

Mac 'n Change – TMG Mentorship Program Summary

The idea of the mentorship program evolved from our choice of working on the Department Administrators Training program. As a result of brainstorming, research, polling TMG and a business case analysis, we decided to focus on developing a Mentorship Program for TMG.

BACKGROUND: The University work environment provides unique challenges for new employees and new managers to fully integrate their experience and expertise with the needs of the University. These challenges are further exacerbated during a period of change in a University environment. The anticipated departure of senior staff with extensive knowledge of University process, experience, acumen, policy and procedure due to upcoming retirements, emphasizes the importance of support and knowledge transfer to the management staff who will be called to fill the vacant positions.

In addition, many new managers may not possess the soft skills essential for the successful management of people and change in a growing organization. Such a skill-set is not easily obtained through training courses but is achievable through the actual experience and guidance of a coaching and mentoring experience.

The Mentoring program will be the new vehicle for the transfer of current best practices, knowledge and organizational history from experienced managers to new managers. This program will provide an easy to access program that provides real-time and confidential support for managing daily challenges and a bridge to a thorough and accelerated understanding of the University environment.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GATHERING:

- Researched mentoring programs in the private sector, government, McMaster University and other academic institutions.
- Polled TMG in the NMOP and CALM programs.
- Held one-on-one meetings with senior management at McMaster University.
- Solicited input from stakeholders in the Centre for Continued Education and Human Resources.

RECOMMENDATION: It is our recommendation that McMaster implement a mentoring program for TMG. The mentoring program should have multiple platforms. The primary driver will be the “Traditional” method with the experienced manager mentoring the less experienced manager. The mentoring program will be facilitated by an on-line component which will provide a framework and resources to support both mentors and mentees.

Although, the mentoring program is designed predominantly for face to face interactions, flexibility and the use of technology may also be necessary to meet the needs of the partnership (e-mail, etc.). Support from the University and in particular, senior management, is essential for this program to be successful.

TARGET GROUPS: Mentees: Members of the TMG group at McMaster University
Mentors: Senior Management, Senior TMG, Other administrators; >3 years of management experience within McMaster University

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MENTORING PROGRAM:

- 1. Pilot Mentoring Program, April - June 2011:** We recruited members from the Senior Management Team and the current NMOP and CALM groups to participate in a Pilot of the proposed TMG mentorship program. The objectives of the Pilot include testing recruitment forms, agreements, feedback reports and the matching of mentees and mentors. A group orientation and training session, as well as individual training and orientations were held. Currently, four mentor and mentee relationships are underway as part of the Pilot Program.
- 2. Phase 1 Implementation, September 2011:** We are collaborating with the CCE and Human Resources to offer the TMG Mentorship program to the Fall 2011 NMOP participants (mentees) and the previous two CALM cohorts (mentees and mentors). We propose promoting the Mentoring Program in both the NMOP and future CALM programs. At this stage, other members of senior management will be encouraged to participate as well as mentors. With budget approval, the web platform and training and orientation sessions will also be offered.
- 3. Phase II Implementation, September 2012:** Upon evaluation of Phase I, with feedback from the participants, the next phase of the TMG mentorship program will be offered to all TMG at McMaster.

LESSONS LEARNED TO DATE:

Mentorship takes many forms. While the anticipated goal of the Pilot was knowledge transfer and networking, priority setting advice, shared life lessons and valuable relationships resulted. Committing time and energy to the mentor-mentee relationship is essential to realize the potential and growth of one another, both professionally and personally. Mentor/mentee relationships form the basis of a supportive, people-focused environment within which innovation, creativity and a strong work force is encouraged to participate. Networking with senior staff who have vast experience in the university setting supports and encourages new managers to develop links with one another, realize the value their experience brings to the work force and together, forges long term growth and benefit to the management team at McMaster University.

SUPPORT RECEIVED AND NEEDED: Our team has recruited a number of champions from different areas and Faculties. The support and participation by the SMT, including President Patrick Deane and Provost Ilene Busch-Vishniac, as well as Human Resources and the Center for Continuing Education has encouraged our team to move forward with this important TMG Mentorship Program. Ongoing commitment is necessary to ensure this Program is sustainable after the CALM course ends. Support from the University, particularly at the senior management level is essential for this program to be successful.

Our team has fully developed the framework for the TMG Mentorship program and a budget proposal for implementation. Our team is committed to ongoing participation and support for the continuance of the Mentorship Program. Currently we have a Facebook page, a Linked-in group and mentorship e-mail address for interested parties to seek information while the program is being implemented.

Mac 'n Change is a diverse, energetic, fun and creative team. We have been able to capitalize on each individual's strength and our fun and spirited nature has enabled us to journey as a team without (many) major bumps or hiccups to create this important TMG Mentoring Program.