

# BancSearch, Inc.™

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*Executive Search Consultants to the Financial Services Industry*

## *Mentoring Your Staff / Employees*

What better way is there to improve one's working skills than to receive instruction from a seasoned senior team member? Mentoring is the perfect way to help your business take a giant leap up the ladder of success by providing this excellent means of personal and professional development.

- **How to begin:** Post interoffice notice that your organization plans to make mentoring available to those who volunteer to participate. Provide detailed information that explains how the program works and appoint a committee to oversee the program and be available to answer any questions participants might have. Inform both staff members and mentors that each has an advantage by participating. Make it clear that the mentoring process can achieve improved performance and career enrichment. Staff members are able to develop their career goals through mentoring and mentors enjoy the benefit of fresh input and ideas from their charges.

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*Are You Developing Top Talent in Your Organization?*

## *How To Develop Top Talent Within Your Company*

Most would agree that any organization is only as good as its employees. Creating a high performance company filled with talented workers has been the Nirvana that most CEO's and other company leaders dream of. This is not easy to achieve by any means, and tends to be an ongoing aspiration. Voltaire said, "Grow your own gardens," and he was right. It is up to company executives to learn to recognize and foster those talented individuals with potential for development within an organization.

Three things that can boost talent and lead to the highest performance are:

- Hiring strong and agile leaders who can easily adapt to change
- Building strong employee engagement so that workers become committed to delivering on strategic goals
- Make collaboration work for your company

In order to give talent a real chance within your organization, it is important to be on the constant lookout for real creativity among your employees. Note those individuals who seek out new and unique methods of problem solving and nurture those approaches with incentive rewards.

Take advantage of the fact that each employee has unique and interesting life experience, skill, and education.

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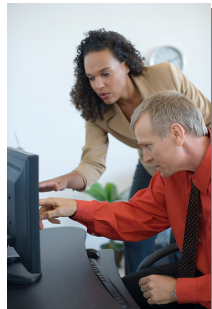
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- **Consider the perfect match:** It is important to make good matches between staffer and mentor. Look for compatible personality traits and make sure each couple spends some time together before the final decision is made about who will mentor whom. The efforts will not be as effective if marked incompatibilities exist between your choices. Make sure your choices are conducive to mutual creativity and have similar work habits. Use your profiles & assessments and observational expertise to make matches that are going to work well together and increase your organization's workflow. Let personnel reports play a big role in your choices about which employees will work best together. Pair someone with weak qualities in one area with a person who has strengths in that area.



- **Encourage open exchanges:** It is prudent to observe the discourse between staff members and mentors, especially during the initial periods following the match-ups. Watch for disagreements concerning work habits and stress that both people are there to learn from one another. Encourage new approaches to problem solving and promote the idea that both people are there to learn how to replace inefficient methods of doing things with more productive ones.

It is important to meet with each team individually and to delineate specific goals and time constraints that should be met. Equally important is the creation of a committee to oversee and supervise progress of the mentoring team and to make sure things move ahead as planned and is goal focused. Mark the successful completion of the program by some type of party or event that will serve both as a springboard for utilization of the new methods and practices learned during the time spent in the mentoring process. Be sure your employees are aware that you recognize and appreciate their efforts.

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View these diversities as strengths and talents that can be nurtured as company assets. Recognize and encourage entrepreneurial talent within the confines of your company boundaries and put this capacity to work to your advantage too.

It is very important to challenge employees by offering interesting projects and opportunities. This gives them the chance they need to allow their creative ideas to shine. That said it is equally as important to celebrate their innovative accomplishments. Let your workers know they are appreciated and they will



reward you, in return, for giving them an enthusiastic environment in which to thrive. The same enthusiastic environment will serve to increase corporate stamina and will even impress people from outside your company.

With so many businesses vying for top talent, it can be difficult to find, hire, and hang on to the right people. However, with a little extra planning, effort and care, you can find superstars who will take your business to new heights and give you an edge over the competition.

All of these talent-development approaches have the potential to contribute significantly to any organization's profitability.

If you have any questions about this article, or about how we can help you with your current talent development, training, or hiring needs, contact us today!

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### Don't Decide Not To Decide

Often, when it's time to make a tough decision like changing jobs or buying a house, we are overwhelmed by negative thoughts about the problems that might arise. Therefore, we never take the first step to get information, which could reveal big, overlooked benefits. Putting the decision off is a decision not to decide and can sabotage your big moves.

Happy Holidays

# Dressing for Success

by Alison Sfreddo of The Training Connection

So, you have just signed on to the mentoring program, been matched with a mentoring partner and are now looking forward to the unlimited possibilities of networking and new visibility. Next question, have you looked in the mirror lately? Many people do not realize that their appearance is the first impression that will linger and that first impression is what can give them the edge on the competition. The simple fact is that if you look sharp you will be perceived as sharp.



