

WORKPLACE MENTOR SUPPORT SHEET 5: REAPING THE BENEFITS OF TRAINEE DEVELOPMENT



Why should you commit yourself to acting as a good workplace mentor? *Workplace mentor support sheet 6: The benefits of being a workplace mentor* outlines the benefits you will gain as an individual, but your employer and your trainee will also benefit from a structured approach to development. An investment of your time, co-operation and expert guidance not only helps your trainee to become a rounded business professional, but will also boost their enthusiasm and job satisfaction, which further embeds your trainee's motivation to add value to your business.

The following explains the many benefits to be gained from proactively developing your trainee.

INCREASE TEAM SKILLS

By providing certain development opportunities, you are preparing your trainee to take on increased responsibility, giving your team a greater capacity to handle its work. Development techniques such as job rotations and shadowing can also help to develop skills in other members of the team.

DRIVE BUSINESS EFFICIENCIES

A more resourceful trainee is better equipped to help you improve team efficiency. If your trainee is given the opportunity to gain wider experience, see how his or her position sits in the context of the overall team and how they work alongside other individuals. It's feasible that your trainee may be able to suggest solutions or improvements for performing tasks that may not occur to those that routinely perform these tasks.

DEVELOP ESSENTIAL SOFT SKILLS

Finance professionals need to be able to see beyond the figures. Only through giving specific development opportunities to your trainee – related to personal effectiveness – will he or she become a better presenter, communicator, time-manager, report-writer, project manager and even workplace mentor.

COMBAT SKILLS SHORTAGES

Development is essential for a retention strategy – failing to provide training or development opportunities is one of the most common reasons for resignations. Good salaries alone are rarely enough to retain talented individuals.

INCREASE LOYALTY AND MOTIVATION

When workplace mentors and employers are perceived as understanding and caring about development needs, trainees are more likely to work above expectations. Feelings of loyalty are a

powerful factor in individual motivation which in turn can help foster a culture of generating new ideas and striving to achieve the best results.

INCREASE SELF-ESTEEM

The confidence your trainee will gain from the sense of achievement at learning and implementing new skills is invaluable to you as an employer. A self-assured, happy trainee radiates positive feelings to others, providing you with a new ambassador to represent the team at meetings or even as a potential role model for other new recruits.

PLAN FOR SUCCESSION

For many employers, criteria for achieving promotion includes ensuring your present position can be filled once you move on, with minimum transitional upheaval. Without appropriately developing those you mentor or supervise, you may be indirectly harming your own career prospects.

The demands made on today's finance professionals – operational and regulatory – are unlikely to lessen in the future. This makes it all the more essential that those who aspire to become qualified accountants are encouraged to develop and thrive. Accountants who value membership of a professional body – with all the obligations that entails, including a commitment to continue developing throughout their career – are the most valued amongst employers.

As a workplace mentor, you have an important responsibility for the development of your trainees – whether they are just starting out or have passed their final exams. But you can also gain many benefits from your role as a workplace mentor depending on how you perform this role, which in turn will benefit your team and your organisation.