Mentoring Program as a Contributing Factor for Professional Development

A Descriptive Study of the Implementation of the Program Named "My Godparent" Carried Out in a Construction Program in Minas Gerais, Brazil

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Abstract:- The Mentoring process has been widely used by Organizations, which seek not only the technical training of professionals, but the feeling of belonging. The results of a good mentoring program are easily perceived, through motivated professionals, with capacity for execution and decision and with safe attitudes and behaviors. The purpose of this article is to explore the definitions of mentoring and leadership and present the results of a program developed with professionals with no previous experience in industrial construction in a project in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Keywords:- Mentoring, Leadership, Prevention, Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the definitions most widely used for mentoring is the exchange of experiences between a more experienced person and a less experienced one, whereby a relation of mutual support can be developed, directing, orientation and feedback, towards personal and professional development of the person.

Mentors have been defined as those who help shape the professional identity (KRAM, 1985). The mentor has the responsibility of guiding and following the mentorees on the roles which are assigned to them, so as to shape them in the most important characteristics needed to perform any given task. Far more than technical knowledge, mentors ought to influence in a positive way the actions of their mentorees, be it by the example, or by the responsibility of being much more than a teacher, rather, a motivator, a developer of self-esteem and knowledge.

Mentorees, in turn, must show the need for learning and the capability of assimilating what is taught to them, analyzing in a critical manner the content imparted.

Organizations that have a growth view, acknowledge the importance of the mentoring programs in the building of the professionals. Such programs must develop the technical ability needed for the feeling of belonging. In this way, the organizations have been searching the formalization of specific programs for the formation of mentors as a means to develop carreers (NOE, 1988).

The main purpose of this article is to explore the definitions of mentoring and leadership, in addition to the aspects of prevention of acidents, presenting the results of a previous program of development with professionals in the sector of industrial construction, in the state of Minas Gerais (Brazil), demonstrating the applied methodology and the results achieved through the mentoring program "My godparent".

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

A. Mentoring Programs

The classical definition of mentoring is linked to counseling, teaching and guidance that a more experienced person (mentor) provides another less experienced person (mentoree).

According to Anwandter (2017), the origin of the term "mentor" is related to Greek Mythology. In the Odyssey of Homer, the character Odysseus, before going to the Trojan War, leaves his son Telemachus in the care of the character Mentor, who would be responsible for his kingdom and the education of Telemachus. With his experience, Mentor becomes responsible for advising, training and preparing Telemachus for, one day, take over the throne. In addition, the goddess Athena grants virtues to Mentor and he becomes an advisor and faithful companion, symbolizing justice and wisdom.

From this origin on, it's been known that "mentor" is a counselor capable of guiding and following, in a wise fashion, the development of their mentoree. According to Telles (2013), the main role of the mentor consists in laying out the bases, sharing knowledge and collaborating for the mentoree so that he or she may develop their abilities in a given environment and strengthen their virtues.

According to Gundlapalli (2017), mentoring can be compared to an intellectual dialogue, healthy and mutually beneficial for both interlocutors. One person has knowledge and experience on one given subject while the other yearns to enhance their performance in that very area of knowledge. This process of mentoring brings about benefits through sharing and learning by both parties.

The author still suggests that mentoring can be regarded as a faster way of learning. In the organization environment, time is determinant for a company to achieve the planned results. Thus, mentoring becomes a means to speed up learning, so that people acquire necessary abilities in order to carry out tasks more efficiently.

B. Benefits for mentors

According to Fieber (2014) and Gundlapalli (2017), the mentor benefits from the process as much as the mentoree.

➢ *Expansion of perspectives*: each person has their way of working, new ideas, experiences and different perspectives of the business which, perhaps, the mentor has not perceived over time. Working with mentorees also give the mentor another perspective as for the ideals which led him/her to follow this office, which can reignite their passion for their job, through the mentoree's energy and enthusiasm;

➢ *Carrer development*: while strengthening their relationship abilities, the mentor can be assigned to other projects and activities, which can give them visibility inside and outside the work environment. Their acquired experience can result in new opportunities to leverage their carreer.

➢ *Proficiency*: regardless whether the person works as a mentor or already has experience in management positions, the mentoring environment allows them to acquire new abilities, develop and improve their existing skills.

➢ *Communication*: communication is essential in any area. Through mentoring, the mentor can develop their communication skills, expand their vocabulary, as well as perfecting their ability to get their message across and listening to other people.

