



## turning managers into leaders

### **Is a One-on-One Mentor Worth It? (or Can I Afford a Mentor?)**

This is a very personal question that only you can answer. A useful way of approaching this is to ask yourself what would happen if you didn't have a mentor. What does it feel like right now without a mentor giving you specific advice and offering encouraging support? What is the cost of struggling with workload problems, stressing out over people issues, and making the same leadership mistakes over and over again? What does it do to your credibility in the eyes of your staff and co-workers when you are perceived as a leader who is unskilled and inconsistent?

Think of one-on-one mentoring as attending a leadership development training session, but with three significant differences:

1. Leadership training programs are usually generic, designed to appeal to the masses. Because they are targeted at a large group, they attempt to cover everything, addressing some issues that don't apply to you, and skimming over those that you could really use more depth on. One-on-one mentoring is a training program that is designed specifically for you – tailored to help you achieve *your* identified goals and deal with *your* identified challenges.
2. One-on-one mentoring has accountability built right in. How many times have you attended a workshop or training session and walked out with some great ideas of things you were going to try and changes you were going to make ... only to have your good intentions fall by the wayside once the reality of the day-to-day took over. Mentoring creates accountability, ensuring that you take action on the commitments you make to grow as an exceptional leader. Accountability means that you go beyond just "thinking about it" and actually put what you've learned into action.
3. A one- or two-day training session gives you great tools for your leadership toolkit, but you don't usually have a chance to try the tools and seek additional feedback and advice. What should you do if what you try doesn't work out exactly the way you'd hoped? How should you react if your conversation with your employee doesn't go in the direction you'd intended? One-on-one mentoring gives you ample opportunity to try, assess, discuss, and try again ... as many times as necessary until you gain the experience and confidence you need ... and the outcomes you want.

At the end of the day, deciding to work with a mentor is as much a decision driven by finances as it is about your desire for professional development and growth. And as in any decision, the best way to come to a resolution is to weigh the benefits against the costs. When you weigh the relative investment of having the skills and confidence to be an effective leader who garners credibility and respect against the incremental investment in choosing to work with a mentor, the decision becomes much easier.