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Sandra Wiley • Jan. 20, 2014

From the [Bridging the Gap](#) blog.

As an avid reader and educator on talent development within our profession, I have long been an advocate of mentoring in order to develop future talent in our firms. The ideal is for firms to develop a program that pairs current leaders with future leaders to transfer knowledge and wisdom from one person to another.

The programs should be well-designed and have objectives and strategies that will protect the firm's future existence. The problem is that at the recent Talent Development Advantage, where 35 Human Resource and Learning Professionals met to share best practices, there were very few mentoring programs that were actually working.

100% of the participants agreed they wanted to develop a program that would work, but their efforts to date have been less than stellar.

This brain trust of amazing individuals came up with the following rules of engagement that they felt would change the trajectory of their attempts to make the program successful:

- Insure that partners in the firm not only verbally said that they would participate, but teach them how to be a mentor! There was agreement that Partners in large part understood why mentoring was important and even enjoyed time spent with their next generation leaders, the issue was that they just did not really know

HOW to mentor. A training program with a solid curriculum for the partners was a

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program is not a one-time, one-developer, one-time training program. Continuous and ongoing improvement by a professional in the firm is needed to insure ongoing success. The professionals in the group agreed that having a strong connection to peers was another important element to development.

“Don’t give up” is the message that everyone should hear loud and clear when the topic is mentoring. Is mentoring working today? Not yet, is the answer in most firms. However, it is possible and it is necessary within our firm’s to develop a program that will successfully guide our young talent in their quest to improve. Keep fighting the good fight!

Human Resources

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