In our efforts to achieve the next level of advancement, the last thing we look at is our appearance. We tend to focus on checking all of those proverbial boxes that will take us to the next professional level and unfortunately, our appearance is not one of those boxes.

Over the years it has become increasingly acceptable to “dress down” in the work place. This trend has resulted in a workforce that no longer dresses the part of the professional that they want to become. Dressing for Success does not take a huge financial investment, but does take some thought as to how you can put your best foot forward.

The following tips can help you “see and be seen” as the consummate and professional that you are.

## Tips on Dressing for Success –

- **Take notice of upper management’s dress code.** Make a quick study of the way they dress. This is how you need to look if you would like to be at that level.
- **Dress for every workday like you would for an interview.** After all, you never know who you may meet. Especially when shadowing your mentor, dress as you would if you were the senior executive.
- **Jeans are never acceptable – period.** Unless you work at a company that has a very casual dress code, blue jeans should never be worn in the workplace. They give the appearance of leisure and not taking the job seriously.
- **Remember, tailored does not mean tight.** Professional does not mean provocative and conversely, clothing that is too tight or too loose gives the appearance of sloppiness.
- **Never lose your sense of personal style.** Do wear those clothes that are most flattering on you and those that give you the confidence to be the best you can be.

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## One Minute Ideas

### Streamline Your Tasks

You can save time by grouping administrative tasks throughout the week. Here are some strategies:

**Making phone calls** – Create a list of the people you need to call daily. Make all of your calls at one sitting. Once you get started, each call becomes easier and more efficient. Schedule your calls early in the morning, just before lunch, or at the end of your workday.

**Reviewing/Reading** – Whenever you leave the office, take some reading materials along with you. This way, when you are waiting for an appointment, waiting in line, or stuck in traffic, you can use this time to go through the materials. *Note:* Have a pen/pencil with you for making notations and/or reminders.

**Billing/Invoicing** – set up a time each week for client/customer billing, tracking, and invoicing. Once you get into a rhythm, it can save a lot of time.

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*“If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.”*  
~ Albert Einstein

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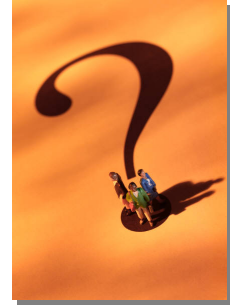
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## Managing Your Staff With Questions

Asking questions is a great way to get your staff involved, motivated, and engaged in their daily jobs. If you make this a part of your daily routine you'll be sending the message that their opinion really matters. In addition you may get some incredible ideas to help your company grow.

- ✓ What part of your job takes too long?
- ✓ Is there anything that caused you to waste your time in order to get a task completed?
- ✓ What else was wasted?
- ✓ What takes too many people in order to complete?
- ✓ Do you have any suggestions or ideas on new products, services, or ways to grow the company?
- ✓ If you owned the company what would you do differently?



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*"One who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; one who does not ask a question remains a fool forever."  
~ Chinese proverb*

## Coach Collaborative Improvement

Use the acronym **COACH** to help you remember some of the most important coaching behaviors:

**C**ollaborate – Work with team members to identify performance problems, set standards and performance objectives, and develop a plan for improved performance. Remember: All good coaches think in terms of how "we can" solve the problem.

**O**wn – Examine your personal behavior and accept some of the responsibility for the problem. Before you discuss the problem with your team member, ask yourself: "Did I make my expectations clear?" "Did I provide the proper training?" "Does the team member have the appropriate tools to do the job?"

**A**cknowledge – Recognize team members' achievements as well as their problems, feelings, and concerns. Acknowledging problems and concerns isn't the same as excusing unacceptable behavior or performance. *Example:* You should acknowledge a team member's difficulty in

juggling the responsibilities of both home and work. But you shouldn't accept the resulting chronic absenteeism or tardiness.

**C**ommunicate – This is probably the most important behavior and the one many team leaders seem to find the most difficult. Communication skills — including listening, questioning, and giving and receiving feedback — are critical for success. Coaches need to practice two-way communication daily and clarify expectations regularly.

**H**elp – You're not only a coach, but also an advisor, serving as a resource and a guide to further resources. In addition to giving help, you should also be seeking help from your team members. Solicit your team members' ideas. You'll be surprised at how creative and innovative people can be when you give them a chance.

~ *Improving Workplace Performance Through Coaching*, Karen Lawson. American Media, Des Moines, IA 50266.



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