



Conversations With Mentoring Leaders

By Randy Emelo

One of the tough challenges for companies today is finding systemic ways to tap into the vast pools of knowledge that exist in their organizations, and then creating effective ways for that knowledge to be shared among employees. The breadth and depth of knowledge available can make this task overwhelming.



Three companies have three different mentoring approaches, but all believe that mentoring shares knowledge and builds skills competency while increasing employee engagement and developing connectivity.



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“Ultimately, it’s about increasing speed to competence and breaking the intrinsic challenges that come with matrix organizations.”

—Leslie Camino-Markowitz, Agilent Technologies

As many organizations have seen firsthand throughout the last decade, the use of an open and broad mentoring program can address this issue, as can the promotion of mentoring networks. As people build their networks and make diverse learning connections, they help spread insights and know-how across traditional boundaries such as geography, function, job level, and demographics.

Networked mentoring begins with the philosophy that everyone has something to teach, and everyone has something to learn. In this same vein, mentoring leaders from Agilent Technologies, YUM! Brands, and McDonald’s share what mentoring means to their organizations and how they are taking mentoring to the next level.

Agilent Technologies

Leslie Camino-Markowitz,
Director, Next Generation Leadership
Programs, Global Learning and
Leadership Development

Q | Why is mentoring important to Agilent?

A | Agilent’s aim is to foster a high-performance environment that will focus and maximize the passion, performance, and potential of its people to deliver business results. Agilent has strong management practices, processes, and systems that support the development of employees in their current work and encourages their continued growth at Agilent. Mentoring can play a significant part in supporting all levels of employees to achieve this together.

Q | How is Agilent using mentoring?

A | Agilent has a strong mentoring culture, and as such, we use mentoring in a variety of ways. Mentoring at Agilent is a process that supports learning and development, and therefore, performance improvements for an individual, team, or business. It typically involves offline help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work, thinking, or career.

Mentoring can be formal, using structured and systematic processes, procedures, and tools. It is typically driven by organizational needs, based on goal achievement, and of a fixed duration. Mentoring can also be informal, which is flexible and loosely structured, with only periodic measurement of results. The characteristics of mentoring relationships will vary depending on the nature of the partnership and the needs of each partner.

Agilent’s Next Generation Leadership programs provide accelerated development for top talent by matching senior leaders and executives with high potential talent to develop a leadership pipeline. Our CEO leads the way by enthusiastically accepting mentoring relationships as another way to directly influence the development of our future leaders, and it allows him to get keen insight into the organization.

Q | What business impact does Agilent hope to achieve through mentoring?

A | At Agilent, we look at our yearly strategic imperatives to analyze the business requirements for talent and to understand how we can move on our commitments. We consider how to use mentoring in support of our values.

From creating a culture of speed to opportunity, creating strategic alignment, building organizational capability, and delivering results by engaging the hearts and minds of our

people, mentoring allows for people connections to get us where we need to be. Ultimately, it’s about increasing speed to competence and breaking the intrinsic challenges that come with matrix organizations.

Q | Where do you see the practice of mentoring going in the next 5-10 years?

A | It’s all about increasing connectivity for a purpose. While I do think that traditional mentoring continues to be highly effective, the reality of the speed in which we need to deliver results, react to continuous unprecedented change, and synthesize information—along with demands on our time—require us to develop faster modes of connectivity toward building capability, enabling informed decisions, and promoting action. Tapping into sources of knowledge quickly and in real time is an imperative. It is all about dynamic mining for knowledge.

To that end we are conscious that we need to evolve mentoring as a knowledge transfer solution that incorporates social learning approaches. We are in the midst of launching ASK network—Agilent Sharing Knowledge—to help shift the mindset of traditional mentoring only as a long-term commitment to one of mining knowledge now, and we are doing it by socializing the concept in support of business objectives.

Q | What influence do you think this will have on your employees?

A | Knowledge exchange to increase productivity and enable competency to deliver on Agilent’s strategic intent is the desired result. With this comes the potential of higher employee engagement and innovation. It is about using the rich knowledge and experience we already have in-house and about the innovation that comes when several minds come together.

