



CVETNET

Reverse Mentoring guide for Trainers



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CVETNET
Intergenerational
digital learning

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that in the company, as in most organizations, different people have coexisted: by culture, by gender, by origin... by generation.

Currently, we can find up to five generations in our companies: Traditionalists (born before 1956), Baby boomers (born between 1956 - 1970), Generation X (born between 1971 - 1981), Generation Y (born between 1982 - 1992), and the last to join, Generation Z (born between 1993 - 2010).

But if different generations have always coexisted in the company, why is it a challenge for organizations today to work with different generations?

Globalization, demographic change and the level of development of new technologies in business and everyday life have accelerated changes and differences between generations.

Then, how should we take advantage of the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of different generations? How do we grow these different talents, and ultimately grow our business?

The company's workforce is made up of the youngest employees who are digital natives and senior employees who are digital immigrants.

These digital natives have another vision in the way they communicate, they use social media and they process work. They have powerful knowledge which enrich the processes and the business.

The company have to take advantage of these competences and knowledge. One way it is the transfer of expertise between employees using the mentoring.

But what is mentoring¹? It is the act or process of helping and giving advice to a younger or less experienced person, especially on the job or at school.

In the traditional mentoring the long-term experienced staff gives support to some new employees who needs develop and acquire know-how.

The senior employees usually have the highest responsibility and key experience, and they have a specific expertise in the business. Usually, they are few and they are in the top of the learning pyramid. In other hand, the new employees are in the bottom of the learning pyramid, they have generic knowledge about the business, but they wish to acquire new abilities.

In the Reverse mentoring, the learning pyramid is reversed and relates a junior employee with excellent digital skills with a senior employee who have less. The youngest employee becomes the mentor, and it allows the junior staff to lead and accelerate the technological change of their companies.

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mentoring>



Reverse mentoring is a social exchange tool, which will leverage the expertise of both generations, by being perceptive of their different needs, value systems, and work demands.

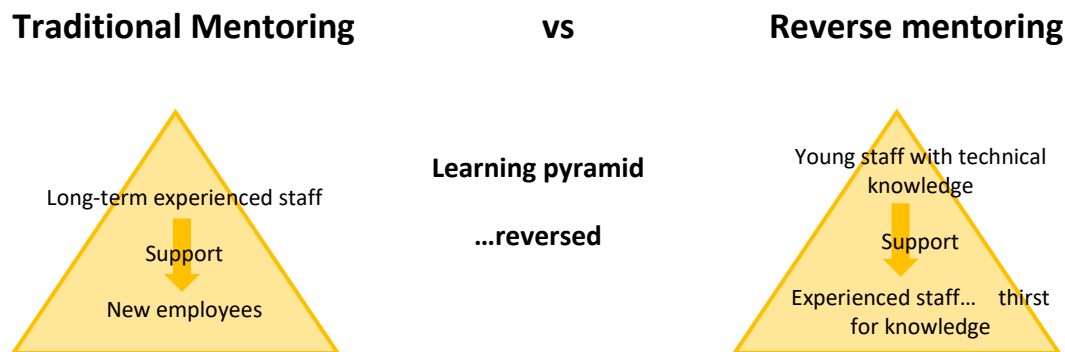


TABLE II Reverse Mentoring Compared to Traditional Mentoring*

Reverse Mentoring Exchange	Reverse Mentoring Functions	Traditional Mentoring Functions	Traditional Mentoring Exchange (Kram, 1985)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares technical or content expertise and enhances understanding of generational trends • Provides guidance and feedback on training and mastery of new skills and knowledge • Collaboration on projects and research that create contact with each other's colleagues • Demonstrates technology savvy and identifies opportunities to apply knowledge • Generates new approaches to problems and suggestions for implementing solutions • Teaches about social networking sites and social media; introduces to peers/colleagues to increase social integration and social capital 	Career Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge sharing • Coaching* • Exposure and visibility • Skill development* • Challenging ideas • Networking* 	Career Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship • Coaching • Exposure and visibility • Protection • Challenging assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public support for advancement in the organization • Enhances knowledge and understanding of how to navigate effectively in the corporate world • Create opportunities to demonstrate competence through contact with other senior managers • Shields mentee from untimely or potentially damaging contacts with other senior managers • Assigning challenging work, supported with training and ongoing performance feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides support for learning and feedback on new knowledge and skill acquisition • Provides support and encouragement that enables mentee/mentor to experiment with new behaviors • Mutual liking and sharing of life events through informal exchange; connecting friends across levels or divisions in the organization • Openly discuss developmental needs and encourage career and personal development 	Psychosocial Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and feedback • Acceptance and confirmation • Friendship • Affirmation and encouragement* 	Psychosocial Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role modeling • Acceptance and confirmation • Friendship • Counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes, values, and behavior provide a model for mentee to emulate • Provides support and encouragement that enables mentee to experiment with new behaviors • Social interaction characterized by mutual liking, understanding, and informal exchanges about work and nonwork experiences • Enables mentee to explore personal concerns that may interfere with a positive sense of self in the organization; talk openly about anxieties/fears
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers fresh perspective on the organization and its business(es) • Demonstrates openness to new ideas, innovation, and a global perspective • Shares willingness to learn 	Role Modeling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New perspective* • Behavior to emulate • Identifying with values 		

*Reverse mentoring functions that differ from traditional mentoring are in bold. Asterisks indicate overlap with alternative mentoring functions (see Allen & Finkelstein, 2003).

Reverse mentoring is a good opportunity to bridge the intergenerational digital gap, as well as fostering more technological habits and at the same time developing leadership skills. It is a dynamic where both the mentor and the mentee participant enrich each other and acquire new knowledge.



It is expected that the development of one-to-one relationships should help reducing assumptions and negative stereotypes and even highlight similarities.

