STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

MENTORING WOMEN IN THE U.S. ARMY

BY

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ABSTRACT

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The U.S. Army is experiencing a crisis in leadership and is struggling to identify the problems and develop solutions to a problem, which if not solved will become more vexing. Even with good leadership the Army's personnel issues of retention and recruiting continue to present challenges. It is imperative that all people are fully trained and utilized to maximize their contributions in a less is more fiscal and force structure environment. Every person's potential must be tapped, especially women who will comprise more of the force structure. Mentoring is a time-honored method of identifying the best and brightest and pulling them up the ladder. Mentoring women will pay dividends to the individuals involved and the U.S. Army by developing individual potential, inculcating organizational values and fully utilizing personnel skills to advance the mission of the organization.

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To my mentor Berry Robison II

MENTORING WOMEN IN THE U.S. ARMY

INTRODUCTION

"Over the course of my career, I've developed my capabilities and approach to leadership by watching effective commanders, by interacting with leaders of all ranks, and by being offered challenging opportunities. A key element of this learning process and one of the most important in terms of professional development is mentoring. This isn't an enterprise that we've invented the past few years. There are dozens of studies that show that the vast majority of successful leaders in almost any profession, benefited from some form of mentoring early in their careers. There are really no substitutes for having access to the advice and personal insights of senior leaders."[1]

General Henry H. Shelton,
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,
Defense Advisory Committee on Women in The Military (DACOWITS)
Spring Conference, 24 Apr 98

Many challenges face current and future Army leaders. The development of leaders who can fight and win on the future battlefield is perhaps the greatest challenge facing the Army today. The challenge in educating and training leaders of tomorrow is to provide them with the capability to be flexible- to innovate, think and adapt to the demands of a fast paced, highly stressful and rapidly changing environment.[2]

As the Army continues to draw down its forces it would seem logical that with no reduction in missions those who are left will have to do more with less. How to get the greatest contribution from all team members should be an area for concern and analysis.

How to develop future leaders to lead a proud institution into the 21st century is of utmost concern to Army officers and non-commissioned officers. One method to develop junior leaders is mentoring. Mentoring has been around for years and has found a place in corporate America as a way to develop leaders. Mentoring of women and minorities has come to the forefront in recent years as a way to break the glass ceiling into the executive suite.

This paper examines mentoring as a method to develop women leaders and their potential. First, we look to history to see an example of mentoring. Next, we examine the effects of mentoring on the mentor, protege and the organization, a discussion of mentoring focused on the challenges of cross-gender mentoring and recommendations for developing mentoring programs.

BACKGROUND

A most interesting example of mentoring is the relationship of Major General "Fox" Conner and General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Long after he had led the Allied armies to victory in Western Europe and had relinquished his nation's highest elected office, Dwight D. Eisenhower had little difficulty in identifying Major General Fox Conner as the most remarkable man he had met. To Eisenhower, Conner was simply "the ablest man I ever knew."[3]

Why did Eisenhower select Conner as his mentor over such distinguished soldiers as John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur and George C. Marshall? How did the relationship start? While stationed in Panama as a major, Eisenhower was assigned as executive officer to Conner from January 1922 to September 1924. According to Eisenhower, "General Conner discovered that I had little or no interest left in military history. I found myself invited to his quarters in the evening and saw that he had an extraordinary library, especially in military affairs. We talked for a time and he picked out two or three historical novels."[4]

Conner would quiz him after he read each book. Before too long, Eisenhower was refighting the classical campaigns, examining operational and logistic planning of history's great captains. He became interested in the Napoleonic campaigns and those of Frederick the Great. He read Carl Von Clausewitz three times and to further expand his intellectual horizons read Tacitus, Plato and Shakespeare.[5] Conner's influence on Eisenhower extended beyond a professional reading program.

