Leading Practices: Mentorship

Organizational values guide the ways in which organizations commit to showing up in the world. The mission of the PCMA Capital Chapter includes the importance of equity-centered values designed to build a diverse and inclusive leadership and therefore, membership. Creating programs where interaction is not just encouraged but becomes normal practice, creates a truly sustainable, beneficial, and diverse culture.

Research suggests that individual mentoring may be optimal for developing one-on-one relationships between mentoring pairs, while a group format may be better for promoting positive peer interactions. Therefore, we recommend group mentoring as an innovative way to connect members of the PCMA Capital Chapter. It also contributes to creating an increasingly diverse, vibrant and equitable culture where people realize greater engagement.

Recommendation

Establish a group mentorship program that taps into the existing knowledge, skills, and experience of our members to facilitate the transfer of skills to newer or less experienced members. This process will help career-advancement for both the mentor and the mentee, and encourage membership engagement.

Define the Program Goals

All mentoring programs must have specific goals in place that align with the organization's business objectives. Some diversity goals could include increased retention and member engagement (involvement on committees and in leadership roles). The best way to encourage involvement from a diverse group is to create an environment that is equitable and inclusive. Conducting surveys and interviews are ways to do this and the collected feedback should be used in creating the mentorship program. Most mentorship programs officially last between 3-6 months with informal check-ins on an individual basis afterwards.

▪ **Group Mentoring:** A type of mentoring where one or several mentors work with a group of mentees. It has long been a popular model for providing youth with a mentoring relationship—at one point it was estimated that 20% of the nation's programs were utilizing a group model. Group mentoring is a combination of group facilitation and peer mentoring with the mentors contributing as facilitators for the group dynamics, helping the mentees share and learn, and providing input based on

the mentor's own experience e.g. through storytelling, providing information, giving feedback etc.

● **Program Inclusivity:** Actively pursue a diverse group of stakeholders to serve as mentors. The Program should also promote knowledge sharing across various cultures, work styles, and backgrounds so no one is excluded. The entire organization should be encouraged to participate in mentoring.

● **Implement Mentor Training:** Training sessions should help mentors and mentees thoroughly understand their roles within the program and direct their expectations. Mentorship training should be mandatory for mentors. Diversity mentoring should include cultural, racial, and gender awareness, as well as communication skills practice.

● **Involve Leadership:** Executives and leaders within the organization play a unique role for the program launch. Leadership involvement will give a mentoring program high credibility within the organization, effectively recruiting participants.
Top leadership are encouraged to participate in the program. They have leadership experience that can help diverse high-potential members and future leaders with their career development plans. This is especially useful when our business objective is to bring diversity to the leadership team.

● **Encourage Good Mentor and Mentee Relationships:** This can be done by hosting in-person mentor training sessions and creating an expectation that mentors should always invite mentees to chapter events and actively engage with them on-site.

Leading Practices in Creating a Dynamic, Diverse Mentorship Program

● **Define Mentorship Program Objectives and Secure Leadership Support:**
Implement SMART objectives – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.
● **Find Strong, Passionate Mentoring Program Managers/Committee Chairs:** They will identify opportunities and troubleshoot issues, working with stakeholders to make ongoing adjustments to keep the program thriving.
● **Build Flexibility into the Mentorship Program:** Successful mentorship programs balance the dueling needs of structure and flexibility. A level of formality is needed

within the mentoring process, participant training, progress tracking, and communication to

help the program run smoothly. Participant needs will vary in outcomes sought and preferred methods of learning. When planning a mentoring program, identify areas that require flexibility and build them into the program.

● **Put Your Marketing Hat On:** When you introduce a new mentoring program to your organization, there's generally natural enthusiasm. But this enthusiasm does not always translate into high participation rates. A common reason? The absence of effective promotion. Do not assume potential mentors and mentees will automatically understand the benefits of mentoring. For many, this will be their first experience. You may need to reassure them that participation is worth their time and effort. [toolkit for promoting your mentoring program](#).

● **Think Win-Win - Understanding the Positive and Negative Factors that Impact Mentor Participation:** Once you have identified them, look for creative ways to reinforce positive drivers and lower the hurdles of negative ones throughout the mentoring process.

● **Use Mentoring Program Best Practices to Prepare Mentors and Mentees for Success:** Productive mentoring does not just happen. [Provide training](#) to mentors and mentees regarding the program's goals, participant roles, mentoring best practices, and your mentoring process. Help mentors and mentees clarify their own objectives. The need for training and guidance does not end after the initial orientation. Provide tips and best practices throughout the mentoring program to help participants stay on track and get the most out of the program.

● **Embrace the Role of Mentoring Matchmaker:** For mentoring to thrive, a solid relationship needs to form between mentor and mentee. The strength of the match plays a critical role in this. Consider giving mentees a say in the matching process by allowing them to select a particular mentor or list their top three choices. Intentionally include diverse mentors in the process.

● **Track, Measure, Listen & Tune:** Track program and connection metrics and ask for feedback. At the program level, [build metrics around defined objectives](#). Assess the outcomes of individual mentor and mentee connections. One of the easiest ways to measure success and capture feedback is through surveys. Ask participants and stakeholders how well the mentoring program met their goals and the goals of the organization. Also ask them for their ideas for improving the program.

● **Bring Closure to Individual Mentoring Connections:** Without defining a closure point, the mentoring process can wander aimlessly. As a mentoring connection progresses, work with the mentor and mentee to identify mileposts that indicate when mutually

established goals have been reached. Establish a formal process that brings closure to the mentoring experience. Within this process, provide an opportunity for both the mentor and mentee to reflect upon what was learned, discuss next steps for the mentee, and provide feedback.

● **Broadcast Mentoring Program Successes:** After a mentoring program begins, the focus naturally shifts into operating the program and keeping it running smoothly. Keep in mind, there are likely many more potential participants waiting for signs that joining the program is worth their time and effort.

● **Continually Demonstrate the Value of the Program:** Recognize participant contributions, and spotlight successes. This best practice effort will bring energy to the program, expand participation, and increase overall support within the organization.

Additional References
- Top 10 Mentoring Program Best Practices
- Mentor Guide
- Mentorship as a Tool for Growth, Inclusion and Equity

Allyship
In the context of the workplace, allyship refers to support and advocacy for colleagues from underrepresented groups, including LGBTQ+, women, the differently-abled and people of color. Mentorship often focuses on strengthening workplace relationships centered on career progression, and allyship can function similarly. At its core, allyship is about consciously taking steps to eliminate individual and systemic barriers that underrepresented groups face in the workplace and society.

- Mentorship and Allyship: Navigating Toward Diversity and Inclusion