

Proposal for the ASTD-TCC Chapter
Mentorship Program Proposal
Summer 2012

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Overview

Why mentorship?

A variety of reasons can be identified that support the benefits of mentoring programs within organizations. Examples include: increased organizational productivity, increased morale, and career development. However, the benefits of a mentorship program must be directly tied to the organization's specific mission and goals.

The proposal outlined below can be tied to the current mission and goals of the ASTD-TCC chapter and can be deemed beneficial to the chapter and its current direction. Specifically, the following benefits have been drawn out. They are:

Chapter Vision

To be recognized as the premiere resource in the Twin Cities area for workplace learning and performance.

- An added benefit to being a chapter member, the mentorship program provides an exclusive option to the chapter that no other workplace learning and performance associations in the Twin Cities area currently provide, escalating the "premiere" status.¹

Chapter Mission

The go-to resource for learning professionals to drive business results through training and development.

- A mentorship program can be considered a go-to resource as mentor/mentee relationships provide additional in-depth information and skills that are not as easily obtained via meetings or conferences.

Learn

ASTD-TCC will offer you educational opportunities to build your skills as a Workplace Learning Professional.

- Skill building via a mentorship program can take place at a unique, individual level as mentees and mentors gain and build skills specific to their needs.

Connect

ASTD-TCC will make it easy for you to establish contacts, make new friends, and become inspired about your career.

- A mentorship program creates another opportunity for members to connect on a regular basis. Mentorship programs build strong relationships and connections to others not experienced through other opportunities.

Grow

Membership in ASTD-TCC will help you to increase your personal market value.

- The added benefit of a mentorship program can also help to increase these growth strategies in a number of ways:
 - Increased loyalty and commitment from members involved

¹ *Note: Secondary research conducted reveals that although mentoring seems to be an aspect in most other HR and T&D associations, they are currently not actively pursuing a program. The only other program that is active is within TCHRA.

- Help prevent or lessen attrition
- Professional Identity - of the ASTD-TCC chapter and its members
- Career development - for mentors and mentees
- Education support – in alignment with education initiative provided by the chapter
- Recruitment – via association with professional identity, enhancing recruitment goals
- Knowledge management and transfer – provides further opportunity for chapter members to expand their knowledge and reach to others within the chapter

There are many other reasons organizations choose to establish mentorship programs. Many of which individual members will find align with their own personal goals. These can include but are not limited to: leadership/professional development, skills enhancement, and retention of their membership.

Below are the detailed components of what is needed in order to develop, implement and maintain a successful mentorship program for ASTD-TCC. The outline will discuss what format and structural components should be considered, how target audiences should be reached and marketed to, followed by legal components and other implications that need to be considered.

Our Audience: The Mentor and Mentee

Mentor and Mentee Roles

Mentor roles

As defined by the Webster’s New World Dictionary a mentor is a “person looked upon for wise advice and guidance”. The mentor may play many roles including: coach, trainer, teacher, advocate, connector/networker, friend, guide, and supporter.

Mentee roles

The role of the mentee is to be open to the process of being mentored. This means having an open mind, willing to be coached, and having a commitment to try new ideas. In addition, the mentee should be prepared to discuss specific challenges or growth opportunities in which they will benefit from the relationship.

Benefits to the Mentor and Mentee

What is the benefit to the mentor?

- Accomplish work tasks
- Start new projects that previously could not be implemented due to lack of resources
- Sense of integrity in helping a student out
- Improve delegation, coaching, counseling, listening, modeling, and communication skills
- Provide a positive image for yourself and your organization/company
- Renews enthusiasm as role of the expert
- Develops a style of personal leadership
- Shares knowledge and experience

- Become a part of an expanded network of colleagues
- Provides new approaches and skills or results in better ideas

What is the benefit to the mentee?

