust, giving the mentee the confidence to try new things safe in the knowledge that even if they fail, someone will be there to catch them.

