

Remote Integration Program: A Plan for Alternative Mentorship

Kirby Attwell, Master of Arts Candidate

Human Dimensions of Organizations, The University of Texas at Austin

Introduction



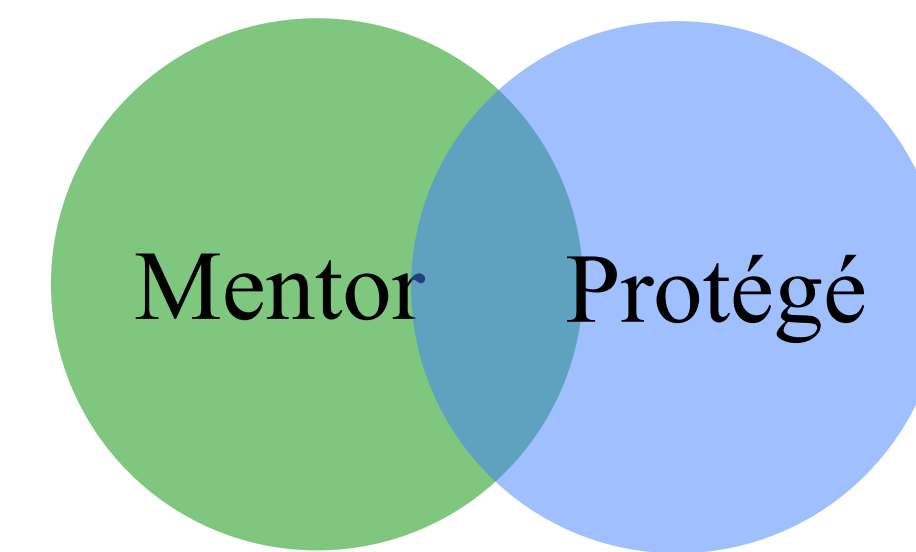
CoStar is experiencing a turnover rate of over 33% in the first year after hiring. The industry average for first year turnover is 16%.

- A new sales force structure is in the implementation phase in some of the larger offices, but is not applicable to remotely located account executives.
- 20% of the sales force works alone, geographically remote from a CoStar office or coworkers.
- Top three reasons for departure are cited (per 2013 exit interviews):
 - 1) Compensation
 - 2) Lack of support
 - 3) Fear-based culture
- CoStar management initially determined a mentorship program would be beneficial. This project looks only Mentorship as it might apply to remotely located account executives.

Methods

- Research for this project was primarily qualitative consisting of conversations and interviews conducted on site and by telephone.
- Quantitative data was compiled and supplied by the CoStar Human Resources Department.

Project



Traditional Mentorship is characterized by an intense personal relationship between the mentor and protégé. The relationship is unstructured. Mentor and Protégé generally share similar interests and backgrounds that may or may not pertain to business (Chau, 1992).