- Fulfills internship hours if applicable
- Makes a smoother transition into the workforce
- Furthers development as a professional
- Gains and provides exposure to career development opportunities
- Demonstrate strength and explore potential
- Increases career network
- Gains experience in translating formal education in productive work actions and activities
- Individual recognition and encouragement
- Critical and informal feedback

Format and Structure Considerations

Goals and Objectives

Program Goals

The goals of the proposed mentorship program seek to meet the four strategic goals outlined by the chapter for the 2012 calendar year:

- Financial Improvement
- Increase Membership
- Increase Participation
- Increase Organizational Visibility

In addition, the mentorship program seeks to meet the 2012 functional goal of:

- Increased value and usability of resources

Program Objectives to aid in meeting these goals specifically seek to:

- To develop current and future leaders and involvement in ASTD-TCC
- To provide an opportunity to network
- To increase value and usability of resources

Program Development

Step 1: Needs assessment – application with members’ interest

At this time there is no chapter-specific data that exists to support the creation of a mentorship program. However, the chapter has found that there is general interest in a mentorship program. I propose that an application be created to first, capture the interest level of individuals and in what

specific content areas interest lies in order to implement the most successful program, and second, begin the process of creating the first cohort group to run through the program.

Application information can be communicated to all ASTD members to:²

- Gauge serious interest in becoming a mentor or mentee
- Determine average time commitment of cohort members
- Determine activities and ideas that can be formalized and implemented throughout the program, based on individual interest. Examples include:
 - Ongoing relationship – monthly meetings
 - Info Interviews
 - Career panels
 - Mock interviews
 - Presentations to classes and student groups

Step 2: Align areas of interest or focus with current SIGs

- Certification SIG
- Coaching SIG
- Diversity SIG
- eLearning SIG
- Entrepreneur SIG
- Instructional Technologies SIG
- Learning and Performance Tools SIG
- Organizational Career Development SIG
- Spirit in Work SIG
- Training SIG

In addition, other options such as: general training and development (T&D) and organization development (high level) can be considered for individuals that want to be able to gain skills or knowledge in multiple areas of T&D.

Step 3: Matching mentor to mentee process

The matching process for mentor/mentee connections is dependent on the number and interest levels of individuals that choose to participate. If creating the program based on the current proposed structure, aligned with SIGs, members can select areas of interest aligned with the SIGs. Matching can be done manually by the Program Manager to closely align mentors and mentees with the same respective interest areas chosen. It is recommended to choose first, second, and third options. This will allow members to choose more than one interest should their initial interest not be met. Matching will be mentee driven. Matches are:

- Made from the perspective of the mentee

² I did consider a survey, however an application, followed by frequent marketing efforts, would suffice in obtaining member interest while moving forward in developing the program and getting it off the ground. We still have the relevant information up front, via the application, without having to conduct a separate survey.

- Are based on application information provided from the mentee

Other considerations for matching that can be gleaned from a member-wide survey/application could be location, time commitment or level of involvement. The survey/application information will be valuable in obtaining this information. The individuals that are interested along with their interest areas can be kept in a database, managed by the Program Manager. Results of the survey should appear in this database for quick use.

In addition to obtaining interest, a selection process should take place to screen applicants for both mentor and mentee roles. An application should be submitted that will cover general and specific interest, level of commitment and time commitment. Applications can be screened by 2-3 individuals within ASTD-TCC (including the Program Manager). Applicants can be discussed for further input if needed, otherwise can be qualified or disqualified based on set standards.

The Program

Program length

The proposed program length for the first iteration is one year from the start of the kickoff orientation. A one year timeframe will provide enough opportunity for individuals to build skills and relationships. It has been noted in most other mentorship programs that the success of the mentor/mentee relationship is most successful when given at least a year to develop. Most mentors and mentees continue to connect informally after the program has ended.

The following time commitment is recommended:

- Mentors and mentees meet at least four times, face-to-face – recommendations will start at once per month.
- Other communication opportunities are encouraged continuously via email, Skype, telephone, instant message etc. – recommendations will start at once per month, especially if face-to-face contact is not as frequent.
- A maximum of a two hour orientation.
- Opportunity to attend 2 – 3 networking meetings (Mentor SIG) throughout the year.
 - Scheduled meetings for the group to get together as a whole may be beneficial for this group. Activities can be conducted or discussed much like other existing SIGs. This provides the opportunity for the group to network beyond their one-on-one relationship and expand their skills and expertise.

Kickoff and orientation

A kickoff orientation should take place at the beginning of each program cohort. The kickoff orientation is valuable as it gives mentors and mentees an opportunity to get acquainted, establishes the mentorship agreement and begins work on the mentorship goals and action plan.

