

Maturing A Sustainable Mentoring Program

A Study on the Maturing Sustainable Mentoring Program: Exploring Opportunities for Enhancement of MSCS Mentoring

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ABSTRACT

When a less experienced person needs guidance and encouragement to perform their specific duties, they may turn to a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in a particular field, a role model, instructor, coach, or mentor. The Marine Corps System Command (MCSC) Mentoring Program involves people not only in their own growth and development but also in the growth and development of the organization. This formal support is established with a comprehensive path and includes a pool of dedicated mentors who believe in helping people grow personally and professionally. Interview with MCSC mentors and mentees reveals that participation in the Mentoring Program has been beneficial to personal development, yet other assigned duties and tasks may deter individuals from investing the time necessary to participate in the Program. Mentor/mentee matching has been key for the success of meeting mutual and individual goals. Specific recommendations for improvement include: (1) Allow time for mentoring; (2) Offer appropriate training; and (3) Educate others about the program.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When one of lesser experience needs guidance and encouragement to perform their specific duties, they may turn to a subject matter expert in the field, a role model, instructor, coach, or mentor. Farnese et al. (2016) defined mentoring as an intense, interpersonal exchange between the senior and the protégé, an organizationally established and sponsored developmental relationship in which a more experienced senior mentor and a less experienced junior protégé are matched for the specified purpose of sharing organizational knowledge and advancing the protégé's career. Bear (2018) examined how matching these pairs enables affective trust and positive learning by both mentor and protégé. It has been found that trust is directly related to the learning of the protégé and the amount of mentoring received. The effective trust and support perceived from the protégé's organization were also found to be related to the learning of the mentor (Bear, 2018). With any two acquaintances from the working relationship, there is the possibility for the business relationship to transition into a continued friendship, even if the mentorship agreement has expired (Johnson, 2010). A mentor typically desires to develop those needing growth, devoting extra time during and after working hours to the career progression of the mentee(s). As such, agreements (Appendix A) are established before the first official meeting and adjusted throughout the time of this relationship. At each meeting, the mentee will get challenged with tasks or assignments and provided continuous positive feedback. This constant interaction is usually conducted for an extended period, requiring sharing with one another (Prasad, 2019).

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Today, mentoring programs in military organizations are broadly recognized as a valuable tool for developing future leaders (Adams, 1997). This comes as no surprise given the growing trend of literature on mentoring and its importance to organizational practices, mentoring programs are used as a strategy for transferring knowledge from a more experienced employee to a less experienced employee. In contrast, others employ the use of mentoring programs as performance interventions at the workplace (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Given the number of generalized benefits derived from mentoring programs, following the Headquarters Marine Corps Mentoring guidance, the Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) Mentoring Committee designed a robust program exclusively to command personnel that helps to effectively provide professional development and learning between employees at different levels and stages of their careers. To pair mentors with potential mentees, MCSC initiated a meet-and-greet based on the "speed dating" model. I have provided a guide for individuals to keep in mind and reading material (Appendix B) to assist with preplanning activities and ideas on what to expect and prepare for as a mentor/mentee. Although the information in this paragraph has been approved for public release, it is not easily accessible for anyone doing a general web search; even members of the MCSC community would have difficulty. During my search, looking for the most recent data, I acquired briefings by directly contacting mentoring program committee members (Appendix C). A brief overview of the process is as follows:

- In order to enroll as a member, you must be a current employee at MCSC with a valid Common Access Card.

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- Once you have enrolled, you will have access to general information and instructions on what to do next as a new member.

To ensure the success of the command's mentoring program, MCSC selected The Training Connection, Inc. (TTC) and Dynamic Enterprise Solutions, Inc. (DES), a professional development firm, to assist with the management and operations of the program. This partnership between TTC & DES and MCSC is dedicated to helping to hone MCSC employees' personal and professional skills while increasing their effectiveness across the organization. The MCSC Mentoring Program involves people not only in their own growth and development but also in the growth and development of the organization. The formal support is comprehensive and includes a pool of dedicated mentors who believe in helping people grow personally and professionally. The activities associated with the MCSC mentoring program may not meet the organization's needs, the employees, or the desired results. If there is evidence the program is thriving, with minimal areas for improvement, that information would also be helpful to know and share with stakeholders (Appendix C).

Purpose of this Project

The overall purpose of this project was to improve the Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) Mentoring Program. The study sought insight into the perceptions of mentoring and its impact on employees' career development. More specifically, the intent was to identify what potential mentors and mentees may need within the agency and present the findings to inform an improved training guide. I want the area of focus to be specific on what current mentors can improve upon and what mentees and new hires' initial need for development to becoming self-

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sufficient. This effort will ensure the mentoring program will in a constant state of growth, a continuous learning mode for experiences and feedback from agency personnel.

Significance of the Problem

As the potential of losing a large number of employees to retirement or industry continues to grow at a rapid rate, there is a need to pass on knowledge from senior leadership to interns, journeymen, and new hires (DeLong et al., 2008). Findings from this study may be used to assist retention of this wealth of knowledge in a time of leadership transformation and flux by providing the information needed in the form of mentoring, competency training, career development, and organizational restructuring. The aim of this project was not only to present the mentoring program as a valid form of knowledge sharing but also to demonstrate that mentoring is one way to expand lines of communication through shared experiences and lessons learned, which can be a source of leadership development (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). The findings may be used as a voice of personnel and sent as recommendations for consideration to the MCSC Mentor Program committee to further develop as a process improvement strategy.

A successful mentor experience can be achieved if expectations are appropriately managed. Knowing one's self and abilities, as well as expressing them to one another, is key in setting realistic expectations for the short and long term (Appendix A). Sharing knowledge and experiences is not the only means of mentoring but sharing the shortcomings as well (Bear, 2018). This understanding will provide the proper support to the mentee and allow mentors to strive for the outcomes that have been previously set. Because the MCSC is a mix of military and civilian personnel, there are different cultures cohabiting a single working environment.

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Having different backgrounds makes each mentor, mentee, and their relationship very unique. Someone growing up in an urban community as a minority race is very different from a person from a rural area, but not having economic challenges also intersects with being a minority and perhaps being sheltered as a child. The diversity is apparent between mentor and mentee, based on the intersectionality of their identities.

The effectiveness of the mentoring practices used in MCSC can directly affect the strength of the workforce and the ability to retain knowledge. Discussing the theoretical background for mentoring in the US military and the perspectives of different leadership approaches can assist with analyzing the organization's needs (Cooper, 2014). Mentees are significant and will eventually become the moderators, substitutes, and co-producers, ultimately taking the leadership role full time and acquiring their own mentees. As they participate in the mentoring program and the use of metaphors provided to their mentees, the intentions of senior employees will address the moral potential of leadership on the quest for a higher purpose, as they are the most influential to the less experienced in MCSC.

Definitions of Terms and Acronyms

- Individual Development Plan - a simple document that offers insight on improving your current professional status by allowing you to: strengthen identified weaknesses, improve overall performance, skills and competencies, and provide insight into both short- and long-term career goals.
- In-service Agreement – an informal written agreement that sets out the terms and conditions, usually a performance rating, for assigned duties and service between employee and employer.

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- Intern - a student or trainee who works, sometimes without pay, at a trade or occupation in order to gain work experience.
- Journeyman - a trained worker who is reliable but not possessing a full understanding of one's job duties and responsibilities.
- Leader/leadership - a person who inspires or motivates a group, organization, or country.
- MCSC – Marine Corps Systems Command, the agency of interest.
- Mentee - a person who is advised, trained, or counseled.
- Mentor - an experienced and trusted advisor.
- New Hire - someone reporting in a process by which an employer reports information on the newly acquired employee to a designated state shortly after the date of appointment for wages.
- Performance Improvement Plan - a tool that gives an employee with performance deficiencies the opportunity to succeed.
- Supervisor - a person who manages or directs a person or an activity.
- US DOD – United States Department of Defense.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The success and growth of the mentoring program is evidence of participants' access to tap into the abundance of resources in leadership and training tools in order to maintain high performing workforce. These resources being essential to the survival of thriving organizations such as Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC), are only as successful as the goals met. The assistance in professional growth came from the time of studying theories and different styles of leadership. The MCSC mentoring program utilized these tools to ensure this desired success could be achieved. There is a need to pass on knowledge from senior leadership to interns, journeymen, and new hires, as the potential of losing a large number of employees to retirement or the private industry continues to grow rapidly (Park, 2018).

Leadership Development

This study examined how leadership could adapt to different employees, transform the culture of the environment, and continue to motivate the group to one goal and mission of the command. Kirton's (2004) Adaption Innovation Theory, transformational leadership, and motivational theory were some of the resources I found useful on the topic of developing young leaders. I recognized how many leadership styles are applicable with the same group of individuals depending on their needs or mission. In other readings, I observed how different techniques are utilized to encourage new ideas and motivate employees to take action in the same goal. Can different leadership styles determine who is more skilled or qualified to guide a group of followers? This would depend on the individual's focus on efficiency and group conformity, which may lean toward adaptation, or if there was more interest in originality

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where innovation is more valued. Perhaps a leader is highly favored on the change he/she can bestow on an organization. Transformational leadership, more specifically Stimulation and Inspirational Motivation, can identify what is needed as a whole, inspire followers to trust in a vision, and execute with those committed to the change (Northouse, 2016).

Mentoring Programs

The National Mentoring Resource Center (a program of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, OJJDP) provides tools and resources to help mentoring programs meet national standards for quality while building ground-level capacity to connect more young people with mentors (OJJDP, 2021). This collection of handbooks, manuals, and other tools provides useful mentoring material in order to develop and further instill agency practices and lessons learned. The main goal of mentoring programs is to improve the quality of work and effectiveness of each individual across agencies, schools, and organizations worldwide. Mentoring closes the knowledge gap and pushes toward more equity of opportunity for rewarding careers to those with limited resources (Northouse, 2016). Building teams of highly functional employees, morale, and their individual development allow them to find opportunities to improve their own shortcomings. Mentoring also assists protégés with differentiating the organizational core values, mission, and culture, as well as understanding how to align with the philosophy they are working under. By the end of a mentoring term, participants should have gained exposure and acquired access to subject matter experts in multiple competencies at different levels in the desire of interests.

Military Context

In the last several years, mentoring has become a hot topic among military leaders. The U.S. Army's field manual series now includes a specific publication on the development and effective conduct of mentorships with subordinates (Johnson, 2010). In his 2003 "Guidance for the Navy," the Chief of Naval Operations at that time, Admiral Vernon Clark, specified that mentoring sailors should be a preeminent focus of the Navy; Admiral Clark went so far as to direct that a mentor be assigned for every service member on active duty (Johnson, & Anderson, 2010). Mentoring relationship continues to experience the interest in leadership development in disciplines across all four U.S. military services up to senior officers. Mentoring is critical for the success of all military entities. In fact, according to interviews at MCSC, it is embedded in the training at each ranking for enlisted and officers of the Marine Corps. Military entities practice a "buddy system," where the higher-ranking individual is responsible for the survival and success for the lower ranking marine, seaman, airman, or soldier; and, in turn, the lower-ranking individual will look up to their mentor for guidance, direction and inspiration to accomplish feats they did not originally envision for themselves.

I am confident that in order to identify what potential mentees may require, diverse leaders who practice multiple leadership styles in any given situation will have to consider SMART goals and align them with their mentees' goals (Morgan, 2020). Appendix A also includes a description and what to keep in mind on how this new partnership can succeed. Given that this work capacity is a new environment for a newcomer, leaders have the challenge to transform the new hires' attitudes, motivations, and behavior (McGuire, 2007). What happens when newcomers are enrolled in the mentoring program as a part of their in-service

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agreement? What if it were mandatory to set up meet-and-greets or interviews rather than participate in a completely voluntary mentoring program? This early engagement could initiate working relationships and exposure of wants and needs for both parties to address in a team effort. Both can be argued effectively and negatively depending on personalities and the selection process. The changes in the mentoring philosophy and leadership approaches should have some type of correlation to specific needs of the mentee and personalities, skills, and traits (Kahle-Piasecki, 2011).