Reverse mentoring relationships are characterized by several elements:

1. Unequal status of partners with the mentee, rather than the mentor, the senior member in the hierarchy of the organization.
2. Knowledge sharing with the mentee focused on learning from the mentor's technical or content expertise and generational perspective.
3. Emphasis on professional and leadership skill development of mentors.
4. Commitment to the shared goal of support and mutual learning.

Organizations as well as participants must be aware of these structural and content-based characteristics in order to effectively manage reverse mentoring relationships.

Benefits of Reverse Mentoring Program:

➤ For the Mentor	➤ For the Mentee	➤ For the Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Personal and career • Contribution to decision making • Gaining experience • Leadership development • Negotiation skills • Decision-making ability based on knowledge • Innovation and creativity skills • Decreasing generational conflict • Data-driven decision making concerning different customer segments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to adopt change • Lifelong learning • Positive image management, participative • Leadership development • (esp. to be a leader for Y-Gen.) • Multi-skilling, parental capabilities • Learn to gain support of employees • Innovation and creativity skills • Decreasing generational conflict • Understanding expectations of Y- Gen. consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication • Learning organization • A path to a flattening organization • Productive organization, organizational image management • Employer brand • Organization citizenship, strengthen psychological contract • Attracting and retaining • Positive psychology, motivated employees • Customer-oriented organization



II. METHODOLOGY

The primary career function is the sharing of skills, knowledge and understanding in terms of technical or digital expertise and generational perspectives. The expectation is that the mentor shares his or her expertise on topics such as technology, social networks, subject-matter advances, generational trends, diversity, risk taking, or understanding a global perspective. In return, the mentee may also share expertise on such topics as organizational issues, job responsibilities, or career planning and development.

As the relationship develops, both parties exchange psychosocial functions through the process of mutual sharing, open discussion, and learning from one another's life experiences.

Younger mentors offer new ways to understand problems, learn, and develop ideas. In contrast, more experienced mentees model appropriate professional and interpersonal skills, and demonstrate the career benefits of a commitment to continuous learning.

It is important to be sensitive to individual differences among participants in reverse mentoring relationships. In particular, the structural role-reversal requirements of reverse mentoring may be challenging for both mentor and mentee.

Individuals' growth may be limited due to gender barriers, including a lack of diversity in senior management, intimacy concerns, stereotypes, and power dynamics.

In reverse mentoring, these issues may be magnified when younger and less experienced members of the minority are in the role of mentor instead of mentee.

The personalities of participants will also affect the development of reverse mentoring relationships. Personality traits that reflect comfort in social situations, such as extraversion, are associated with the successful initiation of mentoring relationships. Certain personality characteristics are likely to make mentors more attractive to mentees, such as ability, competence, and willingness to learn.

Consideration of these individual differences is important in the selection of participants, particularly mentees, who will need to be sensitive to such issues.

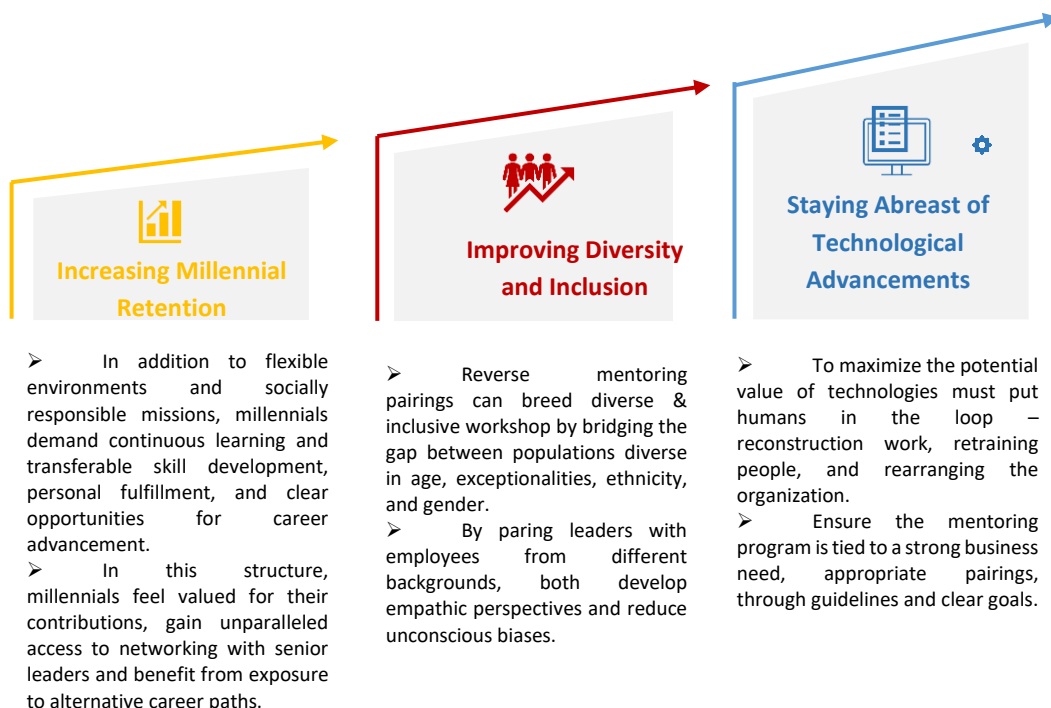


OUTCOMES OF REVERSE MENTORING

Organizational Outcomes

- Talent Management
- Social Equity and Diversity
- Bridging technology gaps
- Understanding trends and customers
- Driving innovation
- Organizational learning

The positive outcomes for organizations that extend from individual participants are numerous. For organizations, reverse mentoring is an innovative tool for talent management, recruiting and retention, improving social equity and diversity, bridging technology gaps among employees, understanding trends and customers, and driving innovation. In addition, the individual learning of participants may extend to organizational learning and promote a culture of continuous learning.





Mentor Outcomes

For mentors, the main benefit of participating in a reverse mentoring relationship is their own *leadership development* and the experience of managing a professional mentoring relationship.

Through interactions with seasoned executives, young professionals gain *organizational knowledge*, such as insight into the leadership hierarchy of the organization and learning how to navigate and get work done in the organization.