➢ *Self-knowledge*: while teaching a mentoree, the mentor becomes more aware of their own knowledge on the business. Upon realizing that, the mentor has a boost in their self confidence in order to work and interact with other people in the organization.

➢ Personal satisfaction: the mentor can experience a feeling of personal satisfaction, at seeing that their work impacts positively in the lives of those who are being supported. Showing their life experience to the mentoree is a way to impart knowledge that cannot be learned no even in the best courses and schools available.

The mentor's work is a two-way street, in which the mentor has the opportunity to teach and learn along with their mentoree.

C. Benefits for thementoree

According to Fieber (2014) and Gundlapalli (2017), the experience in a mentoring program can bring great benefits the mentoree. The main benefits are:

➢ *Challenge*: the mentoree feels challenged and seeks to exceed their mentor's expectations, through his/her results. Oftentimes the mentoree is instigated to exceed their own mentor, which motivates both to devise new ways of work, as well as to expand their array of possibilities to perform the activities.

➢ *New opportunities*: taking part in a mentoring program is a unique opportunity. In this way, the mentoree has access to a way which can boost their carreer as they develop their work through their effort and their mentor's counseling.

➢ *Increase in self-confidence*: when receiving the opportunity in a mentoring program, the mentoree has the feeling that their talent is valued in the professional environment and by other people. This feeling boosts their self-confidence and, with their mentor's support, brings them security to carry out their work without fear of making mistakes that, many times, put their job on the line. With their mentor's support, the mentoree has greater freedom to act and learn.

➢ *Relationship*: a mentoree who stands out in their work in the mentoring program can have access to people who, somehow, might influence in their carreer positively. Moreover, even with the end of the mentoring program, the relationship between mentoree and mentor, many times, becomes a long term relationship and, or, friendship.

➢ *Knowledge*: the most valuable element that can be observed by the mentoree is certainly the acquired knowledge. The mentor is a facilitator of knowledge, because, through their experience, the learning curve becomes shorter, enabling the mentoree to evolve in a faster fashion, without the need for an extended learning process based on attempts and mistakes.

D. Benefits for the organization

According to Blanchard (2019), the organizations have realized that mentoring programs consist in one of the most advantageous alternatives for the preparation of professionals who will soon be in their workforce.

Many are the benefits that the mentoring programs can bring to the organizations, among them are:

➢ More quality in the training of the staff members;

➢ Greater engagement and development of the corporative leadership;

➢ Reduction in the turnover rate of the staff members;

➢ Increase in the intellectual capital of the organization;

Furthermore, the investment in a mentoring program provides the organization with the opportunity to evolve in its work routine, as well as in the development of new production processes. The mentoring program can also be regarded as an investment in R&D (research and development), since that business opportunities and organizational improvement can arise from the promotion of such program.

E. Leadership

Leadership is one of the essential abilities developed during the mentoring program. Through mentoring, the mentoree has the opportunity to observe the leader's role in practice and, while developing this ability, becomes a great asset that can be used by the organization in the future.

Leadership can be understood as the use of influence in order to motivate people so that they can reach the results expected by the organization.

The role of leadership is developed through the creation of a culture and values shared by the people involved in the organization which are known at all organizational levels and that motivate people to perform their activities exemplarily.

According to Chiavenatto (2006), there are three basic leadership styles:

➢ *Autocratic leadership*: This leadership style emphasizes more on the leader himself. The decisions are taken solely by the leader, who sets out the guidelines, without the participation of other people of the group. The leader is something like a "boss", pushing their subordinates, expecting results and ignoring any suggestion given.

➢ *Liberal leadership*: This leadership style emphasizes on the staff. The people are given more freedom to choose the ideal way to do their job. In this style, the leader has a supporting role at entrusting their collaborators with freedom

to act. This leadership style might affect negatively the development of the work, since the absence of demands may reduce the staff's dedication as well as affect their productivity. The absence of feedbacks may also harm the quality of the expected results.

➢ *Democratic leadership*: it emphasizes on the participation of the staff members in the decision making process, as well as in the development of solutions for the business problems. The leader motivates the people around them, asking for their opinions, providing feedbacks and motivating their participation in the whole process of creating solutions in order to achieve the organization's goals. This leadership style promotes a collective well-being, creating an environment of growth and development for the people. This environment brings benefits in terms of communication, professional satisfaction, turnover reduction and productivity increase, which reflects in the results of the organization.