For an organization to improve the quality of goods and services, it must invest in its people providing these products. Băleanu and Irimie (2011) suggest mentoring outcomes at the organizational level are meant to improve the quality of the human capital, increase vertical mobility, and enhance the commitment in the agency. On the individual level, mentoring improves human capital, strengthens career/job security opportunities, and enhances career motivation. Finally, mentoring on the public service level improves the human capital capacity, increases opportunities for diverse groups in society, and enhances public service motivation (Băleanu & Irimie, 2011).

In recent years, formal mentoring programs and online e-mentoring matching services have proliferated within the armed forces (TTC & DES, 2021). Conducting interviews on the MCSC mentoring program will determine which practices are effective, which practices need improvement, and if any practices should be introduced in the hopes of better-supporting interns, journeymen, and new hires as they transition into the MCSC community.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to provide insight into the Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) Mentoring Program. Interviews were conducted with a mix of MCSC employees with various backgrounds, mentoring knowledge, and US military experience. Supplementary information about the MSCS Mentoring Program was obtained through different channels. All research procedures were first approved through Institutional Review Board procedures at Virginia Tech.

Data Collection

Invitations to participate in the study were sent to potential subjects to coordinate a face-to-face interview the following week to further discuss leadership development mentoring and perspectives (Appendix D). As part of the process, subjects were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix E). Upon receipt of signed consent, interviews were scheduled.

All interviews were conducted following a semi-structured protocol (Appendix F). The questions were developed based on the purpose and objectives of this study. Given that leadership has the challenge to transform the attitudes, motivations, and behavior of the new hires, the questions were designed to draw attention to the developmental relationships in which more experienced people serve as guides and influencers on less skilled personnel in the same organization. The intent for these questions was to provoke any preconceived attitudes towards mission-driven leaders based on values on strategic planning, scheduling, and problem-solving skills, etc.

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Additional data came from our briefs from previous years as far back as 2016 to the most recent in 2020. This information was compiled from the conclusion of each graduating class of mentors and mentees. A questionnaire was sent to all participants to acquire each individual experience, expectations, and overall opinion of how impactful the program was personally. This was distributed to gain a snapshot of MCSC Mentor Program participants from different levels of experience, competencies, and diverse backgrounds of their mentoring experience. I obtained these briefs more quickly being an MCSC employee and requesting directly with the program team, but this information is also publicly available. Each out brief has a Distribution Statement A, approved for public release with distribution being unlimited. This information can be found at the Mentoring Connection web page (www.mentoringconnection.com), with an established account.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted with an intent to identify any trends of lost knowledge occurring at MCSC, as senior employees ending their career and journeymen acquire certifications and depart the organization to seek potential career promotion opportunities elsewhere. The approach considered generic program requirements, as well as limitations associated with relationship building and performance evaluations. With each interview, I considered firsthand how colleagues understood the importance of their roles as new and seasoned employees. I sought to uncover the impacts of their responsibilities and how those duties may impact MCSC mentoring program participation decisions. With the protocol being semi-structured and informal, I sought to get to the root cause of the hesitation or delay in joining the mentor community. I looked at the data to consider why these programs have not

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been heavily supported across every division. I considered evidence as to why mentoring is not a part of every Individual Development Plan for all employees, whether as a mentor or a career mentee. I considered subjects' perception of what is expected of them and how their superiors have supported their own personal growth and those in the shared workspace. I explored how relationship building was established and continued through the development of each individual. In other words, the focus of the data analysis was on such factors as establishing relationships, including aspects of employee retention and incentives for participation in the mentoring program.

Timeline & Budget

This study was conducted internal to MCSC, and the subjects were employees of MCSC. Given that the organization can gain valued insight, the MCSC allowed time during the working day to conduct interviews and complete the study. The cost of conducting this study was minimal; therefore, there was no requirement for a budget.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation to this study was the number of participants recruited within the timeframe of collecting data in order to present this information to the graduate committee. There were also time restraints for participants to elaborate and continue further discussion due to scheduling conflicts, as most were still working remotely from home. Another limitation was caused by the recruiting strategy, initially restricted by my own personal network through general discussion from personal opinions on mentoring and developing our workforce. This included my current and former colleagues being open and honest about their personal goals and aspirations in casual settings. These conversations then grew into encouragement for a

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volunteer to speak for the group, express to team leads, and complete surveys and general assemblies. This eventually provided enough motivation for me to go back to school and start writing on mentoring programs. To control this limitation, I asked the volunteers to provide two or more recommendations of individuals to participate in the study. Thus, the working relationships allowed participants a sense of comfort to participate in order to generate a broader perspective across Systems Command.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I had success gathering the perceptions of mentoring and its impact on employees' career development. I was able to gain insight from mentors and mentees within Marine Corps Systems Command. I will be able to present the findings, recommendations, and created material that can assist with improvement and potential training development for all participants. Also, supporting documentation can be found in Appendix G. Some highlights or trends from the interviews and captured in the following bullets:

- Participants agreed the assigned duties and training requirements were sufficient for their professional growth. So, with these responses reoccurring, I took this as a preference of not enrolling in the mentoring program and starting a new job. Participants would rather get comfortable with new responsibilities before taking on additional tasks and assignments. Despite acknowledging mentoring could assist with career development, participants expressed the program would be an even bigger burden on their assigned duties.
- Participants agreed the Mentoring Program was beneficial to personal development. The MCSC Mentoring Program is an asset to the participants, which they have all expressed their desire to be involved in under the appropriate conditions. Participants have also witnessed the benefits from individuals after being enrolled as mentors and mentees over time. Participants have advanced in careers, as well as vastly expanded their networks.

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- Participants agreed the mentor/mentee matching was key for the success of meeting mutual and individual goals. Participants have apprehension of joining any mentoring program, recognizing their personality traits, and fear of getting assigned to a mentor that may not be sensitive to those areas (e.g., an introvert with an extrovert may not mesh so well with one another). Participants do not want to relive bad experiences they have had personally or what has been shared with them.

Recommendations

The interviews were definitely an opportunity for participants to express the concerns individuals are confronted with and their own unique challenges. I have provided the following recommendations to help the Program Coordinator address potential issues identified in the study's feedback and to ensure the program's continued growth and success for future cohorts.

Allow time for mentoring. Participants expressed the need for more time and comfort in the current position. With the responsibility in the office, there appears to be little time and energy to take on additional duties that may be required to be a member of the command's mentoring program. We recommended that mentors speak to supervisors across the command, checking in on their employees, and encourage the mentoring program as a helpful resource. It is essential to communicate the value of mentoring as part of the process of becoming highly effective team members. Any hesitation could be lessened with support from supervisors, particularly with allowing designated time for mentoring during working hours. If this could be accomplished for employees, thus removing the burden of finding time out of the office for the mentoring program, there may be more participation and less need for efforts

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focused on recruiting. This networking creates a general acceptance of mentoring as a valuable and vital process, so time invested benefits all parties involved.

Offer appropriate training. We have agreed that anyone with more experience can be a mentor, but you must be willing to invest the time in best practices for mentoring relationships. Many have the perception that an effective means of mentoring is just storytelling of career experiences. But sharing without having a point to the story will be detrimental to precious time the mentee could be utilizing for their understanding and learning. So, training is necessary for the mentor to identify the mentee's needs, recognize the area of improvement, and acknowledge focus areas for the relationship. Mentors will have to accept their own shortfalls, weaknesses, and learning experiences. Continued training and education for mentors will only allow the development and the ability to build the relationship with whom they have partnered. Training will also contribute to recognizing whether there is a good fit or not. Matching mentors and mentees is key to the success of meeting goals. Merely having common interests and career goals will not suffice for pairing two individuals.

Educate others about the program. At a minimum, all personnel need to be aware that a formal mentoring program is available through MCSC annually. Participants have expressed their familiarity with what mentoring is; however, only the mentors and former mentees recognized the difference between calling someone a mentor (alone) versus having a mentor formally with a mentoring agreement and understanding the unique distinctions. Potential participants need to realize the benefits of formal programs and the impacts on their own professional development and personal goals by educating everyone on what MCSC has to offer and how the program can create a better agency, personnel become more knowledgeable,

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which may create a dedicated, mission-driven community. These program initiatives identify the minorities of the command and the general needs of individuals to be successful members, meeting their short- and long-term goals.

Summary

Participant recommendations provided insight into the future of leadership at MCSC. And these participants could potentially be members of the mentoring program and possibly misrepresented in mentoring, including religion, race, national origin, socioeconomic class, gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability. In response, I have developed a survey (Appendix H) derived from a combination of personal experience, what was acquired from participants, and what I read in past coursework. The recommended material could be considered to be used in the future with more members in the agency. The findings from this study may be used to assist retention of this wealth of knowledge during a time of leadership transformation. The recommendations are providing information anticipating to improve mentoring, competency training, career development, and organizational restructuring. I hope this project report presents the mentoring program as a valid form of knowledge sharing and demonstrates that mentoring is one vital way to open up lines of communication through experiences and lessons learned, which can be a source of leadership development. I have included Appendix B as a guide for mentoring participants. "Leadership with a Higher Purpose" further explains how an agency might categorize types of leadership: authentic leadership, pragmatic leadership, and consideration of aesthetics in leadership (Jackson, 2011). Cooper (2014) explains how tapping into the epitome of doing your job is seeking those that are better armed to the challenges that

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the team faces regularly. Mentoring will assist in exposing the younger community of soldiers to the seasoned veterans before they phase out and into the next phase of their lives.

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APPENDIX LIST

- A. EXAMPLE MENTORING AGREEMENT TEMPLATE
- B. OTHER IDEAS FOR MENTORING PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS
- C. MCSC MENTORING PROGRAM OVERVIEW PROGRAM BRIEF
- D. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT MESSAGE
- E. RESEARCH SUBJECT CONSENT FORM
- F. MCSC KEY INFORMANT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
- G. MCSC MENTORING END OF PROGRAM REPORT
- H. EXAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

APPENDIX A
EXAMPLE MENTORING AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

Revised MON YEAR

Mentor's Name: (Print) _____

Mentee's Name: (Print) _____

We are voluntarily entering into a mentoring partnership, which we expect to benefit the mentor, mentee, and the Marine Corps. We want this to be a productive and rewarding experience, with most of our time spent in collaborative development activities. To minimize the possibility of confusion, we have agreed to the following:

- We agree that we are compatible in this partnership and if, for any reason, it seems inappropriate we will discontinue immediately.
- The purpose of this relationship is to (develop the mentee's leadership competencies as part of the Civilian Career and Leadership Development Program) or (other)
- The mentoring relationship will last for (specify period) or (until the mentee's developmental goals have been accomplished).
- The two of us will meet every _____. While unforeseen circumstances may alter this plan, we agree that meeting times will be part of our calendars, and we will make plans for each meeting.
- Each meeting will last a minimum of _____ but not more than _____.
- Between meetings, we will contact each other by:
Telephone: _____ Email: _____
Other: _____
- In-depth issues will be handled in face-to-face meetings.
- We agree to the confidential nature of this relationship. If we choose to discuss its content with someone else, we will seek the other party's permission first.
- We agree to a no-fault conclusion of this partnership if, for any reason, it seems appropriate.
- We agree to set SMART goals for this partnership. If, for any reason, it seems inappropriate or no longer achievable, we will update as applicable.

Other agreements: _____

Mentor's Signature and Date

Mentee's Signature and Date

**APPENDIX B
OTHER IDEAS FOR MENTORING PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS**

Supplies, Materials, And Equipment To Consider For Meetings

SUPPLIES	MATERIAL	EQUIPMENT
Pens Highlighters Notebook/Ring Binder	Mentor: Questionnaire Reference material PowerPoint Presentation (2 copies) Evaluation form Mentoring Agreement (revised) Mentee: Questionnaire Intended Goals MCSC IDP Evaluation form	Laptop(s)

TIPS FOR MENTORSHIP SOCIAL OR MENTOR SPEED DATING

- ✓ Be very friendly and enthusiastic to encourage the same energy to be reciprocated.
- ✓ Identify the premier mentees – those that are engaging and approachable. Ask those to share their expectations. This will help others to open up and give ideas where they need to improve.
- ✓ Take your time speaking with plenty of volumes to allow the group to hear.
- ✓ Reflect and summarize – this ensures mutual understanding and reaches some goals.
- ✓ Be yourself – this will set the tone of honestly upfront at the start of the relationship, advice will be valued more, and authenticity is vital for the maturity of the program.
- ✓ To be on time is to be early, and staying late shows your commitment.
- ✓ Attire may vary, so keep your partner in mind to improve interactions moving forward.
- ✓ Consider meeting environments to maximize comfort.
- ✓ Make it worth your while, so have fun and ask plenty of questions.