The kickoff orientation can cover detailed information provided in a reference guide/manual as well as activities and exercises structured to begin developing the relationship.

It is recommended, especially for this first group, that a kickoff orientation is conducted in person. The kickoff should run no more than a maximum of two hours to cover the logistics noted above.

Wrap up and celebration

The wrap up celebration is a good opportunity to recognize the individuals that participated in the program, their lessons learned and outcomes as a result of the program. It is a good opportunity for mentors and mentees to reflect on their year and celebrate their involvement and potential growth.

It is recommended, especially for this first group, that a wrap up celebration is also conducted in person. The wrap up should run no more than a maximum of two hours to cover the logistics noted above.

Training manuals and/or reference materials

A training reference with additional how-to information should be provided electronically to mentors and mentees. This reference guide should cover:

- Definition of the mentorship relationship
- Clarity of roles and expectations
- Recommendation of topics to cover to meeting times
- Benefits to mentors and mentees
- Time commitments
- Templates for: goal development, action plans, conversation starters, timelines and more
- Legal considerations – confidentiality clauses, harassment clauses
- Termination clauses
- Signatures of participating members

Targeted Population

Two population types have been identified as individuals that would be interested in a mentorship program. They are:

- Current ASTD members – can be students but looking more towards seasoned professionals that have experience they want to share as well as individuals of any experience level that are looking for a mentorship relationship – whether they are entry level professionals looking for guidance or seasoned professionals looking to expand their careers in additional areas.
- College and university undergraduate and graduate students (members and non-members)

Minimal management – Program Manager/Coordinator role

It is recommended that an individual is responsible for the ongoing management of the program. This role, designated as the Program Manager/Coordinator can ensure that each cycle of mentors and mentees is structured and runs smoothly. Any major decisions to program changes or updates should be confirmed by the board before proceeding.

Because this is a volunteer-based organization, it is recommended that the Program Manager position require minimal effort. The proposed structure as stated above should allow for minimal management, approximately 10 -15 hours per month, and can be expected to be heavily weighted at the beginning of the program.

This position should be considered as a board position, where individuals should apply to be considered. Because this position is needed for the program to run successfully, a board position standing would recognize the time commitment and dedication needed by an individual to oversee the program.

Budget considerations – for marketing, hosting kickoffs and celebrations

A minimal budget should be considered for the mentorship program. It is recommended the following areas be considered for potential budget dollars:

- Printing costs – associated with any flyer or other hard copy materials
- Kickoff/orientation and wrap up/celebration costs – any minor costs associated with site logistics (facility, food etc.) and materials needed. The intention is to wrap these events in other program events (e.g. meetings, conference etc.) to offset costs.

It is assumed that costs can be offset or lessened by standing relationships the chapter has with vendors or by adding the kickoff and wrap up into other, already scheduled events.

Evaluation

It is recommended to conduct a thorough evaluation during and after the first mentorship cohort iteration. Evaluation conducted during the iteration should allow for the opportunity to make any changes to the program as needed and get a pulse of where members are at that are participating in the program.

An the conclusion of the program, an evaluation should determine if the program met the overall program and individual goals/expectations, what obstacles or troubles existed, lessons learned and best practices.

Evaluation conducted via e-mail/online surveys should capture the information needed.

Let's get the word out – Marketing and Publicity

Support from the chapter is another key component that must be developed and recognized from the start. Creating a culture that supports mentorship, getting leadership involved and the board “on board” will be key to success.

Specific strategies and tactics on gaining support and marketing are noted below. It is intended to work through Jaclyn Prescott, Marketing Coordinator for the chapter, to plan and manage the various marketing considerations noted below.

Targeted Population Efforts

Reaching out to current members for announcements and updates

These efforts can be done via e-mail, web, social media, meetings, and events, similar to how other programs and events through the chapter are publicized. They include:

- Specialized emails (for announcing the program, reminders etc.)
- Monthly newsletter articles
- Twitter
- Linked In page
- Blog
- Announcements at monthly meetings, ASTD-U, conference, other events
- Page and/or section on the web site with ongoing information and updates
- Post articles, tips, tricks, research and internships for students and other mentees to continually keep them updated and interested in that ASTD-TCC has to offer. This could possibly be on a mentorship-dedicated page with only restricted access available to those within a cohort.
- Post upcoming events – meetings, ASTD-U, conference highlights on topics that might stand out to mentors/mentees.