F. Creation of leaders

The leader's role is essential for the management of any organization. The leader is responsible for guiding people towards common objectives, uniting staff members, resolving conflicts and joining forces in order to achieve the organizational goals.

In a globalized and dynamic market, the challenges are frequent and an organization must have leaders capable of mobilizing other people in order to create solutions which assure the maintenance, the growth and development of the business. Therefore, the creation of new leaders is a point that must be seriously addressed by the organization.

In this sense, the mentoring program is an essential part to support the process of creation of new leaders. Through mentoring it is possible to identify people and their talents, in a way that their abilities may be developed, besides gaining experiences which can be helpful in the future.

The relationship established between mentor and mentoree consists in an opportunity of learning for both, but, it's crucial that the mentoree has direct contact with the reality experienced by an effective leader and they must also develop their full potential.

Following a skillful leader makes the mentoree witness valuable practical examples of the application of leadership. Mentoring provides the possibility of an observation and the opportunity to apply the concepts into practice, which makes the creation process of new leaders more agile and dynamic.

III. PROGRAM "MY GODPARENT"

The program "My Godparent" came about from the need to set the guidelines and parameters for a special follow up to be carried out by professionals, at an operational level, without previous experience in industrial construction, recently hired by the company analyzed. The goal of the program is the professional development and the assurance that potential risks for personal security, related to the work environment, be identified and duly controlled.

A. Progress of the program

The program "My Godparent" aims to assure that every staff member, known as Godchildren (Mentorees) be followed up during the whole duration of the program by a leader (Mentors) of their specialty, named Godparent, who has the responsibility of guiding them on every aspect related to their job and, by the end of the program, evaluate them on their professional and behavioral performance. The program creates a safe and productive work environment, with trained teams ready to perform any job with quality and without personal and material accidents.

The Human Resources Department determines the relation of the eligible collaborators to the Godparent Program (the Godchildren), present in each training of integration through the filling of the specific form Appendix 1. These, in turn, after an initial presentation of the Program, receive from their Godparents, a visual identification on their helmets (eg. Sticker on the helmet), as shown on Figure 1 below.

Fig. 1. Identification of the program. ("Meu padrinho", in portuguese)

The Godparents, in their turn, are leaders of a specific subject (Messenger, Supervisor or Engineer) in charge of the follow up, development and assessment of the Godchild. These leaders receive specific training in other Program provided by the company, called "Development of Leaders".

During the whole duration of the Program, each Godparent monitors their godchildren and guides them on an array of subjects related to their activities, such as:
a. Indicating the risks the activity entails, the protection measures in order to diminish such risks and the applicable procedures;
b. Training them technically, carrying out the professional development;
c. Providing all training necessary;
d. Carrying out a field follow up;
e. Instructing the mentorees as to the Operational Quality Procedures, Security, Environment and Health, such as: taking part in daily discussions on prevention, the correct use of the individual protection equipment, cleanliness and tidiness of the area, behavioral aspects and relationship with the staff, among others;
f. Guiding their mentorees on importance of their participation in meetings and other activities that they may be invited;
g. Assessing the technical and behavioral performance of their Godchildren through the Assessment Form to be handed out to the Human Resources Department, as shown on Appendix 2;

The Program lasts up to 90 days. During that time, the Godchildren will go through an assessment proccess conducted by their respective Godparent. The follow up is based on:
- ✓ Periodic mettings (feedback);
- ✓ Field follow up;
- ✓ Trainings;
- ✓ Godchild's performance evaluation;

Periodically, the Godparent must have a formal conversation (feedback) with their Godchildren and fill out an assessment of each one of them, recording their performance and progress in their assignments. Such evaluations help define which staff member has the conditions to keep on carrying out their job in the Project or, in case of promotion, if they are apt to move on to work in a leadership position. The forms should be handed out to the Human Resources department for the upload of the records in the system.

The assessments have a pre-determined schedule, considering the start date of the program as shown below:
- ✓ 1st Assessment – within 30 days;
- ✓ 2nd Assessment – within 60 days;
- ✓ 3rd Assessment – within 90 days;

The Godchild will be approved if the results are "Satisfactory" in all assessments.

The satisfactory result in the last assessment allows a change of category from "Godchild" to "Operational", and, with that, the identification on the helmet must be removed, showing the conclusion of their participation in the Program.