READ AHEAD MATERIALS

- Literature on transformational leadership (e.g., chapter from Northouse, 2016)
- MCSC Mentoring Program Brief (Appendix C)
- Kroger, J. (2020). Education for Seapower Strategy 2020. *Naval War College Review*, 73(3), 3. <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol73/iss3/3>

Maturing A Sustainable Mentoring Program

PRE-MENTOR MEETING

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN APPROACHING ANY NEW MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITY, the S.M.A.R.T. Goals (Morgan, 2020)

- SMART goals assist with the advancement and career success of mentor and mentee. SMART goals provide clarification to well-defined expectations in every partnership within the mentor program and if the goals are achievable.
- SPECIFIC – Align the mentor/mentee job description, aspirations, and MCSC mission statement.
- MEASURABLE – How can the success of meeting the goal be measured?
- ATTAINABLE – Ensure each goal is realistic and can be achieved within the agreed timeframe and all are reasonable.
- RELEVANT – All tasks, activity, and focus should be associated with the same area to including the expectations and mission statement.
- TIMELY – Goals have a defined timeframe, including the period of performance.

ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MENTORS

1. Be Proactive
 - a. (INSERT EXPLANATION)
2. Begin with the Result in Mind
 - a. (INSERT EXPLANATION)
3. Simplify and Prioritize Each Step
 - a. (INSERT EXPLANATION)
4. Keep a Win-Win Mentality
 - a. (INSERT EXPLANATION)
5. Seek Clear Understanding, Then to Be Understood
 - a. (INSERT EXPLANATION)
6. Synergize
 - a. (INSERT EXPLANATION)
7. Diamonds Cut Diamonds
 - a. (INSERT EXPLANATION)

Maturing A Sustainable Mentoring Program

WHAT DO SUCCESSFUL MENTORSHIPS HAVE IN COMMON?

- RESPECT -
- INFLUENCE -
- SUPPORT -
- EMPOWER –

DEFINITIONS OF


- SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE
- EFFECTIVE LEADERS
- GREAT CAREERS
- FAVORITE SUPERVISORS

SMART GOAL PLANNING FORM

SPECIFIC Who and What?	
MEASUREMENT ASSESSMENT How?	
ATTAINABLE/ACHIEVE Reasonable?	
RELEVANT Expected Result?	
TIMELY When?	

APPENDIX C

MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND MENTORING PROGRAM OVERVIEW PROGRAM BRIEF




MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND
Equipping our MARINES

Marine Corps Systems Command Mentoring Program

Katie Ruskin
Workforce Development

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A. Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

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MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND
Equipping our MARINES


Purpose

Following the Headquarters Marine Corps Mentoring guidance, the MCSC Mentoring Program designed a robust program that helps to effectively provide professional development and learning between employees at different levels and stages of their careers. The program is dedicated in helping to hone MCSC employees personal and professional skills while increasing their effectiveness across the organization.


2

	MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND Equipping our MARINES	Description
<p>The MCSC Mentoring Program involves people not only in their own growth and development, but also in the growth and development of the organization. The formal support is comprehensive and includes a pool of dedicated mentors who believe in helping people grow personally and professionally.</p>		

	MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND Equipping our MARINES	Program Goals
<p>The overall organizational goals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build and retain a well-rounded cadre of employees.• Contribute to positive morale and satisfaction in working for MCSC.• Support succession planning objectives. <p>The overall individual goals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take responsibility for individual career and professional development.• Recognize skills needed for success and find the developmental opportunities needed to develop those skills.• Gain an understanding of organizational values, mission, and culture.• Increase exposure and access to employees at different organizational levels throughout the MCSC community.		


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Mentoring Time and Commitment



- ❖ 10-month commitment
- ❖ 2 hours per month
- ❖ Balance quantity with quality of time

5


 **MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND**
Equipping our MARINES

Program Features

The Mentoring program includes a blend of developmental activities that complement the active mentoring experience. The dynamic mentoring process steers the relationships beyond philosophical chats with the mentors, and guides the partners to seek out developmental opportunities in a variety of situations and learning experiences.

- **Meetings with Mentors** — Mentorees will have an opportunity to capitalize on the wisdom of their mentor's experiences. Mentoring meetings will help mentorees hone their personal and professional skills while increasing their individual and organizational effectiveness.
- **Behavioral Assessment Tool (DISC)** — Participants will have an opportunity to complete an on-line behavioral assessment tool known as DISC, which clarifies individual work styles, how styles affect job performance, and how the mentor and mentoree can work together to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses. The resulting feedback will also provide program participants with an opportunity to target individual developmental needs and develop effective MAPs.
- **Mentoring Agreement and Mentoring Action Plan** — Each mentoree will design and define a Mentoring Action Plan (MAP) with assistance from his/her mentor. The MAP will be based on a joint assessment of the mentoree's developmental needs and may include some (or all) of the following learning activities. When the mentorees have drafted their MAPs, they will be encouraged to set up a meeting with their supervisors (and mentors) to discuss the mission relevance of their plans and time commitments.

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	MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND Equipping our MARINES	Historical Data
Historical program data:		
<p>The current design of the Formal Mentoring program began in 2014 with just 50 personnel participating. By 2019, following contractual guidelines, the program has consistently taken on a maximum of 100 participants. The program, up till the FY21 program, was divided into two separate cohorts: East coast which encompasses all employees located in Quantico, Albany, Orlando, and Michigan, and West coast which encompasses MCTSSA employees. Both programs ran side-by-side each other with shared forums but separate mentoring partnerships and kick-offs and graduations. The FY21 program is combining both coasts into a seamless shared program.</p>		
Vendor data:		
<p>The Training Connection (TTC) has been the vendor for the Mentoring program since 2014. They are currently the sub-contractor to Claxton Logistics, who is the prime contractor on the Mentoring contract. TTC is a leader in Mentoring and has been helping organizations build relationships, foster communications and create non-threatening learning environments where employees can find support for career and professional development.</p>		
<p>TTC is vital to the success of the program. Our program is managed on the TTC site. Our participants interact on the site as well as manage their partnerships through the site. TTC sets up and conducts all forums and are actively engaged in assisting the Mentoring lead in keeping up with the partnerships and assisting the lead with administrative matters.</p>		
Success Stories:		
<p>Since the beginning of the program our participants have gained insight into MCSC, accelerated their careers, moved to new opportunities and have been able to grow in their knowledge of the acquisition community as a whole due to our outstanding mentors and everything they do for the program. Participant stories and achievements can be found in the end of program briefs provided upon request.</p>		
7		

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT MESSAGING

The following message, approved by the Institutional Review Board, was designed to be shared verbally or via email.

Hello! As you know, the Marine Corps Systems Command has been supporting a mentoring program. I am working on a project with the goal of improving that program. I would like you to participate in an interview, no more than 20 minutes, so that I can gain your perspective on mentoring and its impact on employees' career development. Of course, there is no obligation for you to participate, but I believe your insights would help improve the Mentoring Program. This project is part of my degree program at Virginia Tech, so I will provide you with informed consent to fully consider participation in an interview. If you have questions or concerns, you may share them in advance or when we are together. Thank you for your consideration and for all of the work you are doing to meet our warfighters' mission.

Respectfully,
Jermaine Kendall
MARCORSYSCOM-International Programs
(703)432-8956 office
NIPR jermaine.kendall@usmc.mil

APPENDIX E
RESEARCH SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: "Examining the Performance and Focus Areas of MCSC Mentoring Activities"

Investigator(s):

- Mr. Jermaine Kendall, Student at Virginia Tech: 703-855-2296, jkk1911@vt.edu
- Dr. Eric K. Kaufman, Associate Professor at Virginia Tech: 540-231-6258, ekk@vt.edu

I. Purpose of this Research Project

This research is being collected as part of an effort to improve the Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) Mentoring Program. We are seeking insight into the perceptions of mentoring and its impact on employees' career development. The findings will be used to enhance mentoring in a training guide.

II. Procedures

You are invited to participate in an interview related to the critical role you play in the MCSC mentoring program. This interview is expected to last 15-20 minutes. If you agree, the interviewer will take detailed notes on the conversation (no audio recording). Questions will focus on the perceptions, perspectives, and value of mentoring.

III. Risks

The study involves no more than minimal risks for participants. The potential emotional risk is that participants may fear their responses will be misinterpreted. We will minimize the potential risks by inviting confirmation of the themes we have identified. Also, participants may choose not to respond to any particular questions.

IV. Benefits

Study participants may benefit from improved mentoring in the future because professional development and knowledge sharing can be adapted in response to participant feedback. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

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At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. Any details in the interview notes that could identify you, or anyone who you mention, will be altered during the write-up of the report. The notes taken will be destroyed after the analysis and reporting are complete. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact the research investigator, whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct, or your rights as a research participant, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at irb@vt.edu or 540-231-3732.

IX. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all of my questions answered. I am not a minor and give my voluntary consent to participate in this study:

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this research.

_____ Signature of an adult subject capable of consent	_____ Date
_____ Signature of the person obtaining consent	_____ Date

**APPENDIX F
MARINE CORPS SYSTEMS COMMAND (MCSC) KEY INFORMANT
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Before beginning the session, confirm the interview has received an informed consent form and invite the opportunity for questions about the study. Before proceeding with the following prompts, request the interviewee sign and return the consent form (or give verbal consent when the interview is by phone).

Prompts
To start, please share a brief overview—from your perspective—of how and why the Mentoring Program is necessary for MCSC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What do you see as MCSC priorities in training and professional development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you see mentoring supporting these MCSC priorities? RESPONSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What shifts do you see in MCSC culture that might relate to the role of a mentor as new hires continue to increase? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In what ways are the mentors helping to influence values, norms, and beliefs? RESPONSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As you think about efforts and strategies for improved employee success, what is the role of positivity and encouragement in our future in leadership? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How are the mentors supporting future leaders in their role(s)? RESPONSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Considering MCSC's attention to knowledge sharing and career readiness, how do you see the mentoring supporting that vision? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What role has the mentoring program played in efforts to improve knowledge sharing and career readiness? RESPONSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What comfort do you have related to the mentor's experience, whether from training or years of mentoring? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How have the learning experiences from mentoring contributed to your professional development? RESPONSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe some of the challenges (improvement areas) regarding mentor matching? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As you think about your personal goals, productivity, and confidence in meeting expectations, how do the mentor's experience and methods support your needs? RESPONSE:
Is there anything else you would like to share about your view of the Mentoring Program and MCSC efforts for improvement in professional development? RESPONSE:
Who else do you recommend I speak with about the Mentoring Program? RESPONSE:

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Close by thanking the participant for the time and contributions.

**APPENDIX G
MCSC MENTORING PROGRAM END OF PROGRAM REPORT**



Marine Corps Systems Command

MCSC Mentoring Program

End of Program Report

November 18, 2020

Prepared by



ABOUT THE END OF PROGRAM REPORT

The end of program evaluation reveals the degree to which the MCSC Mentoring Program achieved its stated goals. As part of the process, **The Training Connection, Inc. (TTC)** conducted group discussions at the program’s mid- and end-points. For this evaluation, we asked participants to assess their professional growth over the past ten months, and to provide feedback on lessons learned and successes realized. In addition, **TTC** administered an online survey that collected 99 responses (33 mentorees, 39 mentors, and 27 supervisors).

Note: The MCSC Mentoring Program consists of 50 mentorees and 46 formal mentors.

This report summarizes **TTC’s** findings and observations from the group discussions and online surveys and provides recommendations for strengthening future programs. The report is organized into seven sections:

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INTRODUCTION

To remain competitive and relevant, organizations must continually work to develop capable employees and retain valuable talent and organizational knowledge. Meeting employees' needs and expectations is critical to organizational health, with many employees learning to weigh their options when it comes to making career decisions. The key to meeting these challenges is helping employees develop a sense of value and worth, which give them a stronger connection and deeper sense of loyalty to the organization.

