



Mentorship might just be the right medicine

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There's one thing that the owner of a small business usually realises all too well: they often don't possess all the wisdom to manage the business 100% correctly. Mistakes are made, problems are sometimes left unresolved, and there are constant challenges that need to be addressed.

Challenges like identifying the best marketing technique for your business, how to utilise your time as effectively as possible, or how to fully utilise technology, to name just a few.

Today, there is increasing pressure on everyone, especially the new entrepreneur, to get the business on the right track from the start and keep it there. Often, the owner is expected to do everything, from finances to production and personnel management to ultimately marketing.

The owner or manager of a small business must be able to do everything and must ultimately excel in the execution of these actions. Mistakes must be limited, opportunities must be seized, and guidance must be given to subordinates.

Friends and family, the internet, magazines, and books, and even business acquaintances can perhaps provide you with a constant flow of information that can help you in your business. However, only a mentor can share wisdom with you on an ongoing basis.

The role that mentors can play in businesses should not be underestimated at all. What exactly is mentorship? A mentor is someone who has walked the proverbial path and who can and especially wants to share their insight and experience.

A mentor is someone with more entrepreneurial experience than the person being mentored who can serve as a confidant over a long period of time, usually for free or for a very low fee.

Why do they do it? Firstly, it's their way of giving back to a community or society in general. They sometimes also do it to develop their own skills as a teacher, manager, strategist, or consultant.

The true mentorship relationship also works in both directions: mentors learn about new ideas from a new entrepreneur, just as the entrepreneur can learn timeless wisdom from them.

If the new entrepreneur considers using a mentor, careful consideration should be given beforehand to what role this person can play in the business and, more importantly, what role they can play. Here, the entrepreneur must decide what is really needed:

- Should the mentor act as a sounding board and "devil's advocate"?
- Is it preferred that the mentor provide advice instead?
- Or perhaps just make recommendations?

- Maybe the mentor has specific skills, and management requires that he or she perform specific tasks.
- Or maybe help develop products?
- Or maybe provide a service to the business and/or clients?

Using a mentor has definite benefits. It is especially in the first few months that the entrepreneur can benefit fruitfully from such a person because the entrepreneur is usually so caught up in establishing the business that marketing, systems, and staff training, among other things, do not receive the necessary attention.

The moment mutual trust is established, this commitment usually lasts much longer than originally intended.

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