Conner also drilled into his pupil a set of convictions concerning the future conduct of war. Perhaps the most important knowledge he imparted was that the Treaty of Versailles made another European War inevitable. It was virtually impossible, Conner reasoned, to expect the proudest

and most nationalistic people in Europe to accept the ridiculously harsh terms of the Versailles treaty. Eisenhower should apply himself immediately for that conflict, which Conner expected to erupt within a generation.[6]

Such a war would be a coalition war and the United States would enter it. More important, it would be won by the Western allies under a unified command. Conner felt quite strongly that Eisenhower was the type of officer who could provide the strong leadership required to manage recalcitrant allies.[7] These words served the Supreme Commander well in World War II and became the foundation on which he based his entire command philosophy.[8]

To prepare for the next war, Conner also recommended that Eisenhower seek an assignment under Colonel George C. Marshall, an expert on coalition warfare.[9]

After three years as Conner's executive officer, Eisenhower was reassigned. Eisenhower's association with his mentor did not end when he left Panama. The long hours at Conner's side, the operational plans and reports he had written, the analysis of battles and battle captains paid him handsomely as he graduated first in his class at Leavenworth.[10]

During World War II, Eisenhower still confided in his former commander when problems arose concerning Allied unity. On 4 July 1942, several days after his appointment as commanding general, European Theater of Operations, Eisenhower wrote

Conner, "I cannot tell you how much I would appreciate, at this moment, an opportunity for an hour's discussion with you on the problems that beset me…the same problems (coalition warfare) that you faced twenty-five years ago…recently I've been so frequently struck by the similarity between this situation and the one you used to describe to me." It was clear the Conner-Eisenhower relationship remained strong over the decades and that the future supreme commander still regarded Conner's advice valuable.[11]

As Eisenhower later wrote:

"It is clear now that life with General Conner was a sort of graduate school in military affairs and the humanities, leavened by the comments and discourses of a man who was experienced in his knowledge of men and their conduct. I can never adequately express my gratitude to this one gentleman, for it took years before I fully realized the value of what he had led me through. And then General Conner was gone. But in a lifetime of association with great and good men, he is the one more or less invisible figure to whom I owe an incalculable debt.[12]

MENTORING

"Mentoring is a process of thoughtful and deliberate advice, education, and counsel designed to assist in professional growth and an important step in helping provide the leaders of tomorrow. It is hard for me to imagine an officer, NCO or DoD civilian, succeeding without the benefit of sound advice from experienced superiors. Yet, by sometimes putting artificial gender barriers around the mentoring process, we've prevented women from gaining full benefits of the process. And I know there are a large number of men being led by women who could also benefit from mentoring."[13]

General Henry H. Shelton

Fox Conner is an example of the impact a mentor can have on an individual, an organization and in this case, a nation. He sought out relationships with promising young officers and helped shape their careers and the future of the institution they belonged to, the U.S. Army.

Relationships that support career development enable an individual to address the challenges encountered moving through adulthood and a career. What do mentoring relationships have in common? First, they allow individuals to address concerns about self, career, and family by providing opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and competence, and to address personal and professional dilemmas. Second, they benefit both individuals. These relationships thrive because they respond to current needs and concerns. Third, they occur in an organizational context that greatly influences when and how they unfold. Finally, these kinds of relationships are not readily available to most people in organizations. They remain a greatly needed but relatively rare occurrence in most work settings.[14]

In remarks to the DACOWITS on 24 April 1998, General Henry H. Shelton remarked:

"I am convinced that the "big picture" issue that really impacts women and the one that I, as Chairman, need to be most attentive to is what we can do to ensure women

are allowed to serve their country with the same level of dedication and professionalism accorded to men throughout our history; a thought reinforced by my visits to our women soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines in places like Bosnia and the Middle East.

Today's increased desire on the part of women to serve our country in an enhanced capacity is directly related to societal changes that also have brought about shifts in the role of women across a wide range of professions and these changes have made us a better nation and they will make us a better force. So to me the important question isn't "why" these changes are taking place, but rather "what" are we doing to create an environment that allows women to reach their full potential in their chosen profession, and what are we doing to prepare women for the challenges ahead. I'm using the word "we" with a deliberate purpose, because this isn't a task that I or the Joint Chiefs can tackle alone. Each of you plays an equally important role."[15]

"The prototype of a relationship that enhances career development is the mentor relationship. Both academic and business circles have focused a great deal of attention on this relationship. Derived from Greek mythology, the name implies a relationship between a young adult and an older, more experienced adult that helps the younger individual learn to navigate in the adult world and the world of work. A mentor supports guides and counsels the young adult as he or she accomplishes this important task".[16]

Mentoring is a process whereby women can be prepared for the challenges ahead. Mentoring can accommodate many styles of leadership and is not the same for every mentor and protege relationship. This section defines terms, the purposes and applications of mentoring.