IV. CASE STUDY CARRIED OUT IN A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN MINAS GERAIS, BRAZIL

The Construction Project is located in the municipality of Serra do Salitre, in the mesoregion of the TriânguloMineiro and Alto Parnaíba and the microregion of Patrocínio, in the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

The region has a characteristic economy based in the agribusiness, mainly in dairy cows raising and coffee production.

The presence of big industries in the region is small, in this way, it was expected that local workforce from rural areas would be employed in the execution of the Project. Thus, the implementation of the Program "My Godparent" would be strategic for the training of the people involved, especially in the technical and accident prevention aspects.

The first group in the Program and part of this case study consisted of 65 recently hired professionals (Godchildren) and 30 leaders (Godparents), as shown on the Table 1.

Table 1 - Leadersandprofessionals

Item	Quantity	%
Godparent	30	31,58%
Godchildren	65	68,42%
Total	**95**	**100,00%**

The selection of the participants does not take into account the staffs and areas in which they will do their jobs, rather, it focuses on the experience of the professionals. In this way, the group of "Godchildren" has been divided as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2 - Godchildrendistribution

Area	Godchildren	%
Structures	23	35,38%
Spouting	8	12,31%
Cargo handling	7	10,77%
Warehouse I	6	9,23%
Warehouse II	6	9,23%
Welding	6	9,23%
General services	3	4,62%
Scaffolding	2	3,08%
Mechanics	2	3,08%
Equipment	1	1,54%
Construction	1	1,54%
Total	**65**	**100,00%**

An important datum obtained during the selection is related to the participants' age. As the main selection criterium is the experience in Industrial Construction Projects, it was not taken into consideration the participants' age factor.

In this way, it's been observed a larger number of professionals aged between 35 and 45 years old, as shown in Table 3. This suggests that the majority of the professionals already had previous experience, though not focused in the field required.

Table 3 - Age distribution

Age	Quantity	%
18 < 25 yearsold	9	13,85%
25 < 35 yearsold	13	20,00%
35 < 45 yearsold	33	50,77%
> 45 yearsold	10	15,38%
Total	**65**	**100,00%**

With these data, a complementary research was carried out to verify the hypothesis raised, which was later confirmed, according to data in Table 4, below:

Table 4 - First job vs. First construction project

Item	Quantity	%
Firstjob	22	33,85%
Fisrtconstructionproject	43	66,15%
Total	**65**	**100,00%**

After the selection and sorting out of the staffs, an opening event was held with the participation of the "Godparents" and "Godchildren", as a symbolic act of the beginning of the Program.

This occasion was used for the presentation of all the steps and processes, as well as the introduction of each participant.

Fig. 2. Visual identification of the program on the safety helmet

After this step, a follow up and assessment process of the professionals in the field was begun, lasting 90 days, following the criteria and actions set by the Program.

By the end of the 90 day span, a final assessment of the participants (Godchildren) was carried out, with the results shown in Table 5.

Table 5 - Final assessment of the participants		
Final assessment	**Quantity**	**%**
Excellent	25	38,46%
Verygood	15	23,08%
Good	11	16,92%
Regular	9	13,85%
Bad	5	7,69%
Total	**65**	**100,00%**

The Godchildren who had results such as "Good", "Very Good" and "Excellent", moved on in the Program and were picked out as "Operational", which means, without the need of a closer follow up, being able to perform their tasks according to the leadership's guidance.

The Godchildren who received results such as "Regular" or "Bad" were assessed over the continuity of the Program or in the Company.

In order to register the results, a graduation event was held, in which the certificates of participation in the program "My Godparent" were given to the attendees, the awarding of the best "Godparents" and "Godchildren" and the opening of a space for discussions, the presentation of improvement ideas and perspectives on the Program.

V. RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM

The results obtained during and after the program were excellent, according to the indexes shown in the item 4 of this article.

Related to work accidents, it was verified that none of the professionals mentored (Godchildren) had been involved in occurrences during the execution of the Project.

The mentors' responsibility exceeded the expectations for a team leader, with more productivity and a feeling of belonging. It's important also to point out that the Program is a two-way street, where the mentor also evolves in their

leadership through the follow up and tools developed during the Program.

The motivation of those professionals involved in the Program was noticed through testimonies gathered during and after the conduction of the Program. Below there are some testimonies (Godparent and Godchild).

