

Forget Mentoring: Tap into the Power of Sponsorship, Coaching, and Advising for Success

The mentoring software market was valued at \$335 million in 2022 and is projected to grow to \$615.5 million by 2031, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.9% from 2024 to 2031. These software solutions connect individuals with similar interests where mentees seek advice.

This popular tool is widely used by many large companies to connect their employees with leaders and peers within the organization. Recently, "reverse mentoring," where young employees provide input to leaders on company strategy, has also gained popularity.

However, in my opinion, mentoring programs are redundant and don't add much value. Read on to learn what really makes a difference:

Embracing Sponsorship, Coaching, and Advising

- **Sponsorship:** Talented individuals sometimes need others to notice and support their business or career goals. These supporters, called sponsors, provide crucial help and encouragement, often discovered through networking with like-minded people. Focus on nurturing relationships with sponsors where there's a genuine connection. Those who doubt you because of unconscious biases, jealousy, or any other reason will never support you, so don't waste time trying to impress them.
- **Coaches:** Coaches help bring about internal behavioural shifts. This relationship is a two-way street, akin to the old saying, "When the student is ready, the master appears."
- **Advisors:** Advisors can be junior or senior individuals with specific skill sets and expertise. Their opinions are invaluable, especially when you need a fresh perspective on a situation.

Why Mentoring is Ineffective

- **Misaligned Expectations:** In many companies, when individuals seek mentors, they are often actually looking for sponsors. This need for sponsorship is frequently masked as mentoring. Additionally, mentors often carry their own baggage and blind spots, sometimes influencing mentees without truly nurturing their potential, unconsciously imposing their own views and reinforcing limiting beliefs.
- **Superficial Connections:** Leaders sometimes prioritize popularity and pleasing others, committing to these interventions without establishing a genuine connection.
- **Manipulation:** Both mentors and mentees might manipulate the system to gain insights or favors, making it political. In contrast, sponsorship requires courage to support someone based on merit, thereby avoiding resentment that can arise from favoritism.
- **Availability:** Potential mentors are often too busy building their networks and may not have the time to devote to mentoring.

Tips for Seeking Support

- **Sponsors:** If you are looking for a sponsor, be clear about your goals, such as getting promoted, landing a new job, or finding valuable contacts.
- **Coaches:** If you want to make an internal shift, seek a coach.
- **Advisors:** If you need a fresh perspective on a situation, reach out to experts with diverse expertise.

Timely support and intervention are critical to addressing specific employee development needs. At Farihas.com, we specialise in designing customised leadership development solutions to maximise team productivity and harmony. Whether you need customized **coaching, robust talent management frameworks, or expert HR guidance**, we provide the expertise to help you achieve your goals.

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