The *direct, one-on-one exposure to baby boomers* in the workplace challenges mentors to understand differing work values and approaches and to communicate effectively.

Through the process of reverse mentoring, mentors should increase *personal learning* in terms of improved interpersonal skills such as self-disclosure, active listening, empathy, and feedback.

Reverse mentoring should expand mentors' intra organizational network, thus increasing their social capital in the organization, which is the ability to gain access to the resources of others through social ties. Mentors who develop strong ties with their mentee, typically an executive with whom they would otherwise be unlikely to interact, may also gain access to their mentees' network both within and beyond the organization.

Mentee Outcomes

For mentees, the primary benefit of participating in a reverse mentoring relationship is the opportunity to learn the newest *content knowledge or technical skills* and gain exposure to the perspective of new organizational entrants.

Through *one-on-one interactions with millennial* mentors, mentees also acquire leadership skills through an increased ability to understand and communicate across generations in the workplace. In the process of reverse mentoring, mentees are reintroduced to employees on the front lines of the organization, and through *relational learning* they gain a fresh perspective on the network of relationships in which their job is embedded.

In successful relationships, mentees develop a strong tie to their mentors as well as learn the newest technologies and social networking media. This process should enable mentees to expand their network and enhance their *social capital* through an increased intra organizational base of loyal support.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

1. The ongoing support by leaders at all levels of the organization, is necessary to encourage the commitment of participants to the process of reverse mentoring.
2. Attention to understanding participants, their skills, and their needs, is important for the matching process.
3. Training for a reverse mentoring program for increasing the personal competence of mentors and mentees, to improved commitment to mentoring, support exchanged, and perceived program effectiveness.



4. Reverse mentoring relationships, particularly due to the technology savvy of millennial mentors, will benefit from the use of a combination of face-to-face meetings and electronic media.
5. The Reverse Mentoring coordinator would play a pivotal role by recruiting mentors, holding regular reviews of the progress of the system, acting as an arbiter in any disagreement or dispute (for example between mentor and mentee) evaluating and amending the system, planning for the training of mentors.

REVERSE MENTORING PROCESS



STEP 1: DEFINING THE OBJECTIVE

There are many potential approaches of reverse mentoring like diversity, technology, tendencies, etc... for this reason, is needed to define **the approach** of your program. In the context of CVETNET the right focus will be: Improve the digital skills of the employees and improve the integration of different generations in the workplace.

■ Decide the focus of the reverse mentoring project.

Once the focus is decided then the following step is to think specific and measurable objectives to achieve it, because there are a lot of many issues to address. But where do we begin for?

■ Establish general SMART objectives considering the focus of the project.

These objectives depend on the employee's needs to enhance his/her performance work and can be around the digital competencies, social media, digital tools, or digital tendencies. This information can be obtained by Human Resources(coordinator) of the company through interviews, surveys or questionnaires, like the diagnosis learning needs questionnaire of the CVETNET project².

The company or Reverse Mentoring coordinator can use the SMART OBJECTIVE technique to set learning objectives up.

One example can be: Improve 2 digital competences and 2 digital tools from level 2 (basic) to level 4 (advance) in 10 sessions of reverse mentoring, depending on the performance workplace of the mentee.

² <https://cvetnet.com/publications>



The General Objective of the project will determine the duration of the reverse mentoring process, for this reason, the coordinator will establish the needed time to achieve it. The duration will also be conditioned by the type of specific skills and knowledge to be acquired by the mentee, and the depth in which the coordinator want / can influence. For example, the duration of the session can be between 1 to 2 hours and the duration of the process can be between 5 to 10 sessions.

■ **Establish the duration of the reverse mentoring.**

These guidance objectives will be the basis to start the reverse mentoring, although session by session mentor and mentee will be working on others that are even more concrete and specific.

This phase will have an estimation duration about one month.

STEP 2: SELECTING THE PARTICIPANTS

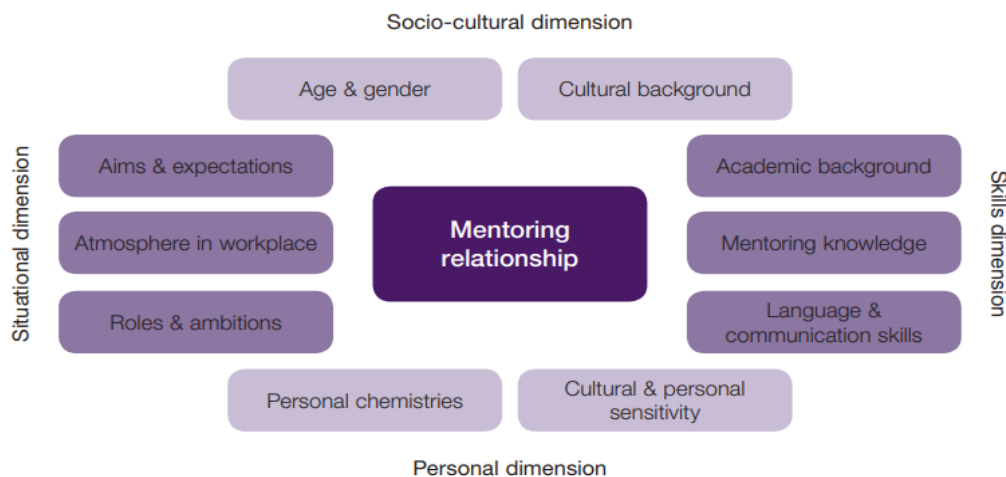


Figure 3: Dimensions and factors influencing the mentoring relationship (Source: Volmari, 2010)

Mentor and mentee have to have the win-win vision of the reverse mentoring to create a respect and openness relationship, to generate trust between them, and an efficient practice to achieve the objectives. More fore, the mentor candidate should have the appropriate digital and coaching abilities, not all digital natives can be mentors like not all digital immigrant can be mentees.