Mentoring can be defined as: "A developmental, caring, sharing and helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how, and effort in enhancing another person's growth, knowledge and skills, and responds to critical needs in the life of that person in ways that prepare the individual for greater productivity or achievement in the future".[17] The modern usage of the term, within an organizational context, refers to an experienced, senior leader or manager (often at the executive level) who develops a younger, less experienced leader and provides career counseling and sponsorship to the individual.[18] An important distinction is that the developmental role of a mentor can be distinguished from that of either a coach or a sponsor. In an article written by the Woodlands Group, the authors note "that sponsors function to enhance the career progression of subordinates by giving them visibility, actively seeking promotional opportunities for the subordinates and advising them on obtaining desired assignments.

Senior leaders who assume the role of coaches help subordinates meet specific growth needs by providing challenging tasks, constant feedback and counsel on how to improve performance. The mentor functions as both coach and sponsor but has a much greater impact on subordinates

than either the coach or sponsor. Much greater intensity, informality and trust characterize the mentor relationship than either the coach or sponsor relationships".[19]

The U.S. Army's position on mentoring is that it is a component of leadership development. The Army's response to a DACOWITS request for information on existing mentoring programs and plans to implement mentoring initiatives stated that mentoring is the proactive development of subordinates through observing, assessing, coaching, teaching, counseling and evaluating; which results in people being treated as they should be treated, with fairness and equal opportunity.[20]

Mentoring is a component of leadership development but the opinion of this paper is that mentoring is "a process of thoughtful and deliberate advice, education and counsel designed to assist in professional growth and an important step in helping provide the leaders of tomorrow."[21]

Both men and women who have risen into the ranks of senior management credit the nature and quality of their relationships with other people as key elements. They see the most beneficial relationships as those they have with their mentors and with people in informal networks. The importance and nature of both have been well developed in the literature.[22]

In today's resource constrained environment, one of the few plentiful resources for learning is other people. Research on executive learning has shown that learning from others is one of the major sources of executive development. Other important sources of learning are job and assignment experiences and formal training and education. However, these are usually more costly in terms of money and organizational arrangements. Activities such as mentoring and coaching are prime untapped resources in creating the learning organization.[23]

EFFECTS OF MENTORING

Kram (1985) identified two types of functions of mentor-protégé relationships: "career assistance and psychosocial support. Career development assistance includes sponsoring, coaching, advising on career moves, and ensuring visibility and access to important social networks, resources and assignments. Psychosocial functions consist of role modeling, feedback, counseling and social support."[24]

Roche lists seven characteristics of mentors which top-level executives who had a mentor suggest as important for successful mentorship:

"• Willingness to share knowledge and understanding

• Ability and willingness to counsel subordinates.

- Knowledge of the organization and people in it.
- Rank of position of the mentor.
- Respect from peers.
- Knowledge and use of power.
- Upward mobility."[25]

A key issue addressed by researchers examining mentorship as a leader development process has been the impact of mentors on the development of managers and executives. Kathy E. Kram of Boston University notes that the mentorship relationship can play a critical role in the development and organizational contributions made by the mentor as well as the protégé.[26]

In a study of 1,250 executives, Roche found that the executives who have had a mentor were better educated, advance more rapidly, are more likely to follow a career plan, earn more money and are more likely to assume the mentor role for other managers than executives who never had a mentor. Another finding of Roche is that executives who had a mentor are more satisfied with their work and are happier with their career progression.[27]

The mentorship relationship can benefit both parties. The mentor is likely to accrue a number of benefits as well as the protégé including:

"• Enhanced promotional opportunities due to the development of his or her replacement.

• Increased organizational effectiveness of his or her organization as a result of the competence and commitment of proteges.

• Recognition and respect from peers.

• Admiration and friendship from the protégé.

