Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC)
513 First Avenue West, Seattle Washington, 98119
Main: 206-352-2050 Fax: 206-352-2049
office@pprc.org www.pprc.org

Environmental mentoring is a partnership between two or more peers where one voluntarily shares recognized environmental experience with other entity(ies) having similar issues or challenges.

Implementing progressive and proactive improvements to reap environmental benefits -- such as reduced energy, water, or resource consumption -- can require significant resources and a steep "learning curve". Some organizations, especially those on tight budgets, are unable to invest or dedicate resources to such efforts without assistance. Environmental mentoring is an effective tool for bridging this resource gap.

The role of the mentor is to facilitate learning through instructing, coaching, modeling, and advising. Mentees learn how others achieve successes. Mentees also receive access to the tools and support needed to achieve their own successes. A few of the benefits for both parties are leveraged resources, and exposure to new ideas, knowledge, and best practices. The mentor also gains positive recognition as an environmental leader.

Environmental mentors have helped others address environmental barriers. These challenges range from minimal regulatory compliance and basic environmental management systems, to cutting-edge pollution prevention (P2) opportunities, technologies and initiatives. Some mentoring relationships remain very casual, while others are deeply entrenched. The length and scope of a partnership ranges from short, specific project(s) to very long-term relationships.

Who Can Participate and Benefit?

Mentor/mentee relationship are extremely varied in the number of participants, the types of business or industry areas, and subject matter. Partnering occurs between public-private, private-private, or even public-public entities. Partners may be businesses, non-profits and other non-government organizations (NGO), government agencies, trade associations, industry sector groups, cities or communities, and educational institutions.

How is Mentoring Accomplished?

Many different models and examples of environmental mentoring relationships have proven successful. Some relationships remain active for years, while others work together for a short time to achieve certain goals. A few examples of mentoring programs are:

- Consulting and/or coaching
- Associations and NGO facilitation
- Peer groups working around a common issue or initiative
- Internal mentoring (within an organization)

Where Can Mentoring be Applied?

Mentoring can be effective in almost any focus area. Specifically, mentoring can be useful in P2 opportunity assessments, environmental planning, management and compliance systems, evaluating or implementing new technologies, green purchasing, implementing best management practices, staff education and training, and other management areas.

This topic hub highlights some of the major issues and opportunities for fostering mentoring relationships keyed around environmental performance. Also, read on for examples of successful mentoring programs and links to additional resources.

Last Updated: 05/27/2008

The Topic Hub™ is a product of the Pollution Prevention Resource Exchange (P2RX™)

The Environmental Mentoring Topic Hub™ was developed by:

PPRC
Contact Michelle Gaither (PPRC)
206-352-2050 or mgaither@pprc.org

PPRC is a member of the Pollution Prevention Resource Exchange, a national network of regional information centers: NEWMOA (Northeast), WRRC (Southeast), GLRPPR (Great Lakes), ZeroWasteNet (Southwest), P2RIC (Plains), Peaks to Prairies (Mountain), WRPPN (Pacific Southwest), PPRC (Northwest).