The coordinator has a lot of information to match a mentor with mentee because Human resources of the company knows about workplaces and their personal and professional competencies necessary for good performance, as well as information on current company employees.

If this is taken into account, the first step in select the participants is waking the candidate's interest up to participate in the reverse mentoring.



■ Communicate the open process to participate in the reverse Mentoring

The communication with media content or articles about what is Inverse Mentoring and which benefits can be obtained the potential candidate, it is a good way. The potential candidates have to be identified to participate.

■ List some potential candidates to participate.

After the communication, the coordinator will collect information about the candidates through surveys, questionnaires and interviews.

■ Collect information about potential candidates.

The candidate (mentor and mentee) can answer some questions from this template “Potentials candidates to participate in the reverse mentoring”:

POTENTIALS CANDIDATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REVERSE MENTORING					
Name and surname:			Date:		
Answer the following questions:					
What's your LinkedIn URL?					
Would you like to be a Mentor/ mentee?					
What's your current job function?					
What are you greatest strengths?					
What areas would you like to develop in?					
What's the first thing you want to get out of this mentorship?					
If you had to describe yourself...					
What are some challenges you are experiencing and trying to overcome in your role at the moment?					
What does mentorship mean to you?					
Instructions: Mark with an X the level of knowledge and skill in the following areas. (1-none, 2-basic, 3-medium, 4-advanced, 5-expert)					
	1-none	2-basic	3-medium	4-advanced	5-expert
For example : Digital Competence					



Digital Competence 1					
Digital Competence 2					
Digital Competence 3					
For example: Digital Tool					
Digital Tool 1					
Digital Tool 2					
Digital Tool 3					
Digital Tool 4					

In this template the coordinator can observe some aspects of the candidate's personality and some aspects of the digital fields that will be object of the reverse mentoring, related with the expected learning outcomes. In addition, the coordinator will know who intends to voluntarily participate in reverse mentoring, for which a certain attitude of openness, commitment and motivation is needed.

■ Match the mentor with the mentee

The Reverse Mentoring Coordinator will match a mentor (who has de knowledge and expertise) with mentee (who has a learning need) taking into account the results of the questionnaires like competencies, expectations and personality similarities. Additionally, prior to the matching process, an interview between the potential candidate and the coordinator is recommended.

■ List definitive couples to participate.

After all, the coordinator will obtain a list of definitive pairs of reverse mentoring to carry the process on.

This phase will have an estimation duration about one month.

STEP 3: GETTING STARTED

Up to this point, the objective of the project has been defined and the pairs that will work together have been established. Now the kick-off of the reverse mentoring can start.

Human Resources department (coordinator) starts the reverse mentoring doing the next tasks:

- Send an individual **welcoming mail** to mentor and mentee informing about the role and the reasons why is mentor or mentee and give some information about the pairs (role, name, mail and department).
- In the same mail attach the document "Principles from the Reverse Mentoring" (see Appendix A) and inform about the General Objective of the process established in the STEP1.
- Coordinator send a second mail to the mentor attaching the following steps to start the process:
 - Sent a message to the mentee introducing yourself



- Ask the mentee for a short bio to introduce him/her
- Send to mentee “Mentorship goal-setting framework” to fill it before the session number 1.

The “Mentorship goal-setting framework” template filled by the mentee will be use one in each session and it help mentor and mentee to establish little and specific objectives needed to achieve the General Objective of the Reverse Mentoring process.

Here an example of temple of “Mentorship goal-setting framework”:

MENTORSHIP GOAL-SETTING FRAMEWORK	
SESSION NUMBER:	DATE:
MENTEE’S NAME:	
GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE REVERSE MENTORING PROCESS:	
1. FIGURE OUT YOUR GOALS	
a) In 5 minutes write your goals:	
b) Look through, curate an prioritize the goals that you want formalized.	
2. SMART GOALS (Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time based):	
3. CREATE THREE PHASES FOR EACH GOAL	
a) Phase 1: The aim here is to just take a step. Make it very easy to achieve. Examples: register for two networking events; download a smartphone app.	
b) Phase 2: Provides the “development” of the goal. The main action phase. Examples: meet-up with the two executives; use the app during 10 minutes every day.	



- c) Phase 3: Make it familiar. become a habit. Examples: Send emails to people you met and get feedback from networking events; maintain new habit of use the app.

To be a good mentor, there are a lot of techniques to create reflection, support and constructive feedback. A basic mentor training is recommended that it be provided by an expert in the field, for example an expert mentor or coach. However, the trainer has some examples in the Appendix A “Mentor Training”.

STEP 4: REGULAR MEETINGS

Before the first meeting, the pair knew by mail so now it is important introducing face to face and explain their motivations to start a reverse mentoring, creating bond and the beginning of the relationship. In all session this introduction part is important to create a confidence and respectful relationship, being the first meeting the most.

Then, the work can start!

- Co-create the relationship between them: remember the roles with the template “PRINCIPLES FROM THE REVERSE MENTORING”, establish the schedule of the meetings and place to do the reverse mentoring.
- Setting the goals. The mentor reviews with mentee “The Mentorship goal-setting framework” sent days before. These goals have to be practical, useful and synchronized with the General Objective established by the company.
 - The mentor pay attention to understand mentee and helps to define SMART objectives to achieve the General Objective, if they are not enough clear.
- The mentor begins sharing experience, knowledge and advises. The mentor proposes activities and little challenges to mentee to try and look for opportunities and limitations.
 - The mentor has to be emphatic and have openness attitude, asking open questions to mentee to generate reflection and challenges. (See “Mentor Training in Appendix A)
- The mentor recommends mentee tasks and resources like books, events, podcasts or blogs.
- During the mentorship, the mentor will have a “Reverse Mentoring Worksheet” template to fill. But at the end of the session, mentor share the evaluation template with mentee who can enrich according to him/her point of view as a mentee. In this template you can find some indicators to observe and check the steps of the dynamic of the reverse mentoring. It is the opportunity for both sharing them feelings, elements to improve and progress.