Yum! Brands

Emma Oberdieck, People Development Manager

Q | Why is mentoring important to Yum! Brands?

A| At Yum! Brands, one of our core beliefs is, “people capability first... satisfied customers and profitability follow.” This guides our overall approach to the training and development of our associates. We know that the only way to achieve breakthrough business results is by believing in all of our associates and helping them to unleash their full potential. Mentoring is one of the key ways we build the capability of our associates to help them grow and develop.

Q | How is Yum! using mentoring?

A| We practice a philosophy reinforcing the belief that every associate owns their own development. In support of this practice, mentoring has been woven into the people development fabric of our organization to make it accessible throughout the year. We talk about mentoring when we set goals at the beginning of the year. We encourage onboarding mentoring for many of our new hires, and we strongly support mentoring for new coaches. We use one-on-one mentoring as a complement to our broader internal ideation and project collaboration network. And mentoring supports our cultural values, which we call “How We Win Together.”

Our most visible mentoring effort is in direct support of our mid-year Individual Development Planning process. Together associates and their supervisors create yearlong action plans to help the associates grow and develop. Emphasis is put on learning from experience, learning from others, and formal learning methods. And while special development offerings such as stretch or temporary assignments can be made

available from time to time, mentoring is always available to Yum! associates who work above the restaurant level.

To ensure that these associates get the most out of mentoring, we provide a variety of tools and support to enhance the mentoring relationship experience, including goal sheets, discussion guides, newsletters, websites, books, and self-guided e-learning modules. We offer a formalized matching tool for those associates who would like a helping hand in identifying the right mentor or mentee. And we have assigned mentoring leaders in each of our operating divisions to provide program and participant support.

Q | What business impact does Yum! hope to achieve through mentoring?

A| Mentoring allows us to grow our people and our business in two key areas: business growth and expansion, and retention and engagement.

In business growth and expansion, mentoring matches associates across geographies, disciplines, and generations, both allowing us to share our wealth of knowledge outside of the boundaries that our business can naturally create and encouraging global innovation and new thinking. Because mentoring fosters close relationships, we learn to deliver superior results supported by the requests we feel more comfortable making of each other.

Related to retention and engagement, we use mentoring to engage and coach associates to grow to their full potential. Mentoring asks us to identify and focus on specific needs for development, and it pairs us with others who are dedicated to developing us in a truthful, safe, one-on-one work relationship.

These relationships, based on low-cost experiential learning, expand professional networks, promote diversity and inclusion, and increase

Why Organizations Are Investing in Mentoring as a Major Learning Strategy

Mentoring is important. It uses the potential of the entire workforce to create a connected cadre of wisdom. Ray Kroc’s quote applies to all organizations: “None of us is as good as all of us.”

Mentoring is flexible. It can be used to meet a wide array of needs, both personal and organizational. It functions as an informal way to address personal development goals, and it has strength as a formal way to support organizationally initiated talent development structures.

Mentoring is effective. It affects both the retention and development of talent. Mentoring allows people to share organizational knowledge across the enterprise in a way that lets them actually apply the learning to their jobs.

Mentoring is scalable. Technology is bringing the world together. Mentoring keeps learning relational and effective—a powerful combination that supports global usability while still applying personal context for learning.

Mentoring builds depth. Mentoring relationships across silos create a broader understanding of the entire enterprise. The long-term development of a rich circle of advisors assures that each leader is well informed and well supported. Increasing both the bench strength of leaders and their depth of total business understanding is critical to organizational success.

Glossary for 21st Century Mentoring

Enterprise Mentoring. Mentoring that is open and available to everyone in an organization. It is predicated on the belief that everyone has something to teach and everyone has something to learn. By opening up the practice of mentoring to all employees within an organization, companies can tap into deep pools of knowledge—often ones that have been previously overlooked. The large-scale objective is to make the depth and breadth of all of the knowledge in an organization available to all knowledge workers.

People-First Learning. A process whereby people look to and connect with other people first when they have learning needs. This is in contrast to outdated approaches of directing people to content first. Employees have figured out that going to other people for advice is typically a better approach to learning than content-focused approaches. The core reason is that other people can both understand and provide context, something that is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to do in codified resources.

