



(U) The Value of Mentoring

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(U) Look in any bookstore or reading list these days and you are sure to find a plethora of materials devoted to mentoring. People have an innate desire to better themselves and to make a difference to the people around them, both in their personal and professional lives. Within SID, skill and career development are important for each of us, as well as for SID as an organization. But how do we advance development? Formal mentoring programs are great, but there are many things we do on a regular basis which also fall into that "thing" we call mentoring.

(U) How did you learn what you know about SIGINT?

(U//FOUO) Perhaps...

- your supervisor enrolled you in some basic SIGINT courses;
- a colleague sat sidesaddle with you and walked you through the functions of a particular database;
- a friend unraveled a complex acronym-oriented sentence for you;
- a language analyst helped you understand the meaning of some foreign language jargon;
- your team chief helped you write your first internal resume; or
- a peer shared with you their worst and best first few days at NSA.

(U) How are you sharing what you know with others?

(U//FOUO) Do you...

- show the new person in your office what databases and accounts they need to work effectively?
- provide budding linguists with in-house resources and guidance to help perfect their language skills?
- share a particular target trend you've noticed with a new Intelligence Analyst? or
- recommend good external assignments to someone who is trying to plan their career 5 years down the road?

(U) This is mentoring?

(U) Sure it is - sharing knowledge and providing guidance and counsel to a lesser experienced colleague. And it's a low cost investment and rewarding way to:

- build essential skills and knowledge;
- enhance leadership at all levels of the organization;
- increase productivity and innovation;
- provide greater agility in responding to opportunities by shortening the learning curve; and
- foster teamwork and break down barriers.

(U) Why is this important to you and to me?

(U//FOUO) Because tomorrow's success depends on you and me! And we need to...

- welcome new employees into SID and show them the ropes. Let them know "the good, the bad, and the ugly."
- quickly bring colleagues up to speed. With today's fast-paced, continuous technological advancements, and the complexity of targets and the global environment, we can't afford the time it would take for every analyst to learn things on his/her own.

- capture today's knowledge base, develop the work force of tomorrow, and shape leaders to ensure the future success of SIGINT!

(U//FOUO) To learn more about mentoring, I recommend you visit the Agency's [Mentoring Network website](#). In the future I will share articles with you on mentoring efforts currently underway in the SIGINT Directorate, how to find a mentor in SID, and other related information. In the interim, I encourage each of you to mentor others, seek out mentors, share your knowledge, and learn from each other!

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