REVERSE MENTORING WORKSHEET	
SESSION NUMBER:	DATE:
MENTEE NAME:	
MENTOR NAME:	
Has the welcome at the start of the session occurred?	Yes/Not
Has the relationship been reviewed?	Yes/Not
Define the SMART objective of the session:	
What activities has the mentor proposed to the mentee?	
What recommendations has the mentor to mentee made?	
List the learning outcomes of the mentee.	
Mentee commitments before the next session	
What aspects would you highlight of the relationship maintained in the session?	
Elements of improvement in the process	
Other comments:	



- Before ending the session, 15 minutes, mentor and mentee will exchange their points of view and feelings on the session through the “Reverse mentoring Worksheet”. The purpose is to improve the aspects of the mentorship and to create a sincerer and close relationship.
- The mentor send an email to the mentee attaching:
 - The definitive shared “Evaluation template of the session”
 - The “The Mentorship goal-setting framework “to fill before next session.
 - Schedule of the next session.

The estimate duration of the regular meetings phase depends on plan to achieve the General Objective of the reverse mentoring; what the coordinator establish in the step 1 (define Objective).

STEP 5: FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS

After the period of the regular meetings the coordinator should check two aspects of the process of reverse mentoring, through questionnaires and interviews:

1. Improvement in the General Objective of the Process
2. The participants’ satisfaction in the reverse mentoring

Here, there is an example of evaluation questionnaire to measure satisfaction of the mentor and mentee:

EVALUATION QUESTIONS FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES
Name of the mentor
Name of the mentee
Period of regular meetings:
OBJECTIVES
Have you managed to achieve the General Objective of the process?
List your learning outcomes.
Have you perceived a safe relationship where you can develop?
I need more of:
I need less of:
Additional comments or observation:



In other hand, to measure the improvement in the General Objective as a consequence to make the process of reverse mentoring, the coordinator can check the diagnosis learning needs between the participants in the process. The company can check if the digital gap has narrowed, and the learning outcomes have been enough.

Although the company measure these indicators, the benefits of the reverse mentoring go beyond those established, improving the development of the participants, the better integration of the generations and a better work environment.



III. CASE STUDY 1

Study case of Vehbi Necip Savaşan Primary School of Turkey

Case Study: Reverse Mentoring	
Short description of the challenge that the tool was used to tackle	After participating in a RETAIN project workshop in Turkey about the use of the tool 'Reverse Mentoring', members of the senior leadership team from Vehbi Necip Savaşan Primary School, decided to develop a long-term school-wide project to use reverse mentoring with all staff, including administrative and support staff to with a view to developing a more inclusive learning environment.
Contextual information	<p>Vehbi Necip Savaşan primary school was founded in 1961. It has gone through several changes recently. When compulsory primary education was extended to eight years in Turkey, the school started providing education for children between the ages of 6 to 14. This changed student population was something that the senior leadership team felt staff were not equipped for in terms of the skills and subject knowledge that would be required.</p> <p>Furthermore, although teachers and administrators generally had a positive attitude towards these changes, they agreed that this was insufficient for an inclusive learning environment. Key challenges included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental pressure (resistance to change, having unrealistic expectations, showing no interest in their children's achievement, etc.), • Inadequate regulations regarding disruptive students, • Low-achieving students and students with low motivation • Teachers who felt exhausted, impatient, intolerant, burn-out <p>Furthermore, analysis of interviews conducted as part of the RETAIN project showed that not only the administrative but also the teaching staff perceived great challenges regarding students who were educationally vulnerable as a consequence of socio-economic disadvantage or needing special care due to certain learning disabilities.</p>
Title of the tool	Reverse Mentoring



<p>How did the school work with the tool</p>	<p>The school started a project named “Anlatmazsan Bilemeyebilirim” meaning “How can I know if you don’t tell me about it?” using ‘Reverse Mentoring’ as a tool.</p> <p>The school manager and one of the teachers, both of whom had participated in the RETAIN project, worked together as mentor and mentee, setting up the project and meeting twice a week for an hour.</p> <p>The aims of the project were to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and understand key areas for improvement across the school 2. Encourage staff to inform the administrative team regarding areas that they felt might hinder school improvement 3. Give an opportunity to each and every staff member to explain how they may have been affected by issues/events within the school environment 4. To prevent gossip or rumor and thus prevent negative, demotivating conversations amongst staff. 5. Improve sense of belonging amongst the staff and help them feel valued and respected. <p>Accordingly, the school manager and the teacher shared their ideas first with a small group of staff members and then with a general meeting of the whole school staff. The initial small group took responsibility for arranging the production of the materials needed, web site, appointment forms, mentoring reflection sheets and the posters to spread the idea of the project school- wide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Since it was planned to be conducted as a long-term project, the school aims to continue the process until they are sure to have benefitted all the expected positive outcomes. Happily, the project has already become a part of their school culture.
<p>Promoting factors</p>	<p>Through the process of reverse mentoring, mentors should improve their interpersonal skills such as self-disclosure, active listening, empathy, and feedback. Therefore, the application of the tool brings about personal and professional change in these respects.</p> <p>Furthermore, in our case study, both the school manager and the teacher who set up the project, reported that working together as equal learning partners mitigated against organizational hierarchy. As a result, they included a ‘real learning’ mindset as another requirement of the reverse-mentoring process.</p>



Barriers	<p>Because of the enthusiastic and innovative attitude of the school manager no barriers occurred during the reverse mentoring process. However, potential barriers could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) agreeing and following the progress(b) sticking to planned meetings and implementing actions agreed(c) providing, protecting and respecting privacy(d) being constructive on the issues shared and feedback received(e) not being ready for sharing and respecting another person's personal experience(f) adopting a 'real learning' mindset(g) organizational hierarchy
Developed by	Seden Tuyan, Figen Yılmaz Çukurova University, School of Foreign Languages, Adana, TURKEY
In collaboration with....	<p>Vehbi Necip Savaşan Primary School www.vehbinecipsavasani.meb.k12.tr</p> <p>Contact Person(s): Ahmet Yurtçu (The school manager) ahmetyurtcu@gmail.com Sultan Bostancı Karakoç (Teacher) sbostanci_6501@hotmail.com</p>



