

MENTORING AS A BUSINESS SOLUTION

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In a recent survey conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 45 per cent of their members said they had trouble finding qualified people for the jobs they had available. John Rees, Manager for The Empire Financial Group, knows how difficult finding the right person can be.

“We were looking for months but weren’t seeing enough candidates who were appropriate. We saw Mentorprise as a great way to find qualified people.” Rees wanted a person with strong industry experience and current, technical knowledge who could communicate with and teach other employees. Rees was looking for the *right* candidate to fill the position.

Mentoring is a progressive business solution. It is a human resource strategy designed to help businesses attract, recruit and train new employees. As an alternative to the usual practice of broad advertising, mentoring matches skills with those needed within your own company on a one-to-one basis. As a leadership development program, mentoring partners experienced business people with enthusiastic and talented employees.

Young Canadians today are our best educated generation and often competent in more than one language. These young people are quick to learn, adapt to change easily, and are comfortable with new technologies. Rees discovered how real this is. Rather than hire for experience, Rees hired for technical and personal skills and used mentoring to develop industry and company knowledge. The strategy worked.

To any company’s benefit, the best young people are attracted to mentoring programs. More importantly, employees who participate in mentoring programs have higher levels of loyalty and are quicker to learn and understand how the company works. Mentees provide fresh ideas, and help implementing programs. In the long term, a mentoring program leads to increased productivity, reduces training and development costs, and motivates senior staff.

The CFIB study found that the best hiring practice is a series of unique decisions. Employers hire people one at a time, based on their unique business needs and the skills and qualities offered by each candidate. When hiring youth in particular, Catherine Swift, President of CFIB, explains, “... employment issues always come down to the employer and employee’s ability to connect.”

IBM, General Electric, and Levi Strauss are just some of the national companies reaping the benefits of mentoring. The Empire Financial Group is a local company also reaping the benefits.

“If you want to keep growing, you have to keep building,” as Heather MacPherson, President of Vickers and Benson Direct Marketing, explains. “That means new products, services, and most of all, ideas. These mentees have them and don’t mind sharing them.”

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