

Topic Hub: Environmental Mentoring Subsection : Reasons for Change

Why Mentor?

Mentoring provides a low-risk, low-cost, and effective mechanism to assist peers and mentees with strategies for achieving better environmental and economical performance. Although benefits to those receiving mentorship, (e.g., the mentees), are more readily apparent than for the mentor, both stand to gain. The industry, surrounding community, and other environmental efforts may also benefit.

Perceived barriers to mentoring can include concerns over liability, competition, resource constraints and perception. Strategies for addressing these barriers are discussed in the "*Mentoring - Challenges*" section of this topic hub.

Benefits for the Mentee

Mentors with technical and managerial expertise can help mentee companies:

- Save time and money by avoiding 'reinventing the wheel'
- Gain access to personalized environmental expertise, usually for free or very low cost
- Spur and motivate environmental improvement
- Gain competency in technical issues and new technologies that reduce waste
- Secure future resource(s) for advice and ideas
- For customer-supplier or supplier-customer mentoring, build stronger and longer-term relationships

Benefits for the Mentor

Mentors realize benefits such as:

- Recognition as an environmental leader
- Improved community trust and reputation
- Professional development and pride, sense of responsibility, and for each individual mentor
- Increased knowledge and experience learned from assisting others in solving problems or implementing improvements
- Identify potential areas for improvement within the mentor company or entity

Additional benefits specific to government offices or staff that provide mentorship are:

- More effective means of ensuring compliance and use of best practices
- Building more trust with regulated entities
- Better understanding of the environmental issues small business face and subsequent incorporation of this information in policy and enforcement

Benefits to Industry and Environmental Issues

A specific industry sector, or environmental initiative (e.g., The Global Reporting Initiative) reaps benefits from mentoring. Benefits include:

- Greater, more united representation in regulatory and community issues
- Improved industry image to public and regulators
- Standardizing environmental expectations and practices throughout an industry
- Improved environmental performance and efficiency in an entire industry sector

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