IV. CASE STUDY 2

AXA's reverse mentoring program³

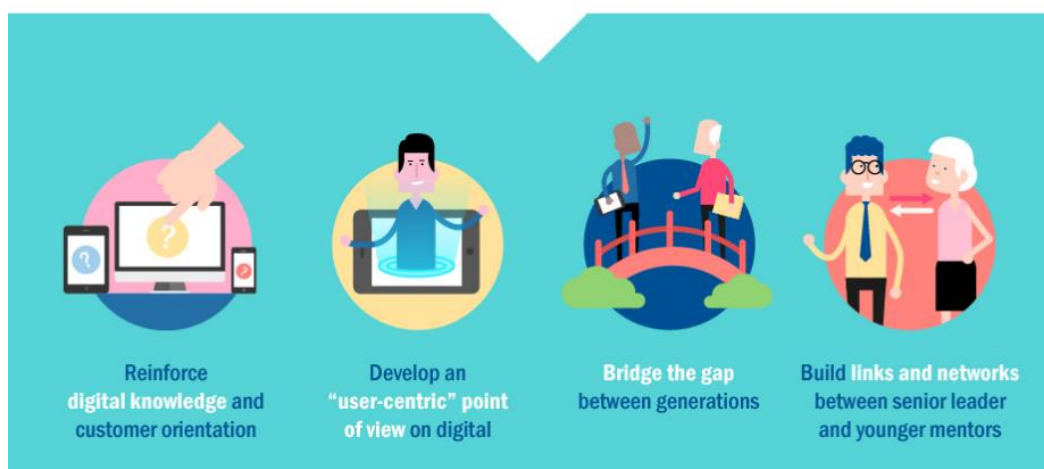
AXA's digital transformation is guided by one goal: customers' satisfaction. The Group must offer outstanding online services and be able to identify, or even anticipate the latest trends, in order to maintain its leadership in today's new world: that of the digital economy.

"Today at AXA, as in many other companies, we have three to four generations of people at work. So, for us, it's about breaking down the silos, breaking down the boundaries". Karima Silvent. Chief Human resources.

Using reverse mentoring, AXA is turning the challenge of the generation gap, currently facing most large companies, to its advantage. Since November 2014, the Group's employees have been invited to participate in the program as mentors or mentees, depending on their degree of familiarity with digital tools.

REVERSE MENTORING AT AXA

A STEP TOWARDS OUR CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION



³ <https://www.axa.com/en/magazine/reverse-mentoring-digital-transformation>

<https://www.axa.com/en/magazine/two-years-on-how-reverse-mentoring-axa>

<https://medium.com/@Kromatic/reverse-mentoring-what-millennials-can-teach-executives-and-senior-managers-9f2998f68b46>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQltmugk9fc&t=171s>



The multinational company took hundreds of its top executives and asked younger employees to be their mentors. Twitter, LinkedIn and Pocket are the subjects that have the most success. Subjects dealing with innovation and security of personal data are also very popular. These new skills are becoming critical for executives to understand and leverage social media platforms and strategy.

■ How is the mentorship program structured?

Executives (mentees) are paired with younger mentors for six one-hour sessions. The first session, “getting started,” is designed to allow the mentee to express their interests and curiosities, so that each mentor can customize the content they share with their mentee. Many mentees request to cover social media apps to optimize their LinkedIn or Twitter accounts and to be more in touch with the digital generations (Generations X and Y). During each subsequent session content is introduced and explored.

The point is to give the older generation, who are used to feeling like wise masters of their domains, the confidence they need to work with the both the latest and most popular technologies. In the process, executives start to realize which products attract and retain significant daily audiences and how they can use these tools in their daily lives.

Practices that may seem obvious to Generation X and Y can be valuable and enlightening to older mentees. For example, “don’t use the same password everywhere,” and, “try Paypal instead of entering your credit card number.” Topics can go deeper, such as identifying what kind of data an app is using from your mobile smartphone.

A CONCRETE APPROACH TO IMPROVE EVERYONE’S DIGITAL USAGE



AXA has been developing content since 2014, and mentors now have the capacity to share over 400 activities/modules of information.



■ What are the benefits of reverse mentorship?

One theme AXA noted over the course of establishing the mentorship program is that mentees seek to understand technologies related to their day-to-day lives versus business technology. For that reason, content has been integrated to address this need for exposure to apps used daily by the masses. Once mentors demystify these technologies and mentees understand how digital tools can improve their personal lives, executives see a shift in their digital mindset at work.

offered some perspective on the practical applications of this program. *“After being exposed to this program, which is all about building self-confidence on technology topics, the older mentees are ready to re-engage with their teams. They now have the knowledge to properly vet the pending projects that were stalled because they didn’t grasp what it was about.”* Guillaume Cabrere, CEO of AXA Lab Silicon Valley

AXA emphasizes that this program isn’t benefiting just one side of the table. Mentors are able to ask mentees about everything from personal development to topics related to business or management.

“It’s mutually beneficial. Of course the senior execs learn stuff. But the younger generation also gets direct access to some of our top leaders and can benefit from their advice and insights, even outside of the program. This is a pretty unique value proposal!” Cabrere.

■ What are the challenges of reverse mentorship?

Change inevitably meets resistance, but AXA’s executives quickly overcame doubts about the mentorship program. *“After the first few sessions ... senior execs — really high in the food chain — were admitting this program was great and that they learned a lot,”* Cabrere.

That required the Learning & Development teams to address 3 key challenges: confidentiality, content and timing.