Godchild's testimony:
"The conduction of the Godparent Program is important, because it helps in our professional development. It is an opportunity to learn more and share knowledge" (AGS)

Godparent's testimony:
"The development of this type of action shows the concern of the company with its staff members and the development of each one of them. I've had a similar experience, because I started out as an assistant and currently I am a manager". (NLS)

Through the implementation of the mentoring program "My Godparent" it's been possible to verify in an empirical way, the importance of this sort of program in the organizational environment.

The program generated effective benefits such as the reduction of the learning time, increase in personal motivation and the development of the participants' potential. The follow up of the program also made it possible the identification of new talents, the development of skills, directing efforts towards the solution of operational difficulties and the improvement in the communication among staff members.

As a suggestion for future studies, it is recommended to conduct a survey of socio-economic, educational and cultural data, in order to identify factors that can positively contribute to the development of mentoring programs.

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APPENDIX 1 - SELECTION AND ELECTION FORM FOR THE PROGRAM

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Selection Result:

☐ Satisfactory

☐ Unsatisfactory

☐ Sponsor Program

Personal data

Date _____/_____/_____ *	Name		*

Address	*	County	*

Zip code	City	*	State	*	Country	*

Telephone (home)	*	Cell phone	*	Phone (message)	Phone (message)

Civil Status	Birth Date _____/_____/_____ *	Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female	Birthplace	*	State

Father's name	*	Birth Date _____/_____/_____

Mother's name	*	Birth Date _____/_____/_____

Documents

General Record	*	Shipping date _____/_____/_____	*	Organ of expedition *	Individual registratio	*	Social integration program - PIS	*

Work Permit	Edition	Issuance date _____/_____/_____	State (issuer)	First job ☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Background *

DEGREE OF INSTRUCTION

COLLEGE WORK 1 ☐ Incomplete ☐ Complete	UNDERGRADUATE ☐ Incomplete ☐ Complete	GRADUATED ☐ Incomplete ☐ Complete

CURSO:

Professional Experiences *

Start Date _____/_____/_____	End Date _____/_____/_____	Employer	City	State/Country
Responsibility		Last Remuneration	Comments	
Start Date _____/_____/_____	End Date _____/_____/_____	Employer	City	State/Country
Responsibility		Last Remuneration	Comments	

In case of emergency, notify: *

Emergency Contact Name	Telephone with area code	
Relationship	Address	State

Other information *

How did you become aware of the vacancy?

Which bus arrived at the company, and how it will return?

Have you worked in any company of the group "xxxxx"?   Which?

How do you plan to commute?   Name and degree of kinship:

Are you available to work overtime?   Are you available to work night shifts?

Are you availabl to work in another location?

Are you aware that you'll be required to pay for any damage to tools and/or equipment caused by your careless or negligence?

Comments

E-mail:

Place and Date	Signature

APPENDIX 2 - EVALUATION FORM

Sponsor Program

AFFILIATE EVALUATION FORM

Result of the Evaluation:

☐ Satisfactory

☐ Unsatisfactory

Candidate:

Registration:

Name:

Occupation:

Period:

Referred by:

Registration:

Name:

Occupation:

Period:

Program start date:

Evaluation:

1	**2**	**3**
(30 days)	(60 days)	(90 days)

Evaluation Result:

5 = Excellent (Performance is well above the results set for the team)

4 = Very good (Performance exceeds expected results for the team)

3 = Good (Performance is adequate and achieves the results set for the team)

2 = Regular (Performance does not fully achieve the results set for the team)

1 = Poor (Performance is far below the results set for the team)

Evaluation Item	Evaluation (Note)	Responsible Visa
Productivity and performance in the activity.		
Participation in the DDS (punctuality, interaction, posture, attention, interest, etc.).		
Correct use and conservation of PPE relevant to the activity.		
Use and maintenance of tools, equipment, instruments and materials.		
Knowledge of the work sector and the executive procedures of activities.		
Knowledge of the CMASS documentation related to the activity (PTR, APR, Checklist, etc.).		
Assessment and knowledge of the risks of the activity and application of control measures (safe behavior).		
Organization and cleaning of the work front.		
Behavioral aspects in general (commitment to work).		
Relationship with the work / cooperation team.		
Others:		

Feedback Meeting:

Strong points:

Improvement Opportunities:

Required Actions / Comments:

Subscriptions

Candidate	Referred by	HR
_____	_____	_____
Registration:	Registration:	Registration:
Date:	Date:	Date: