

The Perks of Mentoring Aren't Just for Protégés

A mentoring relationship is a serious commitment of time and energy. And while the [benefits of being a protégé](#) are clear, it may be a little less obvious why someone would elect to become a mentor.

After all, as a seasoned professional you probably already have plenty of responsibilities and commitments keeping you busy. So why would you willingly choose to take on yet another project - especially one that usually isn't compensated in any immediate, tangible way?

We've already touched on some of the reasons in [an earlier post](#). Mentors who are going through the Everwise process have told us that they develop great coaching skills from mentoring, that they gain exposure to new ideas, and that it enhances their reputation, among other things.

There's also a wealth of academic research and other data showing the benefits of being a mentor. It's not for everyone, of course, but if you're the right fit, here are some powerful benefits you could enjoy:



1. Develop Your Career

First, let's talk hard numbers. [Research by Sun Microsystems](#) looked at the career progress of about 1,000 employees over a five-year period, and found that 28% of mentors got a raise during that period, compared with just 5% of managers who were not mentors. Mentors were also more likely than non-mentors to get promoted.

Part of that, of course, is because people who volunteer to mentor are likely to be more active, engaged employees anyway. But it's also due to the other benefits mentoring confers, such as access to new ideas and an enhanced reputation.

2. Uncover Top Talent

In 1994, researchers [analyzed the obituaries](#) of eminent psychologists, and found that being an inspirational mentor was one of the most common themes. It was a virtuous circle: good mentors attracted talented protégés, which helped them develop a reputation as "star-makers," which increased their status and helped them attract even more talented protégés.

As a mentor, you get to work with bright, energetic young people, who may be the future stars of your organization or industry. If you develop a reputation as a "star-maker," it's good for your career and also helps your organization develop and retain top talent. One executive in the healthcare industry [reports](#) that internal hires increased from 11% to 50% as a result of mentoring.

3. Gain Insight

A [study](#) in the Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology found that mentors' experiences helped them to make sense of their own experiences and challenges. Mentors gained insight both into their own lives and into the lives of their young protégés, and were better able to "deal with the challenges [mentors] face in their day to day lives."



4. Feel Effective

A survey of 1,504 mentors conducted by the Commonwealth Fund [found that](#) 83% had gained something personally from their mentoring experience, including feeling that they were a better person, increased patience, and a feeling of effectiveness. A [study of teachers](#) in New Brunswick, Canada, reached similar conclusions. The link is clear, and logical. If you are helping someone else through mentoring, it makes you feel better about what you can achieve.

5. See Yourself Through Others' Eyes

Career coach [Lisa Quast](#) says that female executives have told her they were able to see themselves in a new way through the mentoring process. Executives can sometimes become detached from the rest of the organization, and having a mentor helps you see through the eyes of someone at a different level.

Said one female executive: "I was able to see the perception others held of me, through the eyes of my mentee." Mentors also reported that their protégés helped them see new issues in the company, and to solve problems by seeing them through another person's eyes.

6. Create a Legacy

We all want to feel that something of us lives on after we're gone. By mentoring someone, you can pass on your ideas and values to the next generation. We've seen from the Famous Protégés and Their Mentors series that the values of a mentor often live on through his or her protégé.

For example, the man who began mentoring [Usain Bolt](#) when he was a mere teenager is still his business manager over ten years later, and [Warren Buffett](#) is still implementing Benjamin Graham's ideas today, decades after Graham's death.

On a smaller scale, mentoring someone can ensure that something of your vision remains in place within your organization or industry for decades to come. If you care about the future, mentoring is a great way of influencing it.

