Remote Integration Program: A Plan for Alternative Mentorship

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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 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
- Coaching
- Counseling
- Security
- Structured Learning Curve

Mentors
- Leadership Practice
- Exposure
- Self-Awareness
- Improved Performance

Organization
- 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 were 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.

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Further information
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Literature cited


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