



The Business Case for Youth Mentoring The Value of Mentoring Youth to the Business Community

By David Mead

*[Author's Note: I typically write about the issues facing business owners and C-level executives. While some of you might be confused about the linkage with the topic of mentoring, I maintain that mentoring young people **is** a critically important business issue! – Dave Mead]*

As we enter the season of giving, I thought it might be appropriate to share an article about giving back. Many of us have long been concerned about the lack of role models and adult guidance for many of our youth and it has been demonstrated that youth who have a formal mentoring relationship do better in school, have better graduation rates, have lower incidence of substance abuse, and lower incidence of crime, not to mention an overall better future. As I have become familiar with the statistics about the value of mentoring, I found that the results are compelling. Mentoring benefits not only the individual and the community, but also employees and businesses.

Most successful people know the value of mentors - I know I have been fortunate to have had several key mentors over the course of my life and career.

One of the things my mother used to say: "If something concerns you, stop whining about it and do something to make it better." Years ago, I was a Big Brother for a number of years and it was very rewarding. I saw the impact of my "Little Brother" firsthand. But, I also realized that there were far more young people needing mentors whose needs were unmet. In Colorado, almost 300,000 young people aged 5 to 22 need a mentoring relationship. Currently, fewer than 20,000 have an engaged mentor - **Less than 7% of the need is being met.**

I joined the Board of [Mentor Colorado](#) (Colorado Mentoring Partnership) in 2014. Mentor Colorado is the support organization for the 65+ youth mentoring organizations across Colorado (like Big Brothers Big Sisters, Denver Urban Scholars, Gunnison Valley Partners, etc.) to help them in scaling their activities with the adoption of best practices in recruiting, training, and supporting mentoring relationships. There are mentoring partnerships in 26 states. Colorado is one of the most recent states to form an organization. The models Colorado is following are the organizations in Minnesota, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania which have dramatically increased the number of quality mentoring relationships.

MENTOR (The National Mentoring Partnership) and Ernst and Young sponsored a 2015 report, [The Business Case for Mentoring : Mentoring at the Crossroads of Education, Business and Community](#), which demonstrates the value of mentoring to the individuals, the community, and to business. As the report states it, "Mentoring is changing the trajectory of thousands of young people's lives." Especially in this period of talent scarcity, there is an increasing need to focus on

workforce development – and that starts with making sure our young people are equipped to join the workforce.

The case for business involvement in mentoring is simple. Mentoring adds value to individuals, business, and the community

Value to the individual and community. Some of the benefits to the individual and the community include:

- **Better school performance.** Improved attendance, higher graduation rates, and more likely to go on to college or learn a trade
- **Less Substance Abuse.** Mentored youth are less likely to start using illegal drugs and alcohol.
- **Lower Crime rate.** Fewer disciplinary problems and lower incidence of criminal behavior
- **Better jobs.** Better jobs and much less likely to be dependent on entitlement programs

Value to companies and employees. Key reasons companies and employees engage in youth mentoring:

- **Fostering employee engagement, satisfaction and retention.** Today's employees are strongly attracted to companies that are purpose-driven and that offer opportunities for engagement.
- **Cultivating and developing the future workforce.** Prepare a more productive workforce
- **Supporting vibrant communities** (which include your customers)
- **Branding**
 - Improve your company's image in the community
 - Increase community awareness of your company's mission

Mentor Colorado can help your company get started. Many companies have a fragmented approach to not-for-profit activities. Other companies may not know how to get started. Mentor Colorado is helping sponsoring companies with the development of mentoring programs, training, and organizing mentoring activities for their employees.

GET ENGAGED! Become a sponsoring organization and make a difference.

If you would like more information about how you and your organization can get involved, please contact Executive Director, [Hannah Krieger](#) or [Dave Mead](#)

Remember [Colorado Gives Day](#) is December 4th.