The program’s emphasis on emerging technologies such as social media makes the potential sharing of personal information a concern. For example, imagine helping your boss upload their personal photos to Facebook. For that reason, project leads intentionally match pairs from different departments. In addition, the mentor and the mentee both signed a mini-NDA before the first session, to make sure we’d create a 100% secure environment (i.e. “no dumb questions” and “what is said during the session stays off the record”). This helps prevent any awkwardness during day-to-day work relationships.

Another challenge is that global teams sometimes require tailored content in order for the program to provide relevant value. For example, project leaders in AXA’s Asia offices appended their program to include local technology trends. Messaging app WhatsApp is ubiquitous in many regions of the world, but in Asia, Reach has replaced WhatsApp.

Pellerin mentioned that one of the most common challenges in administering the program is simply finding available meeting time slots. This is an important task for project leaders, who connect mentor/mentees and rearrange calendars often to accommodate busy executives. AXA has found that maintaining a cadence of one hour-long session every few weeks is ideal for effectiveness and also



realistic. The typical mentorship formally spans six months, but these professional relationships are encouraged to continue informally.

■ How can this innovation technique be useful for corporations?

By design, reverse mentoring involves the pairing of employees from different generations who can offer unique experiences and perspectives to their partner. The sheer size of corporations make them the most likely entities to have enough diversity of age, experience, and expertise to leverage such a strategy.

One could argue that startup employees and young entrepreneurs (especially in Silicon Valley) can easily reach out to tech industry veterans for advice over a cup of coffee. That doesn't necessarily ensure a mutually beneficial exchange of value for both parties, nor does it involve aligned motivations like pairing two professionals who see the same signature on their paychecks.

At a global corporation like AXA, Pellerin noted the program now extends beyond one-on-one mentoring to include tools like LinkedIn Elevate, which facilitates the sharing and discovering of valuable information and content from "experts" within your company.

The program offers benefits that inadvertently address other corporate pain points. Most people have noticed the generation gap at large companies. One benefit of the program is the community-building aspect that allows for easier communication between these employees born generations apart.

ALREADY A SUCCESS STORY AFTER ONE YEAR





V. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: MENTOR AND MENTEE TRAINING

The focus of this basic training is learning some theoretical and practical content to generate awareness and attention in the skills and tasks that mentors need to acquire to carry out the mentoring.

6 Rules of Engagement for Reverse Mentoring





FIRST MODULE: INTRODUCTION (Mentors and mentees)

1. What is reverse mentoring?

The trainer will learn mentor the reverse mentoring framework. The propose of the trainer is to orient the pairs and prepare to participants in them roles and responsibilities. Remind that to get the most out of any mentorship, a mentee and mentor should understand some principles:

PRINCIPLES FROM THE REVERSE MENTORING	
HOW TO BE A GREAT MENTEE?	HOW TO BE A GREAT MENTOR?
1. Set your goals with help of your mentor. Use a mentorship goal-setting framework.	1. Help set mentee goals. Use a mentorship goal-setting framework.
2. Be open about your needs. Give your mentor a view of your expectations and aspirations.	2. Listen patiently and repeat the view of your mentee's aspirations.
3. Come to each meeting with an agenda because your mentor won't have much feedback or advice if you don't have a purpose or goals.	3. Share experience and give advice. It's a must, your knowledge it's important.
4. Take responsibility of your own learning. Make your tasks and carry on the mentor's recommendations like read books, listen the podcasts..	4. Recommend tasks and resources: books, events, podcasts, webs, blogs...
5. Heed mentors experience and advice. Don't be defensive because your mentor want to help you.	5. Encourage Independence. You are setting the stage for intrinsic and ongoing growth.
6. Learn and have fun. Being a mentee should be a fruitful experience.	6. Inspire confidence. Inspire your mentee to get more challenges goals.
7. Confidentiality is agreed	7. Confidentiality is agreed

2. The objectives of the session:

In the reverse mentoring the role of the mentor is providing support, guidance, and feedback to generate development in some personal and professional competences of the mentee. But where does mentor focus on? The mentee and mentor must define a SMART objective (Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time based) to achieve in the process.

The trainer will learn mentor what is a SMART objective and how to co-create with the mentee, reminding in the digital skills context. There are several webs with content about SMART objectives and videos like:

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm>



The mentor has to know some questions to define de **SMART** objective:

Specific: The goal should be clear and specific for this reason some questions are important:

- What does the mentee want to accomplish?
- Why is this goal important?
- Who is involved?
- Where is it located?
- Which resources or limits are involved?

Measurable: This feature allows mentor and mentee to know if the desired result has been achieved or not, as well as the evolution or percentage of progress of the objective.

- What indicators of monitoring do both consider?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?
- How do both know the progress of the process?

Achievable: This attribute refers to the resources that are owned. So, the goal must be consistent with the mentee's capabilities, ensuring that the stated goal can be achieved. The idea is to set an ambitious goal, but at the same time possible.

- What digital capabilities has the mentee?
- Is the mentee trained to carry out a certain task?
- What learning capacity does the mentee have?
- How can I accomplish this goal?

Relevant: This step is about ensuring that the mentee's goal matters to him/her, and that it also aligns with other relevant goals:

- Does the objective applicable in the current work environment?
- What other benefits will mentor have when he/she achieves the goal?
- Why is success important to the mentor?

Time based: The objectives must have a time frame within the cycle that has been determined. In the reverse mentoring the time depends on the regular meetings (phase III).

- How much time does the mentee have to achieve the goal?

The objective of this chapter is that the mentor can define with the mentee a SMART objective for the reverse mentoring process.

3. The bond:

The mentor should create a safe environment, based on trust, empathy, commitment, and relevance. To get these outcomes both co-create a relationship, where they establish the objectives, normative, roles and methodology.



The role of each participant is decisive to generate a space of trust, respect, and openness, breaking down barriers that can be imposed by positions. The mentor is not a helpdesk. The mentor support mentee through different techniques.

4. Sustainer and challenging dialogue:

The mentor must have a curious attitude to give support and guidance to the mentee.