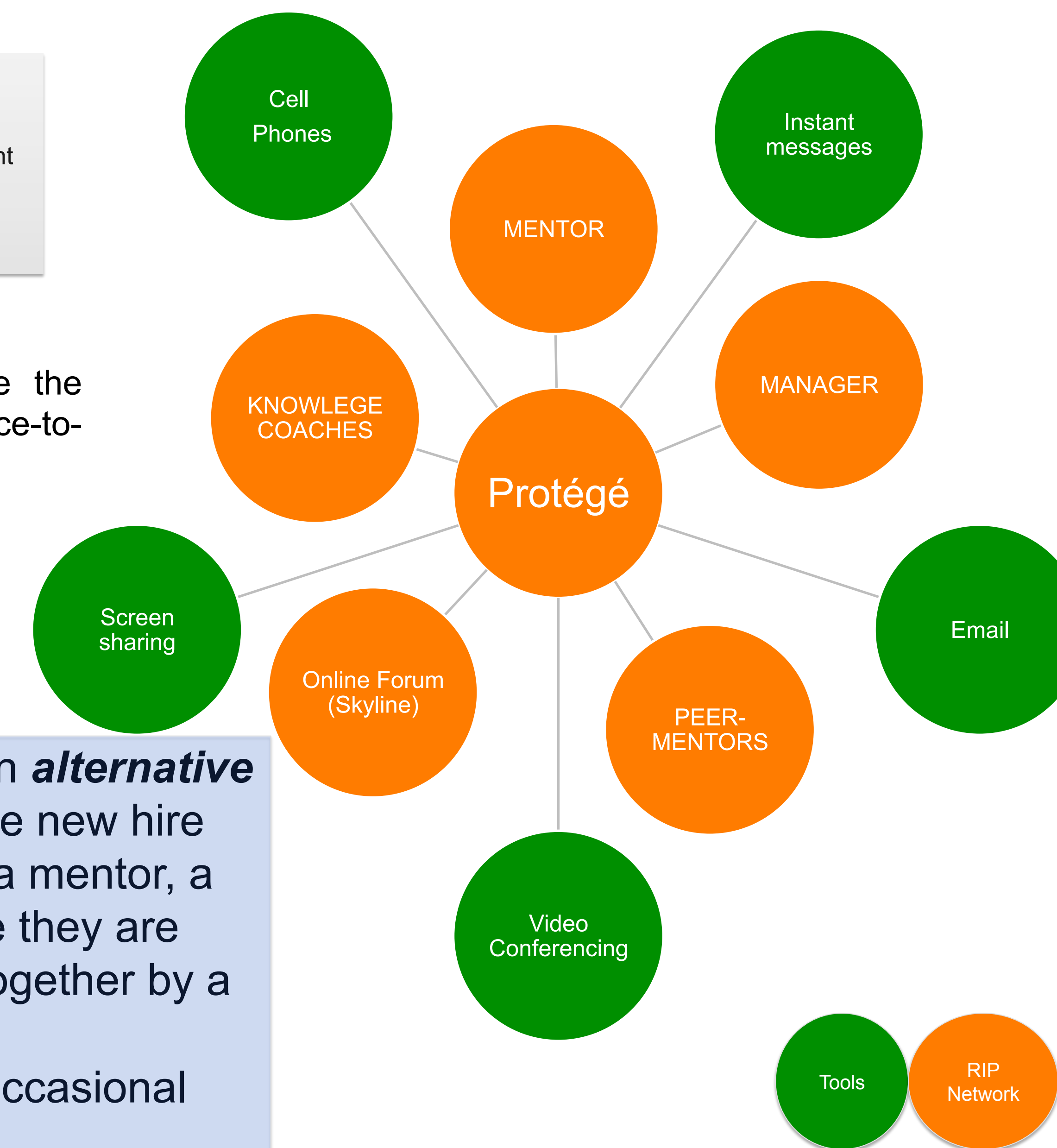
Mentoring cultures have higher levels of organizational commitment which yields less turnover (Payne, 2005)

Advantages of Mentorship

Protégés	Mentors	Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Counseling • Security • Shortened Learning Curve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Practice/Exposure • Satisfaction • Self Awareness • Improved Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Retention • Organizational Commitment • Framework for Change • Better Knowledge Sharing

The mission of the **Remote Integration Program** is to incorporate the advantages of a traditional mentoring relationship into a scenario where face-to-face interaction is irregular.

The **Remote Integration Program (RIP)** is an exercise in **alternative mentorship**. The RIP is a structured program in which the new hire will regularly interact with **multiple coworkers** including a mentor, a peer-mentor, manager and knowledge coaches. Because they are remote to each other, this support structure will be held together by a **web of technology** (phone, email, screen sharing, video conferencing, and online forums) and supplemented by occasional travel.



Recommendations

- **Implement a structured system** for mentors, peer-mentors, and protégés with definitive goals including time frames, goals, and frequency of communication.
- **Qualify and train mentors.** Assign them to protégés before new hire training.
- **Assign peer-mentors** before arrival at training.
- **Create and make available** a network of **knowledge coaches**.
- **Train intensively on the technologies** (screen sharing, video conferencing, Learning Management System, etc.).
- **Keep management engaged** and involved with accountability.
- **Make mentorship a key part of professional development** for mentors and protégés alike.

Literature cited

Chao, Georgia T, Walz, Pat M, and Gardner, Philip D. "Formal and Informal Mentorships - A Comparison on Mentoring Functions and Contrast with Nonmentored Counterparts". *Personnel Psychology*, Vol 45 Issue 3, p619-636, (Autumn 1992)

Moody, JoAnn. *Mentoring Early-Stage Faculty at Medical, Law, & Business Schools and Colleges & Universities*. www.diversityoncampus.com. JoAnne Moody (2010)

Payne, Stephanie C and Huffman, Ann H. "A Longitudinal Examination of the Influences of Mentoring and Organizational Commitment". *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol 48 Issue 1 p158-168. (February 2005)

Stone, Florence. *The Mentoring Advantage*. Dearborne Trade Publishing. (2004).

Rothwell, William J, and Chee, Peter. *Becoming an Effective Mentor*. McGraw-Hill (2013)

Acknowledgments

My father, My sister and my MKP brothers,
for your unconditional love and support.
My 2014 HDO Cohort
The Faculty and Staff of the HDO program for creating this opportunity.
Particular thanks to Art Markman, Amy Ware, and Clay Spinuzzi
for the extra nudge when I needed it

Further information

Kirby Attwell | Master of Arts, 2014
Human Dimension of Organizations
Cell: 713.530.8033
Email: kattwell@utexas.edu