Successful organizations recognize that a carefully designed mentoring program can help build a strong, stable, and diverse workforce. By leveraging the wisdom and experience of seasoned employees, the program demonstrates to mentorees that the organization is willing to help them grow and, in turn, helps them develop the desired relationship with the organization.

MCSC 2020 fully supports this philosophy and continues to preserve this process through enriching professional mentoring programs. The MCSC Mentoring Program keeps employees in a continuous state of learning by following the goals established at the beginning of the program.

OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1) Build and retain a well-rounded cadre of employees.
- 2) Contribute to positive morale and satisfaction in working for MCSC.
- 3) Support succession planning objectives.

This report examines how well the program has met each of these goals and objectives, and analyzes the data collected from participants that provide a clear reflection of their overall experience while participating in the program.

Executive Summary

The first measure of program success is the degree of benefit experienced by its participants. While it is easy to focus solely on the mentorees' experiences, we also find it useful to ask the mentors and supervisors to share their observations. The following tables present how respondents rated the program's impact on a variety of developmental topics.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The first table presents the ratings from all respondents regarding how the program, taken as a whole, has impacted the mentorees' development.

Table 1. Overall, how effective was the mentoring program at helping to facilitate professional growth and development?

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (33)	82%	18%	0%
Mentors (39)	85%	13%	3%
Supervisors (27)	67%	30%	4%

The following tables show how the participants rated the program at helping the mentorees achieve specific objectives.

Table 2. Expand networks to include employees at different organizational levels throughout the MCSC community?

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (33)	76%	21%	3%
Mentors (39)	77%	21%	3%
Supervisors (27)	63%	33%	4%

Table 3. Gain an understanding of organizational values, mission, and culture?

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (32)	78%	22%	0%
Mentors (39)	87%	10%	3%
Supervisors (27)	52%	44%	4%

Table 4. Gain new tips and techniques to do the job better and feel more productive?

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	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (32)	75%	25%	0%
Mentors (39)	87%	10%	3%
Supervisors (27)	56%	33%	11%

Table 5. Apply new interpersonal and/or technical skills learned in the program to the job?

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (33)	70%	30%	0%
Mentors (39)	82%	15%	3%
Supervisors (26)	58%	31%	12%

ADDITIONAL SUCCESS INDICATORS

A formal mentoring program also provides a means of furthering organizational objectives. Participants shared their views regarding the program's overall value and return on investment.

Table 6. The program created a general acceptance of mentoring as a valuable and important process.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Mentorees (33)	85%	15%	0%
Mentors (38)	95%	5%	0%

Table 7. A lot of what I learned in the mentoring program can be applied on the job.

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (32)	81%	19%	0%
Mentors (37)	89%	8%	3%

Table 8. The benefits of the program were worth the time and effort I put in.

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	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (33)	88%	12%	0%
Mentors (39)	92%	3%	5%

We asked the mentorees and mentors to reflect on their experiences and tell us whether they thought that other employees might benefit from participating in the program.

Table 9. I would recommend participating in this program to a friend or colleague.

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (33)	88%	12%	0%
Mentors (37)	100%	0%	0%

® *NOTE: Rows not totaling 100% are a result of values being rounded to the nearest whole percent.*

Observations

The MCSC Mentoring Program finished the last ten months with success. The majority of participants (84%) said that the program facilitated professional growth and development. Many expressed renewed confidence in their work due to enhanced technical skills and new communication strategies. Several even secured promotions or greater job responsibility. It is true that the pandemic left an imprint on this cohort, with some sharing that the activities would have been best completed in person. Although mentors expressed worry that their partner did not get everything out of the program that they might have, mentorees remained fairly positive about their takeaways.

Participants spoke frequently about the new people they met and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect with senior leaders. Many participants (77%) agreed that the program helps to expand networks to include employees at different levels throughout the MCSC community. An even larger percentage (83%) said the program helps to gain an understanding of organizational values, mission, and culture.

Many mentorees counted their sturdy mentoring partnership among the greatest outcomes of their program work. Mentors listened and guided them on everything from job competencies and tricky interpersonal relationships to managing the demands of remote working. The majority (89%) of participants rated their match favorably and plan to continue an informal mentoring relationship with their partner even now that the program has ended.

Many participants (82%) said they had gained new tips and techniques to do the job better and feel productive, and almost as many (77%) have been able to apply new interpersonal and/or technical skills learned in the program. Mentors said their work in the program left them better equipped to manage their own teams and future mentorees. The majority of participants (86%) said that a lot of what they learned in the program can be applied to the job, and 90% said that the benefits of the program were worth the time and effort required. In the written feedback, respondents expressed gratitude for the organization's support and the encouraging program atmosphere. Participants (90%) said that the program created a

Maturing A Sustainable Mentoring Program

general acceptance of mentoring as a valuable and important process. The vast majority (97%) agreed that the Program Coordinator, Katie Ruskin, has been supportive throughout the mentoring process, ratings that are that much more powerful given the virtual nature of this year's program.

We should note that, while some supervisors spoke highly about the improvements they have observed in their mentored employee, they remained conservative in their ratings about overall program effectiveness. Their impressions had not improved much from the mid-point, and their feedback is likely due to the fact that some had little or no communication regarding their mentored employee's progress in the program. At the end of this report, we will make suggestions for concrete ways that mentorees should involve their supervisors right from the start.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

This section begins with an overview of the MCSC Mentoring Program approach to helping its employees develop and describes some of the key program components. It then examines how the participants rated each component and shares their suggestions for sustaining and improving the program.

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MENTORING

The formal program was comprehensive and included a facilitated matching process, formal mentoring training, clearly defined goals for targeting success, and an established tracking system for measuring success.

A few highlights of the mentoring program are described below.

Meetings with Partners

Mentorees had opportunities to learn from their mentors' wisdom and experiences. Mentoring meetings and connections helped hone their personal and professional skills, while simultaneously increasing their organizational effectiveness. The majority of participants (89%) responded favorably regarding their mentoring matches.

Formal Mentoring Training and Progress Reviews

Mentorees and mentors received required formal training before entering into their mentoring partnerships. They also participated in a mid-point and end of program progress review and group discussion. In addition, group discussions provided participants the opportunity to ask questions, share their challenges and success stories and recommend improvements or adjustments to the program design.

Mentoring Agreement and Mentoring Action Plan

An important feature of the mentoring program is the opportunity for partners to outline their own "style" for working together. This was accomplished by way of a Mentoring Agreement and Mentoring Action Plan. Mentoring pairs used these tools to clarify the mentoree's goals for learning, agree upon structures for meeting, and establish norms for their relationship. Of the 50 mentorees in the program, 82% started their Mentoring Action Plan.

Structured Mentoring Forums

The program provided structured mentoring forums and energizers. These forums allowed mentorees to draw on the experiences of the larger group of mentors, providing mentorees with more opportunities for growth and networking and enabling them to gain a broader perspective of the organization.

The Mentoring Connection

The Mentoring Connection (TMC) is a web-based tool that streamlines the administrative processes needed to properly manage formal mentoring programs, while maintaining the personal aspects critical to fostering effective partnerships.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

A key factor in the success of any mentoring program is the level of commitment demonstrated by the organization, including all potential support resources involved.

The MCSC Mentoring Program provides an essential form of support to this program by way of a dedicated Program Coordinator. We asked the participants to provide feedback on this support system.

Table 10. How supportive has the in-house Program Coordinator (Katie Ruskin) been throughout the mentoring process?

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (33)	94%	6%	0%
Mentors (39)	100%	0%	0%
Total (72)	97%	3%	0%

PARTNERING STYLE

Mentorees were matched with a mentor who could provide the best possible learning experience based on a variety of criteria, including personal preference, compatibility, and availability. We asked participants to rate the suitability of their matches.

Table 11. Overall, how suitable was your mentoring match?

	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable
Mentorees (33)	88%	9%	3%
Mentors (38)	89%	5%	5%
Total (71)	89%	7%	4%

We also asked mentors and mentorees whether they intend to continue their relationships with their partners after the formal program concludes.

Table 12. Do you plan to continue an informal mentoring relationship with your mentoring partner?

	Yes	No
Mentorees (33)	94%	6%
Mentors (38)	84%	16%

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The program evaluation was designed to determine whether certain demographic factors positively or negatively affected the success of the partnerships. This gives us insight into which, if any, demographic factors most helped or hindered the success of mentoring matches.

Table 13. Effect of demographic factors on partnership success (mentorees and mentors).

Differences in...	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
Behavioral Style (DISC).	69%	27%	0%
Educational Level	41%	49%	0%
Experience	69%	26%	1%
Age/Generation	45%	49%	0%
Geographical Location	16%	47%	10%

Observations

Almost all of the participants (97%) agreed that the Program Coordinator, Katie Ruskin, had been supportive throughout the mentoring process. In the written feedback, one of the participants explained Katie's ability to keep the cohort on target and moving forward:

"I also appreciate all the gentle reminders and nudges from Katie. We all get busy and overcome by events, but I would usually take action once receiving her reminders."

The majority of partners (89%) reported favorably on their mentoring matches and said they plan to continue and informal mentoring relationship with their mentoring partner even now that the program has ended. When asked to consider the demographic factors that had the biggest effect on their partnership success, 69% chose behavioral style and experience, followed by age/generation (45%) and educational level (41%). A small percentage (10%) said that geographic location had a negative impact.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Throughout the program, mentorees were encouraged to participate in a variety of learning activities to help them accomplish their goals. We typically recommend that mentorees include at least one activity from each of the primary categories. We asked the mentorees to comment on their participation in these activities.

Table 14. What types of learning activities did you incorporate into your Mentoring Action Plan? (Please check all that apply.)

	Mentorees (33)
Conversations with Mentor	100%
Developmental Assignments	55%
Networking Opportunities	42%
Stretch Assignments	36%
Formal Training	36%

The MCSC Mentoring Program included a situational mentoring component used to provide mentorees with additional opportunities to meet with professionals who could expand their experiences and knowledge. Mentors were encouraged to recommend that their partners meet with at least one situational mentor during the course of the program.

Table 15. Did you recommend that your mentoree meet with a situational mentor during the program?

	Yes	No
Mentors (38)	63%	37%

Table 16. Did you meet with a situational mentor during the mentoring program?

	Yes	No
Mentorees (33)	24%	76%

We also asked the mentorees who said they did meet with situational mentors to describe their experiences. Their responses follow:

- It was more informal, as I looked to my current PdM as a situational mentor. The way s/he carried him/herself in meetings was admirable and s/he was a good person to emulate.

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- A situational mentor was assigned to me only very recently. So far, the situational mentor has been a valuable asset because s/he has been listening and providing insight and guidance on a plan to move my career forward in a different direction.
- Due to COVID, I spoke with a situational mentor by phone. It was a great experience because this mentor provided a different perspective on some of the challenges I was facing.
- I am still working with the situational mentor; therefore, I haven't gained much from him/her yet. But I did realize that I need to take breaks and time off so that I don't get burned out. S/he said there are job opportunities where s/he works, but that location is too far away.
- I did contact a situational mentor who was highly interested in being my mentor. However, my outreach occurred during a time when my stress level increased, and I was working long days in order to execute my workload. Then I got sick. Then, a month later, when I had time to reach out again, s/he was on leave for about a month. Then the fiscal year ended. It honestly came down to a schedule conflict, but I do want to mention that s/he was highly interested and motivated to be my situational mentor. I intend to reach out to him/her in the future to ask questions and learn things from him/her informally.
- All conversations with my situational mentor were valuable. S/he helped me to see situations from a different perspective.
- My situational mentor provided recommendations to help me achieve my mentoring goals.

Observations

Outside of conversations with their mentors (100%), mentorees took on a variety of learning activities, including developmental assignments (55%), networking opportunities (42%), stretch assignments (36%), and formal training (36%). Well over half of the mentors (63%) recommended their partner meet with a situational mentor, and 24% of the mentorees did so. A few mentorees shared how they used a situational mentor to round out their program work:

“A situational mentor was assigned to me only very recently. So far, the situational mentor has been a valuable asset because s/he has been listening and providing insight and guidance on a plan to move my career forward in a different direction.”