Mentoring Networks. Learning networks created by the connections people make with colleagues when they engage in mentoring. As people become part of multiple mentoring engagements as both advisors and learners, they build connections with others that can cross traditional boundaries such as geography, function, job level, and demographics. As people make new connections, they broaden their networks. As networks grow, more and more people make secondary connections via their initial contacts. It is a process of organic growth that will have exponential impacts over time.

“Because mentoring fosters close relationships, we learn to deliver superior results supported by the requests we feel more comfortable making of each other.”

—Emma Oberdieck, Yum! Brands

engagement. This heightened sense of associate commitment results in reduced turnover, which allows us to build a stronger talent bench. Our associates tell us mentoring is one of the reasons Yum! is an employer of choice.

Q | Where do you see the practice of mentoring going in the next five to 10 years?

A | Our vision is that every associate around the world has the opportunity to grow professionally and has the responsibility to coach others through every transition and phase of their career. Today, informal mentoring is happening globally in nearly every piece of our business. Formal mentor matching, however, is currently limited to our associates above the restaurant level in both our domestic business and our English-speaking international business units.

Although formal programs would have to be customized to meet the needs of our restaurant associates, we are actively pursuing solutions to enable every associate to enjoy the growth benefits of a close mentoring relationship. In addition, we would expect to offer a formal matching system in all of the languages our associates speak across the globe.

Q | What effect do you think this will have on your employees?

A | Survey and anecdotal feedback from formal and informal mentoring participants and their coaches reinforces our belief that mentoring increases job satisfaction, engagement, and retention. We've found that sharing information in a transparent and supportive setting

increases breadth and depth of associates' business understanding.

We know an expansion of mentoring will make our global business strategies and competencies accessible and attainable to associates where they live and work. And we're counting on that bridge of the knowledge and support gap outside of current comfort zones to unleash the amazing talent potential we house so we can encourage our leaders of tomorrow to emerge as leaders of today.

McDonald's

Dennis Brennan, Director, Inclusion, Global Inclusion & Intercultural Management

Q | Why is mentoring important to McDonald's?

A | Mentoring relationships harness the additional experience and expertise that is available to every employee in the form of fellow employees. Our founder, Ray Kroc, said it best, “None of us is as good as all of us.” We encourage all employees to seek out formal relationships that build their personal and professional skill sets that raise their competence, confidence, and add value to our business.

Q | How is McDonald's using mentoring?

A | McDonald's has a long history of using mentoring programs in formal and informal manners to identify and nurture future leaders, build skills for more competent employees, identify and grow successful franchisees, and



assist those businesses that supply our quality products and services. Since 2006 we have offered an internal, online, virtual mentoring program that employees can utilize at their pace to make relationship connections and build their skill sets.

Q | What business impacts does McDonald's hope to achieve through mentoring?

A | Our mission at McDonald's is: "We aspire to be our customers' favorite place and way to eat." To achieve this mission, our actions as individuals and as a system must reflect our values, one of which is "We strive continually to improve." Engaging in effective advisor or learner (mentor-mentee) relationships within and between our employees, franchisees, and suppliers will achieve levels of employee performance, franchisee growth, and supplier expansion that will service our needs in building the McDonald's brand around the world to satisfy our customers.

Q | Where do you see the practice of mentoring going in the next five to 10 years?

A | Practically speaking, as today's virtual information society continues to expand, mentoring as we know it in the form of advisor, teacher, or learner will still exist. People and leaders will continue to reach out to those who have the initiative, drive, and desire to improve their performance contributions to our business and the communities in which we do business. The delivery systems will dramatically change as the virtual world becomes smaller and access to people and learning tools becomes more fluid.

Q | What impact do you think this will have on your employees?

A | If past performance is an accurate predictor of future performance, our employees will utilize mentors or advisors to greater depths and continue to build their skill competence on broader scales that will better prepare them for positions and contributions to which they aspire.

Journey Forth

Three unique companies, three approaches to mentoring, yet all with one belief: That mentoring will continue to be the way to spread knowledge, skills, and context throughout their workforces, helping to make their employees better and their companies stronger.

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—Dennis Brennan, McDonald's

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