HELP!

How a mentor can transform your career

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Language in Business Spotlight
- Articles use the style, spelling, punctuation and pronunciation of British English unless otherwise marked.
- Articles that use American style, spelling, punctuation and pronunciation are marked with “US”.

EFM
Approximately at CEF level A2
Approximately at CEF levels B1–B2
Approximately at CEF levels C1–C2
CEF: European Framework of Reference for Languages

ifml.: informal word or phrase
vulg.: vulgar word or phrase; sl.: slang word or phrase
non-stand.: non-standard word or phrase
UK: chiefly British usage; US: chiefly North American usage

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Violence associated with water scarcity has greatly increased in recent years. Researchers have developed a global early warning tool to predict potential water conflicts around the world. The Dutch government-funded Water, Peace and Security (WPS) is an early warning system that was presented to the UN Security Council before it was launched formally in December 2019.

The tool combines environmental variables such as rainfall and crop failures with political, economic and social factors to predict the risk of violent water-related conflicts up to a year before they happen. It is the first tool of its kind to consider environmental data, such as precipitation and drought, alongside socio-economic variables.

The tool is available online for the public to use. But it is aimed more specifically at raising awareness among policymakers and people in regions with little water. The tool has already predicted conflicts that are likely to happen in 2020 in Iraq, Iran, Mali, Nigeria, India and Pakistan. Developers claim an 86 per cent success rate in identifying conflict zones that could result in at least ten fatalities. The tool currently focuses on hotspots across Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia.

**Historical data “teaches” the model**

Growing global demand for water is already creating problems — among communities, between farmers and city dwellers, and between people and governments. Tensions are expected to increase as water scarcity becomes a reality.
Mentoring: helpful advice at work
I’ve always felt grateful to John Sutton, my history and politics teacher at school. He took no notice of my mixed reputation and made no open judgement about my rebellious attitudes. Instead, he accepted me as I was. He seemed to respect and believe in something that the other teachers didn’t see. He gave me advice about higher education and introduced me to his former professor. It worked. I settled into my studies and got a place at the university I wanted to go to.

Decades later, I bumped into John Sutton and told him how important he had been. He remembered me but seemed to have no idea of how much he’d done. His mentoring skills came quite naturally and intuitively. He must have helped many others in the same way.

Most of us have had a mentor — a parent, a teacher, a family friend, a manager — even if we didn’t specifically label the person as such. Such people are referred to as “informal mentors”. Some of us have had several mentors at different stages in our lives, helping us to deal with different situations.

This article provides a simple guide to mentoring and to what mentors and mentees do. It also provides guidelines on setting up a mentoring programme. Above all, it shows why mentoring is so important.

The history of mentoring

Many books and articles on mentoring tell us that the first mentor was Mentor, the character in Homer’s Odyssey who gives advice to Telemachus, son of Odysseus, while his father is trying to get home from the Trojan War. In fact, it was the goddess Athena who disguised herself as Mentor so she could help Telemachus understand what he needed to do.

This ambiguity is perhaps symptomatic of the lack of clarity about what mentoring is.

Fast-forward more than two and a half millennia, to the emergence in the United States of modern mentoring in a business context. In his book Every- one Needs a Mentor, David Clutterbuck, a British writer and leading thinker about mentoring, traces the evolution of mentoring from what he calls “sponsorship mentoring” or “transactional mentoring” in the 1970s to the emergence of “developmental mentoring” or “Second Wave mentoring”.

Initially, sponsorship mentoring dominated the management development culture of American corporations and involved mainly white male managers. Sponsorship mentoring is the type that many people may recognize, where an older, more senior, more experienced manager in the same company or the same sector provides a younger protégé with advice and guidance about their future career.

Since then, a Second Wave of mentoring has become more inclusive, no longer involving just potential high-flyers and quite senior managers. Programmes have been created to benefit specific groups of people in the workplace, for example women, the disabled, and members of ethnic minorities and of the LGBT community. Some companies have formalized the distinction between these two types of mentoring by running both a sponsorship mentoring programme to support, for example, the development of a senior management team, and a development mentoring programme to manage, for
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