• Increased personal satisfaction from the role played in the development of proteges".[28]

Mentoring can benefit the organization as well as the participants in the relationship. Mentoring may be used to integrate employees into the corporation, teaching them how the organization works and what is expected of them.[29]

Mentoring may be used to build strong effective work teams composed of employees loyal to the organization and to their fellow workers. It is an effective way for organizations to encourage people to derive good feelings about their work, their workmates, and their work places.[30]

Organizations discover higher morale, as well as increased commitment and loyalty from their employees. Other benefits include increased productivity, choice employees, qualified leadership and reduction in turnover.[31]

MENTORING AND WOMEN

"But I tell you that mentoring needs to be a gender-neutral enterprise and men and women ought not be afraid to seek advice and counsel from each other. And in this regard we've both let each other down. We've got to remind leaders that mentoring isn't just about giving career advice over a few drinks at the NCO or Officer's Club. Nor is mentoring sponsorship or favoritism."[32]

General Henry H. Shelton

Mentoring is increasingly perceived as an effective strategy to enhance individual career advancement and success, to aid in an organization's succession planning and, albeit slowly, to improve the condition of women in organizations. Since the late 1970's, when management literature began emphasizing active development and promotion of mentorship programs for women, both public and private sector organizations have shown increasing interest in these programs.[33]

A review of current literature on mentoring women identified four potential and interrelated problems for women who want to be mentored. The first problem occurs when organizational advancement is attributed only to competence and the importance of gaining a mentor is not recognized. Many women encounter the recognition problem because they find it particularly difficult to approach men who might act as mentors. This may be due to misunderstanding how informal mentoring works, lack of

comfort in initiating a mentoring relationship or fear that that initiating a relationship might be misconstrued as a sexual approach. This problem is exacerbated by the facts that women have fewer interactions with individuals in positions of power in the organization than men and have fewer formal and informal opportunities to obtain mentors.[34]

The second problem, mentor identification, is encountered in selection. Because men continue to fill the higher ranks of organizations, they are positioned to bestow organizational legitimacy on their proteges and provide them with the resources required for success and organizational advancement. However greater comfort developing a professional and personal relationship with another male and the tendency to select as proteges those individuals with whom they can identify means that men may exclude or fail to even consider women as candidates for protégé roles.[35] The impact of men's potential unwillingness to select female proteges is a crucial constraint on women's opportunity.

Differences in needs between men and women present a third problem. The limited evidence suggests that female managers may need and obtain different types of mentoring than their male counterparts and that women's needs in mentoring relationships may change as a function of

organizational rank. Both Reich, in comparing a study of 131 female executives with an earlier study of 416 female executives, and Burke, studying 51 male and eight female proteges, have reported that women being mentored are more likely than men to report particular types of benefits gained from mentoring. Fitt and Newton's study of mentors found that women are viewed as needing more encouragement and, at lower ranks, more role modeling and assistance with learning the organizational "ropes" than men; at higher ranks, women need more help with career development and organizational legitimacy.[36]

Problems of socialization, control and professionalizing also deter women's achievement. Potential mentors (particularly men) may be unwilling or unable to share their competencies and to professionally socialize, or they may be uncomfortable or incapable of promoting learning through relationships with women that require close, interpersonal transactions. If many women are to achieve more important positions in organizations, they must overcome these problems.[37]

The literature gives much support and some evidence for same-sex mentoring of women. The importance of same-sex mentoring is significant because of the conflict that many women experience between their personal and career

lives. Because women are more likely than men to have experienced these conflicts and are more accustomed to dealing with such concerns, female mentors tend to have the understanding necessary to assist female proteges in bridging the gap between these dual lives and the desire to advance women's opportunities in the workplace. Female mentors can offer women greater empathy, better interpersonal skills, more comfort, less likelihood of encountering sexual issues, increased self-confidence, and a perceived fit between professional traits and self-image.[38]

Women mentors can widen their protégés' horizons by introducing them to key people and by helping them network within and outside the organization. Selecting female rather than male mentors is seen as a better way to develop women in their careers. Since women have been making inroads into higher positions, trends suggest that mentoring among women is poised to come of age. However, Gallese reports that senior corporate women have thus far proven suprisingly reluctant to take on mentoring roles. This is indicative of the "Queen Bee" syndrome that occurs when women at high levels are unwilling to mentor others. Their unwillingness may be a result of having made it to the top without a mentor. Also they may have concerns that

a protégé may surpass them within the organization. These and others are reasons given by women for being wary of mentoring. Additionally, the female mentor/female protégé relationship may be viewed negatively if it is viewed as constituting a "female power coalition". Compared with men, women face greater barriers to advancement and may need to spend their time advancing their own careers rather than helping others. When there is a shortage of women at upper levels of management, women in these positions are swamped with women needing mentoring. Consequently women must approach men for mentor relationships.[39]