“Due to COVID, I spoke with a situational mentor by phone. It was a great experience because this mentor provided a different perspective on some of the challenges I was facing.”

“All conversations with my situational mentor were valuable. S/he helped me to see situations from a different perspective.”

PARTICIPANT EFFECTIVENESS

GAINS AND SUCCESSES

When analyzing any mentoring program, it is both practical and enlightening to collect the participants' perceptions regarding their gains and successes. The end result is a more complete picture of the program's contributions to the development of the individuals involved in each partnership as well as the return on investment for the organization.

MENTOREES' VIEWS

We asked the mentorees to comment on the gains or successes they achieved as a result of their participation in the mentoring program. Their responses follow:

- Working with my mentor helped me to start working on my secondary certification. I was going to go with Program Management as I thought that was recommended, but in talking with my mentor and answering the questions s/he posed, I was guided to think about where my real interests and background lie. So, I have started pursuing my secondary certification in Engineering. I refined my communication skills in our bi-weekly meetings (when our work schedules allowed). I feel this is a great program and my mentor was so helpful and knowledgeable. I was nervous at first because I lacked confidence, but I feel this experience has helped me gain some confidence. I was able to conduct an interview with a member of RTAM Range Safety and this gave me insight into the inner workings of that organization and a better understanding of how it folds into the programs I support.
- My mentor and I did a lot of work that helped me understand that there are differences in program offices throughout the command. The PMs and their staff really guide the process and different PMs focus on different things. This makes the acquisition process unique in the different PMOs all while achieving the same result: delivering quality products to Marines.
- Personally, as a new employee, I have gained more confidence in my decisionmaking and conducting conversations with more experienced personnel.
- The area in which I received the most benefit was in being able to discuss career opportunities with my mentor. S/he was an invaluable resource to have as a sounding board when I was evaluating career pathways and opportunities. My mentor and I have had very different career paths but had very similar outlooks on making the most out of your environment and opportunities.
- I received a promotion while in the program. The information that was presented during the resume training definitely helped me prepare a better resume.
- Learned skills for handling difficult conversations with management, a sounding board with problem situations and resolving the problem. Also, exposure to more of the command as a whole.
- I have gained a better understanding on the impact *trust* can have on relationships and how development of trust can improve productivity.

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- I felt comfortable asking technical questions. I had someone to help me navigate personnel issues and provide honest, valuable feedback for handling difficult situations and people. I found someone who would honestly listen to me and I knew s/he could empathize with whatever was going on and I didn't have to worry about my mentor talking to someone else about it.
- I've had personal and professional gains as a result of my participation in the mentoring program. My mentor provided guidance and positive reassurance during moments when I struggled with maintaining my work and home life balance. My mentor reviewed my resume and provided critical feedback, which helped me to get a promotion.
- N/A—I think mentoring was severely impacted by COVID.
- Due to the current medical crises, the agenda and agreement set between myself and mentor was impossible to achieve because it involved me shadowing him/her. We were able to adjust and discuss other topics, such as acting responsibly when not being directly and visually supervised, managing teleworking hours, promotion opportunities in the wake of the pandemic, and what additional steps are involved to get them.
- As a result of the mentoring program, I obtained a new job at MCSC. The new job provides the skills needed in the FM competency to give me the experience to be a more well-rounded FM.
- I informed my mentor at the beginning of the program that s/he wouldn't need to work much on my engineering or technical knowledge. I was having a lot of trouble with the internal processes and getting the correct support. I was overworked and having time management issues. Prior to having my mentor, I felt like I was set up to fail at tasks. Although tardiness took a while to address, I got better at being on time to meetings. I still stress out when I have multiple meetings that overlap but am managing it better than I was before working with my mentor. S/he also helped me better word a declination to an invite. I get really nervous at briefings and rehearsed my presentation a few times for a capstone project out-brief. Also, I just started leading a new team a few months prior to the mentor match, and it was a new territory with contractors, so I bounced off a lot of ideas and experiences with the mentor to see if what I was experiencing was normal or abnormal, and if there was room for self-improvement or room for improvement for the other party, etc.
- This program is very effective. I really liked building relationships within the organization.
- I was able to make a major decision regarding the direction of my career. I was able to network with a couple of people about the possibility of getting a new position. I learned a better way to do my CCAS annual self-assessment.
- My mentor helped me with my MN3331 class, gave me different perspectives on some of my challenges, helped me lessen my workload, and improved my time management skills.
- Gained higher confidence in myself. Gathered further insight to the relationship between the program office and contracts.

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- I have made noticeable gains in some of my skills and competencies on leadership roles. Gained an understanding and fundamental knowledge of the organization and some of its inner workings.
- Better presentation for interviews. Refreshing ideas for my resume. Valuable ideas to deal with challenging work issues.
- The mentorship program has been very beneficial to me. My mentor has assisted me in growing personally and professionally, along with gaining a better understanding of the command. I gained skills and strategies that made me better at my job. As certain scenarios and situations came up at work, I was able to discuss them with my mentor. Due to his/her guidance, I was able to solve these situations in ways that I may not have thought of on my own. In addition to helping me improve in my current position, s/he has taught me to always think ahead. We discussed future strategies and roles, all the way into retirement.
- COVID really changed what I was expecting of the program because I have been unable to meet face-to-face with my mentor.
- While participating in the mentoring program, my mentor helped me gain a better understanding of the Program Objectives Memorandum (POM) and Budget Estimate Submission (BES). The discussions with my mentor proved invaluable recently as I provided input to POM23.
- Established professional relationships with leaders across the organization. Learned new ways to navigate common conflicts within the organization.
- I feel that my role as a team lead was improved by the discussions and meetings with my mentor. S/he provided recommendations and shared past experiences that I was able to cultivate into my own experiences. I believe that this program helped me personally and professionally to achieve a promotion to NH-IV and an increase in responsibilities.
- Enhanced my technical knowledge of RF fundamentals and increased my knowledge of RF spectrum projects and experiments.

MENTORS' VIEWS

Mentors said that they benefited from participating in the program as well, and shared feedback on the positive gains they have experienced. Their responses follow:

- I came into the program as a "substitute" for a mentor who departed. My mentoree and I enjoyed one good virtual meeting, but I have not heard from him/her since.
- Improved my mentoring skills and also discovered another tie in our command and other supporting commands within the USMC.
- This was my first year as a mentor. I had the best experience with my mentoree. Although the pandemic ended face-to-face interaction, we were still able to communicate effectively on all the material presented by the facilitator.
- The scores provided are a reflection of the program objectives. But, due to the COVID-19 concerns, the program was greatly decremented in its ability to produce meaningful interaction.

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- This year was very challenging under the guise of the pandemic. The work environment was a difficult terrain to navigate. Not only was there no physical interaction after the shut-down, but the opportunity to meet other goals was shut down due to lack of interpersonal development.
- This is a great program. It has been very rewarding over the years to be able to mentor up-and-coming employees. One of the greatest rewards is working alongside one of my former mentorees, who is now a fellow APM. To think I had a small role in his/her success is very rewarding. To see the potential in these up-and-coming professionals and be able to foster it has been the greatest success. This period, I was able to secure my mentoree a shadowing detail and interview session that will be an amazing experience for him/her.
- I have learned to reach deeper into my toolbox to assist my mentoree in growing both personally and professionally. Using digital means of communication (because of the COVID pandemic) was a challenge.
- I was able to reconnect with some past contacts while assigning outreach tasks to the mentoree. The process also allowed me to practice my mentoring skills and knowledge transfer. As I approach the end of my government career, my goal is to pass on my knowledge gained (both from positive and negative experiences) and this program has provided me a platform to do this in a way that benefits other employees in our command.
- My mentoree is more aware of command structure and opportunities and understands how to switch competencies.
- I enjoyed the structure of the mentoring program. Each of the milestones throughout the year helped to provide topics for discussion and development. The program helped me to recall the lessons learned and experiences that helped groom my particular leadership style and approach to navigating a federal government career within DoD.
- New ways of communicating and maintaining an open line of communication regardless of what is going on.
- Expanded my professional network through interaction with mentoree.
- The mentoring program allowed me a chance to improve my leadership and mentoring skills. My mentoree afforded me the opportunity to see things from a different perspective and gave me the opportunity to improve my communication skills. I also developed some new technical skills as I researched responses to provide the mentoree with factual supporting documentation on technical professional knowledge.
- I increased my interpersonal skills in dealing with my mentoree, especially during the times when my expectations of the mentoree's progress were not being fully met. I was able to refocus my concerns on what the mentoree needed at the moment, regardless of my personal feelings about his/her progress. I was able to remain positive and encouraging for the most part while providing gentle reminders of what I thought the mentoree needed to be working on.
- Although we were not able to initiate our plan due to COVID, s/he gained some insight into other career opportunities that are available. Our initial intent was for

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him/her to shadow someone from every competency in order to help point him/her into a career field s/he may be interested in pursuing.

- My mentoree and I talked a lot about the impact of COVID-19 in a workplace environment (with teleworking) and across the United States. We talked about the efficiency of teleworking vs. working in the office and how to make our mentormentoree partnership work.
- This year's mentoring session was my first time as a mentor and COVID-19 restrictions were difficult to overcome. Personally, making the mentor-mentoree connection was challenging. I wasn't able to help my mentoree to meet his/her goals, so I'm disappointed. Learning the level of commitment it requires to build a relationship was beneficial. I will take this experience with me as a lesson for my own development both personally and professionally.
- Understanding that every mentoree has different needs and goals. COVID aside, no two mentoring experiences have been the same.
- Gained a broader and more in-depth perspective and appreciation of the challenges that the younger engineers face in our organization. Also have a better appreciation for cultural differences that can influence both performance and job satisfaction within the workspace.
- It was very helpful to understand the needs and priorities of the next generation of leaders.
- Learning to pull the mentoree along to help him/her accomplish his/her goals.
- Though I was the mentor, the program offered an opportunity for me to expand my knowledge in the contracting competency to compliment my existing skills.
- I thought the EQ and motivational stuff added to the program this year were intriguing.
- Because I mentor and coach many people, I have organized my thoughts and experiences to facilitate deliberate sharing opportunities throughout the relationship. In addition, I have identified tips and documents to be used as tools for each of my mentorees and coached personnel. It has been very rewarding and allows me to look inward as well.
- S/he learned to see himself/herself as a work in progress and his/her professional growth as a business and understood that a business needs evolutionary improvement.
- Ability to enhance the development of future leaders and command navigation.
- I think that, in spite of the current world situation, between the pandemic and having the majority of MCSC personnel teleworking, we were still able to have a very successful mentoring relationship. I think some of our conversations, which were based on dealing with newfound challenges of working remotely, were extremely beneficial to both mentor and mentoree. I was also able to invite him/her to participate in several high-level meetings and briefings because we were all working remotely. My mentoree was able to dial in and we had great conversations after the fact about how the meetings went, how various participants were viewed and treated, and what could be done to enhance receptivity of ideas to potential nay-sayers.
- Seeing and experiencing the growth of my mentoree. When s/he received new responsibilities, I was able to coach him/her through some difficult situations in

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his/her new job. I was pleased to be part of his/her success in overcoming those situations and issues.

- Discussions with my mentoree helped me see certain aspects of my organization from a whole new perspective.
- Every time I have a chance to mentor someone, I always learn the individual's needs, the skillsets required of the position they are in, and the goals they have for the future. In order to mentor someone on a balanced life, you have to discuss career goals and understand how that individual sees the organization. Relationship-building and trust is key in making sure that you can have an open discussion and can provide a path to goal attainment.

🕒 *NOTE: Some mentor responses focused on gains made by their mentorees.*

Observations

We asked participants to consider the most important gains or successes made in the program. Mentorees found collaborating with a mentor and building a trusting relationship with them to be a major accomplishment. Mentorees said they now have a better understanding of the different parts of the organization and how they come together to achieve the larger mission.

"I was able to conduct an interview with a member of RTAM Range Safety and this gave me insight into the inner workings of that organization and a better understanding of how it folds into the programs I support."

"My mentor and I did a lot of work that helped me understand that there are differences in program offices throughout the command. The PMs and their staff really guide the process and different PMs focus on different things. This makes the acquisition process unique in the different PMOs all while achieving the same result: delivering quality products to Marines."

