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My alma mater, the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) recently announced a mentoring program and I jumped at the opportunity to participate.

It paired alumni with accounting majors still in college. The great thing about this program is that it is a nine-month program instead of a one-shot deal. So, I met monthly with my mentee – Kamille Fajardo, a junior accounting major at UIC, throughout the past year.

Although the focus is a little different from mentoring programs offered by CPA firms to their young, full-time staff, the approach taken and the topics addressed are quite relevant and applicable.

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courses she had completed. I asked her why she chose accounting. We reviewed her personal and professional goals, including whether or not she was interested in working at a CPA firm or in industry upon graduation.

Every session I asked:

What would you like to talk about? How is school going? What courses are you taking and do you like them? What worries you? What are you curious about? How can I help you? How is the job going in terms of feedback, the work you are assigned, relationships with supervisors and co-workers? (I helped her get an internship with a client of mine).

Agenda items throughout the year:

We discussed the keys for young staff people to be successful at CPA firms; how to advance, how CPA firms work. I defined the various CPA firm services. We discussed ethical issues that CPAs face. I helped her improve her present resume. We reviewed the results of a forum I convened of 16 young staff from local Chicago CPA firms, who talked about the firms they work for, what they like and dislike about their jobs, etc. I coached her how to interview for a job.

I arranged for Karin Knoerr, partner at [The Hechtman Group](#), to administer a personality profile test called the [Culture Index](#) and analyze the results in a one hour meeting with Kamille.

Kamille asked me for help in finding an internship with a local CPA firm she could work at while attending school full time. One of my oldest clients, [Jesser and Ravid](#), hired her for the tax season and it worked out great. They have hired her for the summer as well.

Obviously, everyone must develop their own style and approach. But CPAs who are passionate about mentoring can make an enormous impact on young staff. It was an

eye-opening experience for me to get to know Kamille and discover what a

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mid-sized CPA firm performance statistics in the country, The Rosenberg Survey. He has consulted with hundreds of firms throughout his 20+ year consulting career. He shares his expertise regularly on The Marc Rosenberg Blog.

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