During the last fifteen years the number of women in professional and managerial positions has increased dramatically. One important consequence of this trend is that relationships between junior and senior colleagues will more often involve members of both sexes.[40]

Kathy E. Kram in her book, Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life studies mentoring and peer relationships. She identifies five major categories of cross-gender relationship complexities can be identified. Each of these complexities is shaped by individual and organizational factors, and each has the potential to be destructive by limiting the competence and effectiveness of both men and women.

First, men and women are inclined to assume stereotypical roles in relating to each other in work settings. These roles are defined by assumptions and expectations about appropriate behavior for each sex. In order to reduce the uncertainty, ambiguity, and anxiety created by the emergence of cross-gender work relationships, individuals rely on what is familiar. Sometimes unknowingly, men and women assume traditional roles that they learned from past situations. These roles tend to constrain behavior and to reduce individual competence and effectiveness. The challenge is to figure out how men and women can be freer to behave in a variety of ways most appropriate for a given work context.

Second, in cross-gender relationships, the role modeling function is frequently unsatisfactory to the younger individual and sometimes to the mentor as well. While women in the early career years face developmental problems similar to those of male counterparts, women face some that are unique to being female in male-dominated organizational contexts. Concerns about appropriateness of a particular behavior may appear unwarranted to the male mentor who does not understand that what works for a man may not work for a woman. Concerns about balancing work and family commitments are exacerbated for women in their

thirties who are simultaneously advancing their careers and assuming roles of wife and/or mother. These unique gender-related concerns make it difficult for male mentors to empathize, to provide role modeling and to identify with their female proteges.

Third, in cross-gender relationships, the mutual liking and admiration characteristic of all significant work relationships may lead to increasing intimacy and sexual tensions. This growing intimacy and sexuality is a source of anxiety that can both be threatening as well as exciting to men and women who work together. Such mutual attraction can lead to testing the boundaries of the relationship, to withdrawing from the relationship because of anxiety and fear that is evoked by continual involvement, or to assuming stereotypical roles of a father/daughter connection in order to eliminate the possibility of sexual involvement. Concerns about intimacy and sexuality add stress to a developmental relationship. The manner of dealing with them determines whether the relationship is strengthened or weakened by this complexity.

The last two categories of complexity deal with the external relationship. They pertain to how the two individuals relate to the organization as a whole. Cross-

gender relationships are particularly vulnerable to these complexities because they are still a relatively rare occurrence in most organizations. This, combined with heightened awareness due to Affirmative Action efforts make the relationships more visible.

Cross-gender relationships are subject to public scrutiny. Others study the relationship with interest and probably with some suspicion. If the external relationship is not carefully managed rumors develop that can be destructive to one or both careers as was seen in Mary Cunningham's career at Bendix (The Boston Globe, 2 October 1980). The possibilities of sexual involvement and favoritism rather than competence as the criterion for sponsorship can threaten the reputations of both individuals. This puts stress on the relationship as the public image becomes the priority increasing the likelihood that certain developmental functions are forfeited.

As a result people of different sexes involved in mentoring relationships must be assured that their relationship is seen as professional. This need to assure or defend the relationship affects the willingness of men to mentor women. These barriers can be overcome by developing training programs within companies to increase opportunities for women to meet potential mentors.

Additionally, open discussion in the workplace regarding the new organizational dynamic is necessary for positive relationship development.