Improved conversation skills boosted the mentorees' confidence in their day-to-day operations. A few even secured a new position or took on greater work responsibilities:

"Working with my mentor helped me to start working on my secondary certification. I was going to go with Program Management as I thought that was recommended, but in talking with my mentor and answering the questions s/he posed, I was guided to think about where my real interests and background lie. So, I have started pursuing my secondary certification in Engineering. I refined my communication skills in our biweekly, when allowable due to work schedules, meetings. I feel this is a great program and my mentor was so helpful and knowledgeable. I was nervous at first because I lacked confidence, but I feel this experience has helped me gain some confidence."

"I received a promotion while in the program. The information that was presented during the resume training definitely helped me prepare a better resume."

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“As a result of the mentoring program, I obtained a new job at MCSC. The new job provides the skills needed in the FM competency to give me the experience to be a more well-rounded FM.”

Mentors were candid about the impact of COVID-19, with some expressing concern that their relationships had not quite taken flight due to reduced “meaningful interaction.” Even so, they appreciated the opportunity to polish their mentoring capabilities and even pick up a few new technical skills. Two elaborated:

“The mentoring program allowed me a chance to improve my leadership and mentoring skills. My mentoree afforded me the opportunity to see things from a different perspective and gave me the opportunity to improve my communication skills. I also developed some new technical skills as I researched responses to provide the mentoree with factual supporting documentation on technical professional knowledge.”

“Because I mentor and coach many people, I have organized my thoughts and experiences to facilitate deliberate sharing opportunities throughout the relationship. In addition, I have identified tips and documents to be used as tools for each of my mentorees and coached personnel. It has been very rewarding and allows me to look inward as well.”

Mentors took pride in providing their mentorees with a higher-level look at the organization and said that learning about their partner’s experiences gave them new insights on different segments within it. One shared a sentimental comment about their overall experience as a mentor in different cohorts:

“This is a great program. It has been very rewarding over the years to be able to mentor up-and-coming employees. One of the greatest rewards is working alongside one of my former mentorees, who is now a fellow APM. To think I had a small role in his/her success is very rewarding. To see the potential in these up-and-coming professionals and be able to foster it has been the greatest success.”

SUPERVISORS’ OBSERVATIONS

Supervisors are typically able to observe their mentored employee throughout the course of the program. When properly informed, supervisors can provide valuable insight into how their employees meet specific challenges, and how the organization benefits from the employees’ participation.

With that in mind, we asked the supervisors to tell us how well they thought their employees kept them informed about their progress in the program, and how well the mentorees balanced their time between the program and their primary work responsibilities. Another important test of the program’s effectiveness is whether the mentorees’ supervisors have observed their mentored employees applying new skills learned in the program to their current jobs. Their responses are summarized in the following tables.

Table 17. My employee kept me fully informed of progress in the mentoring program.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
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Supervisors (27)	70%	11%	19%
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Table 18. My employee's current job performance did not suffer as a result of time devoted to mentoring activities.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Supervisors (27)	93%	7%	0%

Table 19. Overall, the benefits of the MCSC Mentoring Program were worth the time and resources required.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Supervisors (27)	59%	33%	7%

We also asked the supervisors to comment on specific ways they have observed the mentoring program contributing to improvements in the organization. Their responses follow.

Supervisor Responses

- For me personally, I have found the mentoring program to be an excellent way to have open, honest discussions with someone, expand networks, and obtain other perspectives. But this was not based on observing the employee specifically.
- The mentoring program provides the mentorees with exposure to other areas and programs within the command.
- No observations for this cycle.
- The program helped my employee deal with senior personnel who may have been exhibiting poor leadership.
- Increased confidence in his/her own work.
- Due to the impact of COVID, especially the travel restrictions, my employee's ability to interact with his/her mentor was restricted. Being geographically separated, there was less than ample time spent together. I believe it would be beneficial for them to have another opportunity to share and develop this relationship.
- S/he had expressed an interest in learning more about cost estimating and was hoping the mentorship program would provide that opportunity.
- S/he has shown more confidence when presenting information to his/her peers. I have seen an improvement in his/her performance.
- Though it has been a bit challenging during these COVID times, I have noticed that my employee has a broader knowledge. S/he also has a more aggressive approach when reaching out to different sections to better accomplish his/her missions.
- Networking and understanding the importance of relationships.
- I have not observed improvements to the organization due to the mentoring program.
- Helped him/her to have a better understanding of the organization. S/he stepped out of his/her comfort zone, applied for a promotion, and continued to take on new

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challenges. Leadership of the team has improved, and s/he continues to apply lessons learned from his/her mentoring relationship and mentor training.

- I have not observed anything. I was not kept informed on what the individual was doing during his/her training.
- My employee learned of different offices and process that s/he could utilize to accomplish assigned tasks and goals. Helped learn how our organization fit into the overall MCSC.
- S/he gained confidence in his/her interactions with customers.
- I think the mentoring program is a great way to connect with someone not in your organization, help network, build a trusted relationship, obtain perspective and feedback, and expand your organizational knowledge.

Observations

The majority of supervisors (70%) agreed that their employee kept them informed of their progress in the program and 93% said that their employee's current job performance did not suffer as a result of time devoted to mentoring activities. Some observed tangible positive outcomes:

“S/he has shown more confidence when presenting information to his/her peers. I have seen an improvement in his/her performance.”

“Though it has been a bit challenging during these COVID times, I have noticed that my employee has a broader knowledge. S/he also has a more aggressive approach when reaching out to different sections to better accomplish his/her missions.”

“Helped him/her to have a better understanding of the organization. S/he stepped out of his/her comfort zone, applied for a promotion, and continued to take on new challenges. Leadership of the team has improved, and s/he continues to apply lessons learned from his/her mentor relationship and mentor training.”

Even so, only 59% of supervisors said that the benefits of the MCSC Mentoring Program were worth the time and resources required. A few of the supervisors said they were not able to see any gains in their mentored employee or had no idea about their progress. At the mid-point, we addressed the importance of keeping supervisors in the loop and emphasized their role in the success of the program. However, given the lukewarm ratings supervisors provide even here at the end-point, it is important we continue to strategize concrete opportunities to involve supervisors. At the end of this report, we will recommend approaches to closing the gap between mentorees' enthusiastic feedback about their growth and supervisors' uncertainties.

PROGRAM DESIGN

STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

By the time the mentoring program concludes, participants have met regularly with their partners, attended a variety of events, and participated in activities that could be formal or informal in nature. In an effort to identify key elements that added value, we asked participants to reflect on their personal experiences and comment on the overall strengths of the program. Their responses are listed below.

Mentoree Responses

- Gives junior employees access to senior personnel outside the normal chain of command. Gives both people access to new information sources within the command.
- Meeting and matching up with mentors who have the experience in the command to help you navigate the challenges. The meetups were good because being with others with similar goals makes you work harder but also allows room for networking.
- Flexible structure that allows each mentoring partnership to grow and achieve based on their own goals and approach. Experienced mentors who can provide valuable guidance. Wealth of institutional and industry knowledge to share, including how to build relationships, write a resume, interview, etc.
- One of the biggest strengths of the MCSC Mentoring Program is the care and feeding that the mentors provide. It is also helpful to have individuals outside of your team and competencies as they can assist you in learning and honing skillsets that you may not utilize routinely in your day-to-day job.
- Having local mentors helped because we are all dealing with the same issues within the command-wide telework.
- Ability to discuss certain topics of interest and professional development plans and having an immediately reachable resource.
- The mentor/mentoree matching process (but it could stand improvement).
- The opportunity to discuss career and personal goals along with guidance and recommendations on how to achieve them.
- Opens the door to other competencies within the command and the wealth of knowledge they provide.
- Bringing together people from different experiences and backgrounds (at different levels of acumen) provides a great opportunity for learning from each other.
- The strengths I feel are the connections I have made in the program and the additional classes and the structure of the program was beneficial. I also feel doing all the assessments and classes along with the tutorials helped me to progress and allows me look back and self-correct for a positive career experience and possible change.
- Gather knowledge of other competencies within MCSC. Gain a networking POC.
- Matching mentors to mentorees. They clearly spend time looking at each profile and making informed matches.
- The training and the assistance provided by my mentor with my career goals.

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- The surveys were quite interesting. The interpretation of the DISC assessments at the workshop are different than how I read the report and the workshop slides. At first, I thought my strength sounded bad, but the workshop said other stuff and I thought, "Oh, okay, good—not so bad."
- The strengths of the program are the networking and training opportunities.
- Provides the opportunity to communicate with someone outside of your program and competency and meet new people.
- The program allowed me to be partnered with a great mentor who challenged me to grow as a leader and helped me to achieve various goals.
- Experienced mentoree.
- For me, it was a strength and positive that we were in different locations.
- It provides you with someone you can connect with and feel free to ask questions and not be judged, evaluated, etc. It is also a great to learn about other aspects of the command.
- Provides new insight into accomplishing tasks. Mentor and mentoree alike can provide different perspectives.
- Exposure to different competencies that you may or may not have interest in. Understanding methods of growth within the command and strategies. Bonds formed.
- In my opinion, one of the greatest strengths of the mentoring program is that the command has bought into it and sees the value in investing in the career development of junior-level employees. Connecting aspiring, ambitious employees with mentors who have climbed the organizational ladder has provided a renewed sense of purpose and drive to allow me to refocus on longer-term career goals.
- Gives you someone outside of your program to reach out to.
- There are a lot of strengths from this program, but the first one that comes to my head is building that network with your mentor and sustaining it for the long term.
- Pairing people together who wouldn't normally talk and the willingness of the mentors to do almost anything to assist the mentoree.
- It is great to be able to communicate with someone who has more experience and can provide insight into what things I should work on to move up in my career. Exercises provided got me out of my comfort zone and challenged me.

Mentor Responses

- The pairing of strangers, regardless of location with a common goal of knowledge-sharing.
- Provides accepted access to experienced MCSC personnel in leadership positions.
- It allows the mentorees to position themselves in a manner that is not quite effective in the everyday work experience. For the mentor, it allows them the opportunity to share real-world and career experience that is not often shared during everyday interaction.
 - It allows the more experienced employees to help open the eyes of junior employees, who can learn from the senior's mistakes without having to repeat them. It gives the junior a safe sounding board and facilitates a learning environment in which the junior does not have to be guarded or worry about how questions and exploration will affect their career.

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- The strength is the pairing of strangers and with experience and the ability to have a platform for life experience to transfer, hopefully better informing the mentoree. It can also provide a relationship that turns into a lifetime situational mentor arrangement with someone you trust.
- The structure of the program provides an excellent framework for the mentoring program to operate. Mentors and mentorees are provided with topics to discuss and explore that lead into a dialogue about various experiences and approaches for leadership and problem-solving.
- A great opportunity to meet new people and get a wider perspective of jobs throughout the command.
- I believe that COVID-19 presented a significant challenge to fostering a good relationship. The program itself is an excellent tool for development but, as with so many other opportunities, this pandemic was a significant hinderance.
- Networking. The people who run it and contribute to it.
- Matching people with different skills, experience, and competencies to round out the workforce.
- Providing differing perspectives at different levels.
- It provides a venue and framework along with structured learning that enabled our mentoring to be successful.
- I believe meetings and exercises are strong methods for the mentoring program, even when being done virtually. Regular meetings and gatherings (virtually) throughout the program were beneficial.
- Challenges both the mentor and the mentoree to increase knowledge of various competencies.
- Networking opportunities with both current and retired employees who can serve as situational mentors, depending on the mentoree's specific interests or aspirations, even beyond federal employment.
- Partnering mentors and mentorees together.
- The interviewing session and the resume-writing training were very good.
- The mentoring program is a great opportunity to meet other people within the command. The mentors are always providing their experiences and recommendations to help the mentorees grow. The mentoring program is well supported by the command.
- Creates a professional environment that allows employees who may never even cross paths under most ordinary circumstances to connect and develop a fairly close relationship. The tools and guidance provided along the way facilitate the process of getting to know each other and learning from each other's experiences.
- Structured approach.
- The structure of the program and the upfront DISC assessments.
- Bringing people together to share experiences and teach while learning.
- Open to all. Provides a resource to all looking to obtain their career goals, understand more about the command and the Marine Corps, and grasp ways to meet their current job goals and plans for the future. An outstanding format that provides significant support for the workforce.