The mentor observes concrete experiences and generating a sustained and challenging dialogue based on reflective questioning. It is better if the mentor uses open questions that generate reflection in the mentee, giving the opportunity to investigate in own opinions. Some examples are:

- What do you want to achieve?
- What is happening right now?
- How would you like it to be?
- What prevents it?
- What problems could you run into?
- What could I do?
- Where can I find more information?
- What will do?
- What do you realize?

“The most effective questions to promote awareness and personal responsibility begin with words that seek to quantify or gather data, terms like *what*, *who*, *how much*, and so on. *Why* it is discouraged, as it often involves criticism and can put the interlocutor on the defensive” (Whitmore, 2018).

Ask how and why they encourage analytical thinking, also necessary so that the mentor can evaluate and give feedback.

The mentor uses his know-how to evaluate the mentee and offer him a FEEDBACK that challenges him to improve and to get out of his comfort zone. There are the best practices⁴:

- The nature of your feedback should be specific, provide examples whenever possible
- Oreo technique: surrounding negative feedback with positive feedback. You start and over with positive explanation.
- Give feedback as close to the observation as possible
- Ask the mentee about the feedback, you want he/she reflect

To learn giving feedback good way, read examples and watch a tutorial (Sweatt, 2021):

“Ms. Tyler is coaching Mr. Butler, and coincidentally, he is having the same issue as Ms. Thomas in the first scenario. Ms. Tyler observed Mr. Butler in action the day before, and now they're sitting down so that Ms. Tyler can provide him with feedback.

⁴ <https://www.sophia.org/tutorials/giving-and-receiving-feedback-2>



Here's what Ms. Tyler has to say. Mr. Butler, I really enjoy your lesson on geometrical shapes. Students seemed very engaged and active during your activity. But one thing I noticed is that the students were very loud, and it was distracting other students who are really trying to concentrate. Maybe you can create a hand signal for your students so they will know when they're getting too loud and need to quiet down"

The trainer can find a lot of webs and videos explaining this technique.

SECOND MODULE: TRUST RELATIONSHIP (For Mentors)

1. Know your mentee:

If the mentor knows the mentee, could support and motivate the mentee better. Some questions to think the mentor:

- What knowledge does the mentee have?
- What abilities does the mentee have?
- What does the mentee want to get at the end?
- What motivates the mentee?

The mentor can use an Empathy Map like a guidance to know deeply the mentee. For example:



Note: a Blank Empathy Map⁵

⁵ <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/empathy-mapping.htm>



2. Opening skills to share knowledge and practices. If the mentor exchange knowledge, is helping colleagues to improve and met news point of views and opportunities.

- Do you check that the mentee has understood what you have explained?
- Are you patient and empathetic?
- Do you promote the mentee's autonomy?

3. Communication skills:

The trainer has a lot of resources to learn about the communication skills, for example:

<https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>

THIRD MODULE: PRACTICE (For mentors if there is a group)

The possibility of training several mentors at the same time will allow the creation of role-play between them simulating the reverse mentoring process. These simulations create spaces to practice and observation to improve the mentor skills.

Template to the trainer to observe the role-playing process:

PRACTICING THE REVERSE MENTORING PROCESS	
Name of the mentor	
Name of the mentee	
Date:	Duration of the session:
CO – CREATION RELATIONSHIP	
Has the mentor explained his role to mentee?	
Has the mentor explained the methodology of the session?	
Has the mentor explained the duration and periodicity of the session?	
Do they co-create the objective of the session?	
What actions have created a safe environment?	
SUSTAINER AND CHALLENGING DIALOGUE	
Does the mentor use reflection questions?	
What actions does the mentor use to challenge the mentee?	
Does the mentor offer feedback to the mentee?	
What techniques does he/she use to give feedback?	
What techniques does/he use to motivate the mentee?	
Is the mentor patient and empathetic?	
Does he/she promote the mentee's autonomy?	
Additional comments:	



VI. LEXICON

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Comfort zone⁶: A comfort zone is a psychological state in which things feel familiar to a person and they are at ease and (perceive they are) in control of their environment, experiencing low levels of anxiety and stress. In this zone, a steady level of performance is possible.

Digital Immigrats⁷: A digital immigrant is a term used to refer to a person who was raised prior to the digital age. These individuals, often in the Generation-X/Xennial generations and older, did not grow up with ubiquitous computing or the internet, and so have had to adapt to the new language and practice of digital technologies. This can be contrasted with digital natives who know no other world than one defined by the internet and smart devices.

Digital natives⁸: Digital native is a term coined by Marc Prensky in 2001 to describe the generation of people who grew up in the era of ubiquitous technology, including computers and the internet. developed countries are considered to be digital natives, as they mainly communicate and learn via computers, social networking services, and texting. Digital natives are comfortable with technology and computers at an early age and consider technology to be an integral and necessary part of their lives. The opposites of digital natives are digital immigrants.

Mentoring⁹: Mentoring is a methodology and practice aimed at developing people's potential, based on the transfer of knowledge and learning through experience, all within a structured process in which a personal and trusting relationship is established. between a mentor who guides, stimulates, challenges and encourages another according to their needs to maximize talent.

Open-ended question¹⁰ is a question that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no" response, or with a static response. Open-ended questions are phrased as a statement which requires a longer response. The response can be compared to information that is already known to the questioner.

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comfort_zone

⁷ <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/digital-immigrant.asp>

⁸ <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/digital-native.asp>

⁹ <https://www.escueladementoring.com/mentoring/>

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-ended_question



SMART Objectives¹¹: Goals are part of every aspect of business/life and provide a sense of direction, motivation, a clear focus, and clarify importance. By setting goals, you are providing yourself with a target to aim for. A SMART goal is used to help guide goal setting. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Therefore, a SMART goal incorporates all of these criteria to help focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving your goal.

¹¹ <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/smart-goal/>



VII. LIST OF SOURCES

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