



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
 2012 Twenty-Five Influential Black Women
 in Business Awards



Deadline
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Become An Online Mentor

Ementoring Is A Unique Way to Hone New Business Talent
 By: ANN BROWN
 Friday, May 27, 2011 | Business



Want to be a mentor, but finding it hard to carve out the time? Try e-mentoring. With the use online software, mentors and mentees log into a secure online environment where they can converse under supervision of moderators and coordinators.

Pam Perry, PR coach and social media strategist and founder of Pam Perry Pr, has found mentoring new talent online more than rewarding--and easy. "Our company lives in the digital space – and all our employees and vendors operate virtual. So it's easy for us to mentor interns online. We use the social media tools and create private website via Google for them too," says Perry.

E-mentoring is less time-consuming than face-to-face mentoring--and also allows companies to mentor newcomers who may not be located in the same city. And, while some critics say e-mentoring just does not offer the same quality as in-person mentoring, those who have tried e-mentoring feel it is the wave of the future.

"Some things are taught and some things are caught, meaning you can learn a lot from a book or lecture. But when you're in a mentor relationship, you are really required to watch and observe more. It's more like modeling and you learn from imitating systems, procedures and protocol. Information is about access. When you have access to a mentor – you will never be without sound guidance, a wise answer or a valuable lesson," notes Perry.

For Allison Babb, mentoring--and being mentored--is a constant in one's career. "I'm mentored directly from mentor coaches, through books, through live events and through virtual programs. It just never stops for me. I'm always looking for expert guidance and I never stop learning or being mentored. It's a constant journey," she says. How to get started e-mentoring? There are several online sources: eMentor Pro (<http://www.e-mentoring.org/>) has been helping offering Internet-based mentoring since 2002; Pa e-mentoring (<http://www.pa-ementor.org/>) offering career mentoring for high school students; and e-mentoring (apps.mentoring.org) offers the applications to begin mentoring online.

Why e-mentor? E-mentoring has several advantages: it can be done anywhere at any time, there is an online history created of what has been accomplished (which can be reused whenever needed) and it can also be used in conjunction with in-person mentoring.

In-person mentoring usually takes up to three months, but says Perry, through e-mentoring, you can mentor up to a year. "When you mentor an intern, it's good training for them and you are also coaching them to be better prepared for a real job with your firm. They will also have an affinity to you that may last a lifetime," says Perry.



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When mentoring has been completed, your company may have developed its next talent. "When the formal mentoring is done – hopefully a real genuine relationship has blossomed. And when that happens, you really are never done “mentoring” that person. You keep in contact and you know it’s a success when your mentee reaches out and begins to mentor others just the way they were mentored. That’s when it’s full circle – and that’s a blessing for everyone involved," says Perry.

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