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Challenges and perceived barriers to mentoring can include concerns over liability, cost, competition, belief that no assistance is needed, resource constraints, and sponsorship. A few potential solutions and alternative approaches are presented here to spur interest and participation.

Liability. Some fear that mentees might claim liabilities if a problem develops following mentor advice or assistance. Potential solutions include:

- Use disclaimers in all materials, correspondence and reports from the mentor to the mentee.
- Sign a clear contract or agreement up front with a disclaimer.

"It's proprietary." "We can't afford to lose any market share." The competition is always a concern. Giving away company or technology secrets, may give competitors an advantage and opportunity for increased market share. This is of special concern in low-profit-margin sectors. Alternative approaches include:

- Make an initial agreement that all parties can refuse to answer questions or provide information related to proprietary technologies or operations. Working together on more general or cross-industry management issues such as sustainability, environmental management systems, green procurement, takeback programs, etc., the group should not be risking any competitive advantage related to sector specific technologies, processes or trade secrets.
- If multiple partnerships are possible under the mentoring program, pair or group companies from different industries.
- Help businesses understand how the initiative can enhance the industry image and performance.

"We don't need help." Some businesses could benefit from mentoring, but are worried it will draw attention to a problem, or raise a regulatory or public relations red flag. Larger companies may assume that because of their size, the role of a mentor may be their only option. Alternative views or solutions include:

- Indirect mentoring via information sharing (e.g., case studies, success stories, and proven environmental benefits and cost savings, etc.), gives environmental incentives to mentee candidates.
- Solicit a proactive and credible third-party facilitator to contact potential mentees and offer mentoring in non-compliance related areas as an effective means of solving problems or improving operations.
- Inform large corporations that equal-sized or smaller corporations may have lessons to share regarding non-company specific environmental initiatives such as product stewardship or or green purchasing.
- Start off with internal mentoring to gain acceptance of the mentoring concept and show its potential for results.

"We can't commit the resources right now". Businesses perceive time, staff and money as barriers to mentoring. Potential solutions include:

- Initially define expectations of mentor and mentee, time commitments and duration of mentoring relationship; offer flexibility to suit needs and expected availability.
- Address how changes to these commitments, such as an extension in end date, will be handled.
- Offer less resource intensive mentoring interactions such as phone or email, rather than on-site meetings.
- Use proven mentoring examples that yielded progress and results, and are justifiable in terms of increased efficiency, increased revenue, improved environmental performance, etc.

Credible sponsorship. The Institute for Corporate Environmental Mentoring found that the sponsor of a mentoring program shapes how the program is perceived by mentees and influences the degree of participation by mentees. Therefore, whether the sponsor is a company, government, non-profit, or other, a few ideas include:

- Ensure the ability, capability, and credibility of the mentors and facilitators.
- If companies hesitate to participate due to government sponsorship and the enforcement aspect, governments can take more of a convener role and rely on companies, credible NGOs, or other professionals to manage a program.

Nomenclature. The term "Mentoring" may conjure up negative images of liability, or commitment of too many resources, or additional hierarchies.

- Allow flexibility in defining and implementing the mentoring relationship, to suit the participants needs.

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- In some mentoring-type relationships involving partnering or networking, the term is not necessary.

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