These outlets can be made available to the public to some degree to attract potential members with restricted access to information for participants who would be participating within a current, active cohort.

Reaching out to a new student population

As potential members, the student population at colleges and universities within the Twin Cities metro area and outer MN, potentially may be interested in ASTD-TCC and its mentorship program as a way to connect with the training and development community, network and gain professional experience.

Connection within college classes

- a. Compile list of local colleges and universities that have HRD/T&D programs
- b. Find contact point of program
- c. Consider undergraduate and graduate programs

- d. Visit introductory and advanced classes of schools to reach:
 - i. New students just starting out and interested in learning more and wanting to build connections
 - ii. Existing/advanced students looking to gain internship experience, network, and look for post-graduation job opportunities
- e. Present at class on:
 - i. What ASTD and ASTD- TCC is?
 - ii. What the member ship is, what it gets you
 - iii. Involvement and opportunity
- f. Distribute a flyer for follow up. Include a call to action:
 - i. Email
 - ii. Website
 - iii. Social networking opportunities

In addition to reaching out to these audiences initially, it is in the chapter's benefit to continue to keep the interest of these individuals via ongoing communication in the above, as well as creating a wait list for future cohorts.

Although membership fees for student members do not contribute to the larger net of the chapter, it is important to consider that a student's ongoing membership can be considered beneficial in the long run. If they are invested and involved in the chapter initially they do have the potential to continue to stay members after graduation. A mentorship program is one way to create and maintain their interest levels.

Continuous communication

Communication should be continuous to those who participate in the cohort. The best opportunity to stay in touch with cohort members is via email. Bimonthly or quarterly emails are suggested and should contain the following content:

- Reminders to mentors and mentees to connect
- Survey – get a pulse on how things are going, what can be improved, changed etc.
- Send out additional tools and tips

Legal Considerations/Implications

Risks

Risks can include but are not limited to:

- Consider legal implications: illegal activity, harassment, discrimination, accidents/injury (worker's compensation)
- Work not completed as stated in contract
- Bad publicity for the chapter and mentor involved which results in a negative image for all parties
- Members seeking business or publicity for their business
- Confusion between coaching and mentoring

Other Concerns

It is important to address concerns that both mentors and mentees can potentially have during their involvement in the program. The chapter should recognize these concerns, addressing them via a letter of intention. The Program Manager should be prepared to discuss these concerns with mentors and mentees and provide solutions as needed. Concerns can include, but are not limited to:

Concerns for a mentor

- Contract clauses to legally cover the “what ifs?” – harassment, discrimination, accidents and injuries, inappropriate behavior
- Mentee is not dedicated to the relationship
- Contract guidelines not being followed
- Inconsistent culture fit, does not align with student

Concerns for a mentee

- Contract clauses to legally cover the “what ifs?” – harassment, discrimination, accidents and injuries, inappropriate behavior
- Mentor is not dedicated or assigning and cooperating on the work as proposed
- Contract guidelines not being followed
- Inconsistent culture fit, does not align with student
- Not fulfilling internship requirements adequately

The Letter of Intention

The current proposed solution to mitigate risks and concerns is to address these issues and the solutions within a letter of intention. This letter will be distributed as part of the orientation and reference manual information at the start of the program and will cover:

- Definition of mentoring vs. coaching and use for personal business purposes can easily be stated within clauses and contracts. It is our hope that members also consider the ethical implications of joining for personal reasons and that this is not acceptable.
- Internship/Mentorship goals
- Roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each party
- Timeline and meeting points
- Confidentiality clause
- Termination of agreement
- Equal Opportunity Statement
- Harassment Statement
- Signatures for both parties

This letter should align with the ASTD National Code of Ethics.

Summary

The proposed mentorship program can be deemed to have many positive benefits to the ASTD-TCC chapter. It is within the details of this proposal that I recommend the chapter moving forward to launch a program late summer/or fall (during the annual regional conference). Development of the

program and program materials, as well as communication can move forward throughout the upcoming months to ensure the program is ready for success.