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- Great program for network development and it is also growing the next generation of leaders for the USMC and the nation.
- Connecting people who would not normally work together.
- Opportunity to expand network, share lessons learned, and have open discussions for ongoing challenges in a non-attributional environment.
- Structure.
- First, MCSC supporting a mentoring program is a plus. Second, the strengths are in the people who participate—both mentorees who want to be mentored and mentors who enjoy passing on their knowledge and experience. Lastly, MCSC has a very capable and energetic individual who is passionate about the continued success of the program.
- Establishing relationships.
- The formal training provided.
- Opportunity to meet new people and get a new and different perspective on how things operate in different offices.
- Matching partners. Activities—I'm webinar-challenged but it worked ok.
- I truly believe the structure and materials provided are crucial in setting up the mentoring environment for success. It helps to ensure that both mentor and mentoree are set up for success and ensures that the goals are understood and endorsed by both. I also appreciate all the gentle reminders and nudges from Katie. We all get busy and overcome by events, but I would usually take action once receiving her reminders.
- Provide guidance to the mentoree to help him/her navigate difficult situations.
- Command support in mentoring activities.

Supervisor Responses

- Excellent way to have open, honest discussions with someone, expand networking, and obtain other perspectives.
- Structured programming and documented objectives that facilitate the mentoring program.
- Provides people who have "been in your shoes" to those who are just starting out. Can be a very powerful tool. Also provides insight to how the command works and where one should direct their energy.
- Information on career development.
- The strengths of the MCSC Mentoring Program are rendered by each member's contribution and dedication to growth. It provides an opportunity for that development and growth to occur, is not assumed or granted upon completion, so the strength is the opportunity it offers.
- Networking and establishing a better understanding of the MCSC mission.
- Establishing networks and better understanding of the MCSC mission.
- Networking and determining how other PMOs conduct common practices.
- A great opportunity to better understand the command and understand the workings of other sections. Perhaps also a better understanding of how to grow within this command and or the government.

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- Personal and professional development. Connecting people with others in different competencies across the command.
- Unknown. I do not have personal experience with this program.
- The mentor is the key. A good strong mentor made the difference in the success of this effort.
- A great way to connect with someone not in your organization, to help network, build a trusted relationship, obtain perspective and feedback, and expand your organizational knowledge.

Observations

When asked to consider the program's greatest strengths, many zeroed in on the networking opportunity and access to leadership. Here are some comments that detailed the benefits of making new connections:

"Networking opportunities with both current and retired employees who can serve as situational mentors, depending on the mentoree's specific interests or aspirations, even beyond the federal employment."

"Gives junior people access to senior personnel outside the normal chain of command. Gives both people access to new information sources within the command."

"Meeting and matching up with mentors who have the experience in the command to help you navigate the challenges. The meetups were good because being with others who have similar goals makes you work harder but also allows room for networking."

"A great opportunity to meet new people and get a wider perspective of jobs throughout the command."

Mentorees took comfort in their mentor's guidance and hearing about their experiences. A few shared:

"The program allowed me to be partnered with a great mentor who challenged me to grow as a leader and helped me to achieve various goals."

"It provides you with someone you can connect with and feel free to ask questions and not be judged, evaluated, etc. It is also a great to learn about other aspects of the command."

"It allows the more experienced employees to help open the eyes of junior employees and learn from the senior's mistakes without having to repeat them. It gives the junior a safe sounding board and facilitates a learning environment where the junior does not have to be guarded or worry about how questions/exploration will affect their career."

Respondents also described how the program structure kept them on target—especially in a virtual environment—and made it easy to customize the needs of each pair. Some shared:

"I truly believe the structure and materials provided are crucial in setting up the mentoring environment for success. It helps to ensure that both mentor and mentoree are set up for success and ensures that the goals are understood and endorsed by both."

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“Flexible structure that allows each mentoring partnership to grow and achieve based on their own goals and approach.”

“I believe meetings and exercises are strong methods for the mentoring program, even when being done virtually. Regular meetings and gatherings (virtually) throughout the program were beneficial.”

“The structure of the program provides an excellent framework for the mentoring program to operate. Mentors and mentorees are provided with topics to discuss and explore that lead into a dialogue about various experiences and approaches for leadership and problem-solving.”

“Creates a professional environment that allows employees who may never even cross paths under most ordinary circumstances to connect and develop a fairly close relationship. The tools and guidance provided along the way facilitate the process of getting to know each other and learning from each other’s experiences.”

Others appreciated the matching process in that it brings together employees who are at different stages of their career, from varied locations, with unique experience and job competencies. They noted how the transfer of knowledge within these encounters enhanced their perspectives on the agency and its mission. Participants also understood the program to be widely accepted and supported by organizational leadership. One said:

“In my opinion, one of the greatest strengths of the mentoring program is that the command has bought into it and sees the value in investing in the career development of junior-level employees.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

An effective mentoring program must be flexible and responsive to the needs of the people involved. Refining the program in response to participant feedback—such as changing needs or identification of new opportunities—will help ensure the long-term success of the MCSC Mentoring Program.

Mentoree Responses

- N/A (x3)
- None.
- No idea.
- Command-sponsored. Need stretch assignments and more social functions with mentors and mentorees.
- More interaction between all mentors and mentorees. Obviously, COVID affected this year's program greatly. I wish there had been some virtual breakoff groups or other ways that participants could be encouraged to interact with one another. Even in future years, not everyone is local or able to attend events in person. Looking into a way to cluster mentor/mentoree pairings could be beneficial.
- Keep up the great work!

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- Assuming the COVID-19 situation will eventually be reconciled, I would like to see the mentor/mentoree matching process allow potential participants from both MCSC proper and MCTSSA to be matched based on the needs and desires of mentorees and the willingness of both mentors and mentorees to "go the extra mile" to make long-distance mentoring relationships work. Also, if given the opportunity, I would eagerly reenter the program with the same mentor to try to accomplish the objectives we had identified but were unable to complete due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Meet often and stay engaged.
- I would continue to stress the importance of making the connections and reading and following up with the mentor. Be persistent with both the mentor and mentorees to continue to make those connections with each other and others within the circle. This has been a very odd year and I know everyone has done the best they could. The only other thing may be to look closer at the partnerships of the mentoree and with whom they are trying to connect. I realize the criteria is limited to how to do the matchups when reviewing someone. I do like the interview process at the beginning. Maybe if someone is selected to do another interview to get a better feel if the match will be good and productive for both parties.
- I think this was a unique year for everyone in the mentoring program. It would have been nice if there could have been some socially distanced workshops in person instead of everything being virtual.
- I wish that I could have attended the interviewing forum because I think that it would have really been helpful. In the future, you should offer more sessions of the interviewing forum and the resume writing training.
This was a really unique time because of COVID. I'd recommend local mentors over distanced mentors. I liked the flexibility of program because it allowed us to learn what we wanted to gain from the mentor.
- Assign a primary and secondary mentor to each mentoree. The primary mentor can act in the same capacity as the plan that is currently in place. The secondary mentor should be one who is located in the same competency and organization as the mentoree. This will allow for the knowledge and the flexibility of meeting with someone when you can't always meet with your primary. I recognize there was a situational mentoree; however, I think this should have been assigned at the beginning, so everyone is involved in the same process.
- Everything in this program is great.
- In the virtual environment, it would be helpful to have the courses offered more than once. Often, I felt my training requests weren't valued by my program as much as they might have been had I needed to physically step away. So, if my program is unable to allow me to participate in a training, it would be nice to have an alternate date. I think suggestions on ways to have those "formal" discussions virtually that are needed to meet the goals would be helpful. We relied so much on being able to get together and then I struggled to make the time for program participation with trying to balance more virtual meetings.
- Invest time up front to set up realistic goals and identify ways to accomplish them.
- I would almost suggest, if possible, having a primary mentor but also having a potential quarter mentor who is specifically focused on your current industry field. I

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liked the time I had with my mentor and s/he is great and helpful; however, his/her industry is completely different than mine. The tussle I had in choosing a mentor was intrapersonal connections vs. insight into current profession. It would have been cool to have an optional mentor within my field where we could converse each quarter to discuss their experience in the field, their take on the direction the command is going, and how to be effective within your lane.

- COVID took everyone by surprise, and I'm not faulting anyone or the program for the shortcomings that resulted. However, I found all virtual sessions to be ineffective. One of the greatest reasons I sought out the mentorship program was for the networking opportunities. While I certainly appreciated the opportunity to connect with a mentor and harvest his/her wisdom, there would have been a far greater benefit resulting from face-to-face interactions and opportunities to meet with others throughout the command.
- Try it. Challenge yourself to something new as it can prove to be beneficial not just for yourself but your mentor as well.
- Really, I have none—the program is great. More valuable than I thought it would be.
- None. Program is good and they did a good job matching me to my mentor.

Mentor Responses

- N/A
- None
- The start and completion dates of the program should fall within the reporting year for CCAS.
None. It's a good program.
- My recommendation for the future is that I can establish myself as a mentor for next year's program.
- You need to bring back the 360 evaluations and the work/life coach. I was very disappointed about their removal. It has helped a lot of my mentorees in the past.
- I believe this year should be a "do over" and that we should begin next year with the added discussion of the ways in which COVID-19 affected the program.
- The only thing that I would like to see different is the timing. My thought is that it should be closed out on September 15 so that the entire program could be within one CCAS period. Then, the mentor, and mentoree could write to it as a completed accomplishment. I know it can be written to for two years as it is now, but with just the closing being in the second year, it's not much of a punch for the self-assessment.
- None at this time. Excellent program.
- Reinforce and encourage that the mentorees are the ones driving the programs and that they only get out of it what they put into it.
- I am not sure how well other mentor and mentorees matches worked. I would be interested in how they communicated and worked out, but it was not a great year for us.
- Keep doing it.
- I would suggest that cross-competency matching would be a good idea.
- Keep them going—provide TEAMS-like capability.

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- Provide training on how to effectively implement remote mentoring.
- I recommend that participants NOT overlook your plan of what both the mentor and mentoree plan on getting out of the program. Not having a solid plan can easily have the pair side-tracked and not focused on why they are in a relationship.
- Establish a minimum level of action plans for the mentoree to commit to. Many potential mentoring action plan activities were suggested to the mentoree, but they only followed a couple of them.
- Continue with the interviewing sessions and resume writing training.
- In addition to the DISC analysis, would like to have a 360-review process available for the mentoree to use if interested.
- Program is good—maybe offer the option for mentors to keep their same mentoree since this year was difficult. (Of course, only if the mentoree desires...)
- Continue to expand. Use the tools we have for working remotely to keep in touch with your team. Enjoy the interaction and building relationships.
- I can't think of any at this time.
- Post-COVID, more mock interview dates vice just a single date.
- Recommend we try to reach some folks who have not been involved. We have a host of skilled professionals who would be willing. It takes one mentor to talk to their colleague. People rarely say no. Are there any underrepresented competency mentors? Let's target there. Also, maybe we can have a forum where the mentorees and mentors discuss what they gain from the program and answer questions. We need "in your face" advertisements because people are so busy and aren't seeing the advertisements.
- Seek the utilization of Zoom for government.
- No more pandemics?
- I attended most of the virtual sessions, with the exception of the mock interviewing event, and enjoyed them but was challenged by IT issues. Perhaps, since we are not sure how long we might be in the current state of conducting most activities virtually, looking for additional activities and sessions that can be provided to enhance the virtual relationship.
- I think right now it has a good mix of training and allowing the mentor and mentoree to manage their relationship,
- Develop more mentoring activities for individual partnerships (as opposed to larger group activities).

Supervisor Responses

- N/A
- None (x2)
- None at this time.
- The questions in this survey assume the employee has informed the supervisor. In my case, this did not happen; therefore, the questions were really not applicable. They didn't equate to my employee if there wasn't communication.
- Make it a firmer requirement for employees participating to speak with the supervisor some set number of times. In the COVID environment, with little face time with employees, it was easy for mentoring program participation to be forgotten.