Finally Ms. Kram notes that cross-gender relationships are subject to peer resentment. This complexity occurs for women with male mentors who are working in a predominantly male peer group. Because of the competitive dynamics that occur among peers aspiring to advance, the solo woman stands out as one who receives special attention if she is regularly coached by a male superior. Although this relationship may be important for her, she may be reluctant to maintain it for fear of becoming isolated from or ridiculed by her male peers. As a result, the solo woman in this situation can experience considerable stress as she confronts having to choose between peer relationships and a valuable relationship with a male superior. With this complexity, it is likely that the senior colleague is unaware of the stress created by peer resentment since the resentment is directed at the junior colleague.[41]

The complexities of cross-gender relationships have a range of effects on individual development and on the quality of mentoring relationships. The potential negative consequences require attention. Strategies for managing negative consequences must be identified so that the

advantages can be maximized and the potential destructiveness minimized. A combination of individual and organizational efforts is most successful.[42]

Individual self-awareness is a critical first step. If men and women understand how they create and perpetuate stereotypical roles that reduce competence and effectiveness, they may choose to behave differently. Similarly, managers can change their reactions to public scrutiny and peer resentment by being aware of these consequences. They must manage the external relationship in a way that preserves the integrity of the internal relationship while supporting career advancement of both individuals. Awareness of individual needs in the workplace helps individuals become more at ease with cross-gender relationships. By increasing comfort and self-understanding, withdrawal from a relationship that provides critical developmental functions will be unnecessary.[43]

Education opportunities are particularly helpful when they bring together individuals who face similar challenges in the workplace. Women professionals at similar career stages can discuss the problems they encounter in their relationships with superiors, peers and subordinates. Or male managers can learn how their behaviors contribute to difficulties in mentoring young women in discussions with

their peers. When such discussion opportunities are offered within an organization, an added benefit is the networking that occurs as a result of the educational experience. Public seminars offer the greatest amount of anonymity and confidentiality. In-house seminars offer greater opportunity for follow-up support back on the job.[44]

Individuals can improve the quality of their cross-gender relationships in several ways. None of these will have lasting impact unless certain conditions exist in the organizational context. Until there are more women in managerial ranks, the few women managers will have difficulty eliminating dysfunctional stereotypical roles. If an organization succeeds in increasing the numbers of women in managerial positions, there will be more female mentors to provide the role-modeling function. However, unless more women are granted access to the upper managerial ranks, the stresses associated with being a woman in a position of authority may make it difficult to assume the role of mentor. And until the culture of the organization genuinely supports equality and collaboration between the sexes, individual efforts will be undermined, since attempts to eliminate stereotypes and public scrutiny will be viewed as deviant behavior. Finally, organizations must encourage the development of cross-gender

relationships by providing the educational opportunities for individuals to develop relationship skills and by rewarding individuals who pay attention to people and relationship development.[45]

In addition to the individual efforts, those with authority can develop reward systems and educational programs that encourage individuals to improve the quality of their cross-gender relationships. Such organizationally sponsored education demonstrates the value attached to managing relationships for the purposes of increasing individual and organizational effectiveness.[46]

Cross-gender relationships offer benefits to both men and women. Both individuals learn new ways of relating to the world from their opposite-gender colleagues. Junior women have greater access to power, information and desirable positions through their alliances with senior male colleagues. The complexities of these relationships are not trivial and they may discourage individuals. These complexities must be managed effectively if individuals and organizations are to reap the benefits that positive cross-gender alliances have to offer.[47]

TYPES OF MENTORING PROGRAMS

There are many types of mentoring relationships. Mentoring programs within an organizational context include formal or informal. There are three differences between formal and informal mentoring. "First formal mentoring programs typically focus on satisfying organizational rather than mentor/protégé goals. Second, in formal mentoring relationships the mentor/protégé pairing is a structured rather than a spontaneous selective process. And in formal mentoring relationships there is usually a specified time frame for the attainment of organizational mentoring goals".[48]

Major companies in the U.S. are implementing formal programs in which senior managers provide personal counseling and career guidance for younger employees. Recognizing the merits of formal mentoring, organizations with programs for women include TENNECO, Prudential Insurance Co of America, Johnson Wax and NYNEX.

