

OPINIONS

More on mentoring ...

PharmaVOICE wanted to know: Who has played a role in your professional and personal development? And does your company have a mentoring program?

A Necessary Luxury

Is mentoring a lost art? No. Many of us have worked for those who cared and shared, and led by example. Professor Westphal at the University of Louisville Medical School taught that behind every idea is a person, and that any critique should always put the feelings of the person above the idea. Carroll Dowden, president of Dowden Health Media, taught that in defining the problem well we create the solution. Today there are fine mentors; they just find mentoring is much more difficult.

Not so long ago managers led teams of people who shared common professional backgrounds. They were housed in one location and managers had time to mentor.

Today a team often comprises a wide variety of professionals from very different backgrounds. They work in locations across the country, or even internationally. Time for mentoring is a luxury.

Yet the need for mentoring has never been greater. New business models and techniques are developed rapidly. Jobs become more complex. Turnover of staff is common.

We formed e-ClinicalMentor to address these needs; to mentor staff members who do not have a mentor when they need one, or because they work at satellite locations and have no mentor at all. Our first Web-based tool, e-ClinicalMentor, mentors the user through the complex tasks of setting up and conducting clinical trials, especially Phases IIIB, IV, and Registries.

The challenge for all of us is to use the technology to support those we mentor but not let the technology become a barrier to interpersonal communication.

Michael Ryan
President
E-CLINICALMENTOR

The Breadth and Depth of Disciplines

Early in my career within the healthcare industry, I had several mentors who provided meaningful guidance and helped shape the direction of my career path, going from pharmaceutical sales to managed care, medical ser-

vices, health economics, and marketing. From them I learned that 1) breadth of knowledge is as important as depth in recognizing the business dynamics of any company, and 2) understanding the interdependency of disciplines is an essential management skill.

When I moved to the agency/consulting side of the industry, I discovered that my client-side experience, which went beyond pure "marketing," was a critical component of building relationships with clients — whether pharmaceutical, medical device, diagnostic, or technology companies.

Most people look to managers and supervisors to play the role of mentor. These people are, of course, often critical to our development. Yet whether we can point to a specific individual or not, it is important to keep in mind that we can find mentors all around us. I find myself learning every day from my clients, peers in other industries, staff members in all departments of our agency, and vendors.

We all have the tendency to surround ourselves with people who think as we do.

Yet because I believe we also can learn from those who take different approaches, I seek out people who challenge me and offer new and alternative perspectives. And I try to play this role for others, occasionally playing devil's advocate to make sure all conclusions are well-reasoned.

While we do not have an "official" mentoring program at Adair-Greene, we look for these skills in the managers we hire and try to develop them in our staff.

I also participate in a nonindustry specific community-based mentoring program. This has been a great source of information and inspiration that in turn allows me to bring new energy and fresh thinking to Adair-Greene.

The best leaders lead by example. By stretching my own boundaries and serving as a role model for those who look to me as a mentor, I hope to inspire others as my mentors have inspired me. There is, after all, always more to learn!

Kim Levy
Senior VP, Managing Director
ADAIR-GREENE HEALTHCARE
COMMUNICATIONS



A Career Influenced by Peers

As a partner in a newly formed medical education firm, I believe that both my professional and personal success have been strengthened through skills I learned from mentors.

Not surprisingly, in spite of being in an industry dominated by men, the people with the greatest impact on my career have been women.

Beginning my career as a sales rep at Fisons Pharmaceuticals, I learned by example how to communicate successfully. The first to influence me, Kathleen McNally, who was then vice president of sales and marketing, taught me how to listen — and probe — to find out what my staff needed to succeed. As I entered the service sector, these abilities helped me uncover, respond to, and meet the needs of clients.

A second important presence in my career development was Marianne Smith, who was director of medical education for Pravachol marketing at Bristol-Myers Squibb.

From Marianne I learned two critical qualities that make a leader: setting realistic expectations and remaining calm in the storm. (The latter an area of continuing development.)

To continue to develop and teach others in the field, myself and a network of friends and colleagues — all successful, professional women — share issues, ideas, and advice about our professional and personal challenges.

We at Phoenix Marketing Solutions act on our beliefs. Because we believe that mentoring makes us stronger — as individuals and as a company — we encourage our employees to take professional seminars and business courses to develop their skills.

In addition, we are developing an in-house training program to build professional skills as well as an incentive program to recognize development milestones.

We hope to have these in place by September.

Tracy Doyle
President
PHOENIX MARKETING SOLUTIONS