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- Once COVID is over, get back to more in-person meetings. More group meetings, too, because when you are around others who are putting forward effort to improve, it makes you more productive.
- Recommendations for future mentoring programs include supervisor feedback and input to the mentor.
- More cross-communication across other commands that impact the acquisition mission.
- Require mentorees to provide supervisors with regular updates as they progress through the program.
- As an individual is going through it, provide his/her supervisor with updates of what s/he is learning and how it is going.
- The program would have been more effective had COVID-19 not made face-to-face interaction between the mentor and the mentoree more difficult than previously. One comment from the employee was that it would have been great to be able to spend more time getting to know and selecting your potential mentor, other than just a “speed dating” session. S/he did note that his/her mentor was a fantastic person, but in retrospect, s/he was not sure that s/he was the greatest fit from a professional development perspective.
- None. I feel the existing program was very successful in this case. COVID-19 restrictions affected the one-on-one mentoring efforts but were beyond our control.
- Recommend the survey results adjust if the employee did not fully engage with the supervisor. All my answers were neutral because I didn't know either way, so I don't feel as though the input provided any real information. As stated in the other feedback, not all of the questions seem to apply when the employee has not engaged the supervisor on this.

Observations

Many respondents noted the value of the program and said that they could not think of opportunities for improvement. One summarized the year with a stroke of pragmatism:

“I feel the existing program was very successful in this case. COVID-19 restrictions affected the one-on-one mentoring efforts but were beyond our control.”

Others continued to brainstorm ways to compensate for the lack of face-to-face interaction. They considered topics for small group meetings and suggested that even simply replaying training sessions would maximize participation. A few of their considerations could be of benefit even in non-pandemic times:

“Obviously, COVID affected this year's program greatly. I wish there had been some virtual breakoff groups or other ways that participants were encouraged to interact with one another. Even in future years, not everyone is local or able to attend events in person. Looking into a way to cluster mentor/mentoree pairings could be beneficial.”

“I wish that I could have attended the interviewing forum because I think that it would have really been helpful. In the future, you should offer more sessions of the interviewing forum and the resume writing training.”

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“In the virtual environment, it would be helpful to have the courses offered more than once. Often, I felt my training requests weren't valued by my program as much as they might have been had I needed to physically step away. So, if my program is unable to allow me to participate in a training, it would be nice to have an alternate date.”

Other recommendations centered on virtual workarounds, such as working through Teams or Zoom. A couple of comments:

“Provide training on how to effectively implement remote mentoring.”

“Perhaps, since we are not sure how long we might be in the current state of conducting most activities virtually, looking for additional activities and sessions that can be provided to enhance the virtual relationship.”

Respondents shared potential tweaks to the matching process, such as prioritizing local pairings, assigning situational mentors at the program start, and looping in a “quarter mentor” or advisor from one’s own industry. Two suggested shifting the timeline so that the start and completion dates align with the CCAS reporting year. Others shared advice for future mentorees: stay engaged, challenge yourself, invest the time, and drive the relationship. One warned:

“I recommend that participants NOT overlook your plan of what both the mentor and mentoree plan on getting out of the program. Not having a solid plan can easily have the pair side-tracked and not focused on why they are in a relationship.”

Finally, two urged expansion of the program by reaching out to people in different areas. One elaborated:

“Recommend we try to reach some folks who have not been involved. We have a host of skilled professionals that would be willing. It takes one mentor to talk to their colleague. People rarely say no. Are there any underrepresented competency mentors? Let's target there. Also, maybe we can have a forum where the mentorees and mentors discuss what they gain from the program and answer questions. We need ‘in your face’ advertisements because people are so busy and aren't seeing the advertisements.”


PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS


The MCSC Mentoring Program had a successful ten months, despite the complications created by the COVID-19 environment. Many used creative workarounds to accomplish their goals and the more engaged participants identified notable gains and successes that are enhancing their careers and contributing to the overall mission of MCSC.

Some of the highlights of the program include:


- **97% of participants said the Program Coordinator, Katie Ruskin, was supportive throughout the mentoring process.**
- **90% of participants said the program creates a general acceptance of mentoring as a valuable and important process.**
- **89% of participants rated their match favorably.**
- **89% plan to continue an informal mentoring relationship with their partner, even now that the program has ended.**
- **84% of the participants rated the program favorably for helping to facilitate professional growth and development.**

This year's program was certainly confronted with its own unique challenges. We have provided the following recommendations to help the Program Coordinator address potential issues identified in the participants' feedback and to ensure the program's continued growth and success for future cohorts.

 **Tackle the challenges of virtual mentoring head-on.** Participants acknowledged that COVID had disrupted some of the traditional program aspects but still peppered their responses with calls for more small-group work and face-to-face interaction. While this group launched pre-pandemic, the next cohort will likely work remotely the entire time. In some ways, however, it might be easier for the next cohort because, this time, we are in the position to tackle the challenges of virtual mentoring head-on. At the mid-point, we shared a number of strategies for connecting remotely, but even since then, we have been continually adding to our bank of resources for successful virtual mentoring. We can offer strategies for adding warmth to the mentoring relationship and concrete examples of developmental assignments that can be completed from afar right at the start. The Program Coordinator will want to plan to share these materials as part of the orientation for the next group so they can hit the ground running.

 **Encourage regular, targeted communication with supervisors.** At the midpoint, we recommended that mentorees stay proactive about looping in their supervisors, who have remained extremely positive about mentoring as a valuable process. Although the majority of supervisors said their employee checked in with them about their progress, and some even pointed out the positive outcomes they have observed in their employee as a result of their participation, supervisors' written

feedback still indicated that they would like more insight. The Program Coordinator may want to encourage mentorees not simply to communicate with their supervisors about the program, but to plan and initiate targeted conversations designed to provide specific details about their goals, activities, and progress. Perhaps mentorees should plan to speak with their supervisor at the beginning of the process, when developing goals, and at mid-point to address their progress. They can ask for help mapping the needed competencies and listing potential networking connections or looking for situational mentors. They could even organize a “virtual coffee hour” with the supervisor. Mentorees should remember communicating with their supervisors regularly about their progress will demonstrate their drive and capacity for leadership.

 **Remind participants of the resources available on The Mentoring Connection.** Some participants asked for additional opportunities to collaborate, even despite the virtual environment. When planning workarounds to keep momentum and foster a sense of community, remember that the tools on The Mentoring Connection (TMC) can help. Supervisor email updates make it easy to send frequent reports on Mentoring Action Plan (MAP) progress. The discussion forum is a straightforward platform for small groups to further analyze books and share ideas. Even the archive of newsletters includes prompts to ease partnership meetings and mentoring strategies to ensure a satisfying and productive experience. The Program Coordinator will want to emphasize the TMC platform as the mentoring hub and encourage participants to log in regularly to make use of its resources and connect with others.

The end of program report informs the Program Coordinator and key stakeholders about program results and it reveals benefits earned by participants along with contributions to the organization. Sharing a copy with key stakeholders offers insight into program value and return on investment.

APPENDIX

Virtual Mentoring Success

Using Communication to Keep Momentum

For most of us, after months of Zooms, communicating through devices, and managing remote learning schedules ... virtual fatigue might be setting in. In the face of our changing work environment, mentoring might seem easy to push off as a lesser priority. Please don't do that—this may be the very time you need a mentor's guidance, listening ear and compassion.

Over the last decade, the move to mentoring collaboration from a distance—and not just during pandemic—has been a critical success factor in building the next generation of leaders. Formal mentoring programs connect people across geographically dispersed organizations, forcing participants to lean heavily into virtual communication. We firmly believe that when mentors and mentorees can't be together in person, a partnership should not wither. In fact, we have found that partnerships actually thrive once the pressure to find time for face-to-face meetings is taken out of the equation.

Now that most of you—even local partners—are connecting virtually, we wanted to share best practices for staying in touch and maintaining momentum throughout the mentoring program. Over the nine months, we will send weekly installments of a series called “Virtual Mentoring Success.” Each will include tips and advice to keep you moving forward and accomplishing your mentoring goals.

Be Positive

As we dig into virtual communication strategies, let's take a moment to establish positivity as the grounding principle for any productive mentoring relationship. It's important to be candid about the uncomfortable aspects of connecting from afar, but when speaking with your partner, aim to show your openness to new ideas and flexible mindset. Positivity is more than *the opposite of negativity*. Being positive means avoiding apathy and exuding a solution-oriented demeanor. Consider the difference in tone between these two statements:

#1. *“However you want to stay in touch is fine. It's up to you. But Mondays aren't good for me.”*

#2. *“It would be great if we could check in weekly. Text works best because I always have my phone. Does that work for you? Perhaps we could also plan a call the first Friday of each month?”*

The second statement shows that the speaker is motivated and determined to get the most out of the time with their mentor. It demonstrates that the speaker intends to meet their goals, and nothing will slow them down.

Agenda Savvy

One of the biggest challenges in a virtual relationship is getting to know your partner through the phone. To avoid awkwardness in one-on-one calls, set an agenda ahead of time.

Agendas need not be elaborate—write a simple list of three to five items and send it to your mentor ahead of time. Think of them as scripts: Here are the things I want to talk about, please help me with what I need, and here are some examples of the ways I’m staying focused.

Aim to send the agenda to your mentor at least one day prior to your mentoring meeting so that they can add topics. Also, try to estimate the amount of time the meeting should take. For example:

“Looking forward to our meeting on Friday! Here is a short agenda with the topics I hoped we could tackle. Please feel free to add anything. It will probably take about 30 minutes, but I am free until 4 p.m. if you would like to speak for longer.”

If you have an idea about what you would like to discuss in your one-on-one meeting the following month, add it at the end of the agenda. Be sure to also include a line for “Next Steps” in which you can ask your mentor to help organize a short to-do list to keep driving toward goal completion. Start the next meeting agenda with a report on how you did with that list.

Build a listening atmosphere

It’s much harder to pick up on non-verbal clues when communicating virtually. You might miss when your partner’s face lights up with a big idea or not notice that they are distracted because your message has fallen off point. It might be necessary to carve out listening opportunities to ensure evenness. As the agenda planner, make it your responsibility to stop and check in every few beats: *“Does that sound okay?” “Do you think there is a better approach?” “Have you had any experience with this?”* When each partner remains balanced between sharing and listening, both partners will leave the discussion feeling satisfied—and it will be that much easier to get the ball rolling on the next call.

Be willing to adjust your communication process

If it turns out weekly text messages are falling flat or phone call meetings still seem too stiff, change the process. Tweaking the communication plan will strengthen the foundation of your partnership. Ask your partner about their communication preferences. Ask if things are working and, if they aren’t, brainstorm new ideas together.

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**APPENDIX H
EXAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The following is a questionnaire that could be used by individuals who attended the overview brief and reviewed the reference material to improve the MCSC mentoring program:

Feedback on the MCSC mentoring program						
	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
I am satisfied with MCSC mentoring program recommendations and what it provides.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Will assist mentors and mentees in connecting socially and supervisors in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Will improve the sharing and asking questions between participants and supervisors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel confident improvements will affect the career path at MCSC.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel more valued at MCSC than before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Will improve technical skills of mentor programs participants	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following is a questionnaire of the survey for individuals completing minimum requirements to participate in the mentoring program:

After participating in the MCSC mentoring program						
	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
I am more satisfied with my job than before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel more socially connected with my peers and supervisors in the workplace than before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel more comfortable sharing and asking questions in the workplace than before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel more confident about my career path at MCSC.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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I feel more valued at MCSC than before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My technical skills have improved.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following is a questionnaire of the individuals who have not participated in the MCSC mentoring program:

Reason not to participate in the MCSC mentoring program						
	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
I am currently satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6 X
I feel socially connected with my peers and supervisors in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6 X
I feel comfortable sharing and asking questions in the workplace than before.	1	2	3	4	5	6 X
I feel confident in my current career path at MCSC.	1	2	3	4	5	6 X
I feel my contribution is valued at MCSC.	1	2	3	4	5	6 X
My technical skills are adequate to advance in MCSC.	1	2	3	4	5	6 X

Each response to the survey could be compiled into a report to be displayed and compare the perceptions and opinions with data in the agency in its entirety. The survey data could also be analyzed and compared to the perception data collected to validate the acceptable assumption that there is or is no correlation between relationship building and knowledge sharing between peers and leadership.