Before he retired, Tenneco CEO, James Ketelsen launched a new version of the company's Executive Compensation Program, pioneering a pay-for-mentoring plan that has led to more women in management. In 1988, Tenneco developed a program called Integrated Leadership Initiatives, a plan designed to increase the number of

women in management. Prudential implemented an accountability program that ties compensation directly to manager's performance in developing and promoting women and minorities to senior-level positions. Johnson Wax identifies high-potential women who are a little below executive level for formal mentoring plans. Within the organization, both the line and staff personnel are eligible for mentoring plans and executive vice presidents and division heads are selected as sponsors.[49]

The Coast Guard started a mentoring program in 1991 after a leadership study found that mentoring is a major factor in retaining personnel in an organization. The program was comprised of a five-day training course and a "formal" network where people sent in applications volunteering to be a mentor or requesting a mentor. Personnel at Coast Guard headquarters then made matches according to career field, grade, or what the person requesting the mentor said they needed.

By 1997, it was clear to the Coast Guard that the limited program had been successful for those able to participate and the Coast Guard had to find a better way to make this tool more widely available to all its people.[50]

By the time the Coast Guard terminated the "old" system in September 1998 there were 1237 mentoring

relationships. But with 90,000 personnel (including reserves, auxiliary and civilian employees) the Coast Guard had to develop a system to expand the opportunity. They partnered with the Department of Transportation (DOT) agencies and developed the One DOT Mentor Matching System that is accessible via the Internet and allows matches across organizations. Mentors volunteer by entering their demographics and potential proteges select someone with the experience, expertise and interests they are looking for in a mentoring relationship.[51]

The Marines have also recognized the need for a comprehensive review and analysis of its mentoring program and is developing a mentoring handbook for Marines. The handbook will provide leadership tools that can be used to establish formal and informal mentoring programs within Marine commands.[52]

RECOMMENDATION

"So the first task I want you to help me with is eliminating artificial barriers to what I believe is an important component of professional development (mentoring). I'm convinced that our men and women conduct themselves as professionals in this endeavor and they should not be afraid to talk to each other, or be seen together, nor should anyone draw inferences from such events. I'll keep talking to our senior leaders at every opportunity in other words, giving everyone a little "push", if you promise that you'll give them a little "pull" by actively seeking mentoring opportunities."[53]

General Henry H. Shelton

Consideration should be given to developing a separate mentoring program in the U.S. Army. Formal mentoring programs in which all must participate and are centrally managed are cumbersome to administer in an organization the size of the Army and may not produce the desired results.

Developing a mentoring program that is decentralized, informal and tailored to the needs of the Army and its increasingly diverse personnel needs to be explored and initiated. Mentoring should not be confused with sponsorship or favoritism. Mentoring should not remain buried in leadership development. Mentoring should not be classified as too hard to do because of the possible cross-gender mentoring relationship challenges.

A mentoring program should be developed and imbedded in the Professional Development Education (PDE) system.

Emphasizing mentoring in PDE would educate individuals about the potential benefits, limitations and complexities of mentoring, as well as to provide forums to build effective developmental alliances.[54] Formal training to develop mentors could be conducted locally from Department of the Army centrally developed mentor training programs.

The mentoring program must be a separate component of leadership development, the program should be voluntary, and the mentoring program relationships would be outside of the senior-subordinate chain of command. Use of technology such as the Coast Guard's use of the Internet or telementoring to conduct the program would make the benefits of mentoring available to the Total Army. Attempts to alter the culture of an organization so that relationship building is a priority, along with specific rewards and recognition for taking the time to mentor junior personnel, are likely to result in an enhanced mentoring process.[55]

Mentoring needs to be exploited for its benefits. Mentoring can be used to identify potential at all levels, develop the right skills, protect the people investment, foster communication, and reinforce organizational mission, vision and values.

While the effort and cost may seem great, the potential consequences of failure to improve the development of future leaders through the use of a mentorship style of leading and developing subordinates are ominous by comparison.[56]

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ENDNOTES

[1] "Remarks by General Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Military (DACOWITS)", 24 April 1998; available from http://www.dtic.mil/jcs/chairman/dacowits.html; Internet. Accessed 6 Jan 1999

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[3] Lieutenant Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, "Mentoring General Ike" Military Review (October 1990) 26.

[4] U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Dwight D. Eisenhower, The Professional Soldier and the Study of History(Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,1990),16-17.

[5] Kingseed, 28.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Edgar F. Puryear Jr.,19 Stars (Presidio, CA: 1971) 168-9.

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[11] Ibid,29.

[12] U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Dwight D. Eisenhower, The Professional Soldier and the Study of History(Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,1990),19.

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