

Mentoring Management in Public Administration Performance Development

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Abstract

The performance of public administration is the guarantor of public management based on knowledge and adaptability of economic and social conditions to the modern requirements of society. The accumulation of ideas, experiences and performance achieved so far in public administration can be improved by providing public mentoring? The answer to this question will lead to the conceptualisation of mentoring for the public sector as a way to achieve performance in the public sector, through sectoral participation in individual and collective performance development and thus the professionalisation of the public sector. Fostering the development of skills and emphasising qualities of managers and non-managers will result in the shaping of individual professional identity and organisational culture identity. Optimisation of mentoring programmes is required by the flow and mobility of staff in public administration, who can achieve performance by adapting the mentoring process to the demands imposed by social, economic, cultural, political and professional conditions.

Keywords: public sector, public management, mentoring, performance, public administration

JEL Classification: H83, K23

1. Introduction

King Odysseus, during his absence while away at war, appointed his son Thelemachus a "mentor". The Greek origin of the word 'mentor' has been preserved to this day.

In the first half of the 20th century and in this area of mentoring, the USA is also laying the foundations and developing this phenomenon, initially using it in the economic and industrial sectors. The development and the economic, social, demographic and professional complexity of the workforce quickly made this method necessary and it was quickly adopted and adapted for other sectors, namely education, respect of human rights, management and of course the business sector².

In the UK, mentoring programmes for public administration are mainly organised in the communications sector for civil servants who are in that job or who want to be in communications.

2. The current framework of the mentoring concept

Professional requirements and special conditions for managers and non-managers have been driven by the rapid evolution of technologies and the economic development of society³. Thus, every employee must ensure professional training and professional development that will propel him or her forward and participate in ensuring the performance of the public sector, regardless of its field of activity. Training and self-training courses, exchanges of experience and work visits must form part of employees' individual and collective training and personal development programmes, depending on the post they hold and the career path they wish to follow⁴.

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² On some developments in the economic and investment sector, read: Manole Decebal Bogdan, *The Law of the Digital Economy a Reality for Legal Relations in the Future - New International Investment Protection*, in „International Investment Law Journal”, Volume 3, Issue 2, July 2023, pp. 146-155; Cristina Elena Popa Tache, *About the Human Rights and Consumer Protection in the Digital Age of Digital Services Act 2022 or what Aspects Interested Investors Should Pay Attention to*, in „International Investment Law Journal”, Volume 3, Issue 2, July 2023, pp. 121-132; or Bogdan-Radu Herzog, *The Removal of Economic Barriers in the Process of Social Deconstruction. Legal Precedents Created by Prosbul, the VOC and Loi le Chapelier*, „International Investment Law Journal”, Volume 2, Issue 2, July 2022, pp. 127-136.

³ See some considerations in Ionel Didea, Diana Maria Ilie, *(R)evolution of the insolvency law in a globalized economy*, in „Juridical Tribune - Tribuna Juridica”, Volume 9, Issue 1, March 2019, pp. 91-112; Ana-Maria Groza, *The status of civil servants - between aspirations towards professional excellence and political interference*, in „Juridical Tribune - Tribuna Juridica”, Volume 8, Issue 2, June 2018, pp. 502-514 and Nina Gumzej, *Data protection for the digital age: comprehensive effects of the evolving law of accountability*, in „Juridical Tribune - Tribuna Juridica”, Volume 2, Issue 2, December 2012, pp. 82-106.

⁴ See in this regards: Chivu, I. et al., *Human Resources Management in SMEs - Contemporary Trends*, Economica Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 75 et seq.; Constantin, Ticu & Stoica-Constantin, Ana, *Human Resources Management*, European Institute, Iași, 2002, p. 121; Deaconu, A. et al., *Human Resources Management*, Bucharest Publishing House, 2004, p. 58 et seq.; Manolescu, Aurel,

Within the public administration, training and professional development programmes are provided through participation in training or specialist courses, following the recommendations in the annual evaluation reports of each official. With adequate budgeting and increased interest from both official and internal employees, this training requirement is met and ensured. The practical and motivational applicability of the professional training is not always pursued, which leads at some point to a maladaptation of theoretical knowledge in the practice of work, but also to personal inefficiency of the employee.

Ensuring that the public administration has a programme of similar practices, experiences and information of employees similar or not similar to the position held, will determine the usefulness and adaptability to performance appraisal methods, as well as non-formal motivation.

The applicability of mentoring in the public sector is present in the education sector for pre-university teaching posts/positions.

Administrative practice has shown that a feeble but limited attempt has been made with this method of mentoring, through the applicability of the "public manager" concept. Although legislated in all respects, the implementation of this concept in various public entities showed that they were not prepared for the support provided by this specialist who was and is trained to international standards. Reluctance from the administrative segment has intersected with the professional drive of young public managers, which has led to the phenomenon of mentoring being isolated from the outset.

Currently, the complexity of Romanian society and the development of public administration, by aligning with European standards, requires a new approach to the concept of mentoring. Mentoring must become a criterion in the evaluation of public administration performance, ensuring a legislative, logistical and motivational comfort that will determine the achievement of indicators in each field of activity.

3. Subjects of the mentoring process in the public sector

Mentoring programmes for public sector employees can be provided at institutional, inter-institutional, local, national or international level. Regardless of the location of the positions of the employees involved in the mentoring programmes, whether internal or organisationally external, the subjects of the mentoring are: the mentor and the mentee.

The mentor can be a manager or non-manager who provides encouragement, advice and career support to the mentee. The mentor will show the mentee the steps to follow in achieving individual and institutional performance, as he/she is recognised for his/her theoretical, practical training, and institutional and inter-institutional recognised skills and competences. But, within the mentoring programme, the mentor is also the beneficiary of a process of updating and refreshing theoretical, technological and educational information, enjoying recognition and strengthening of professional and mentoring reputation.

The mentee can be the manager or non-manager, as a direct beneficiary of the mentoring programme, who enters the programme to develop and channel their professional training and find their educational and professional motivation and motivation to perform in a way that ensures public sector performance. They must discover themselves in terms of career aspirations and skills discovery.

Mentor and mentee are the subjects who can and should influence and accept each other within the mentoring programme, providing a confidential and temporary space to be supported and accepted/appreciated and to communicate and understand the activation/reactivation or discovery/rediscovery of the professional self.

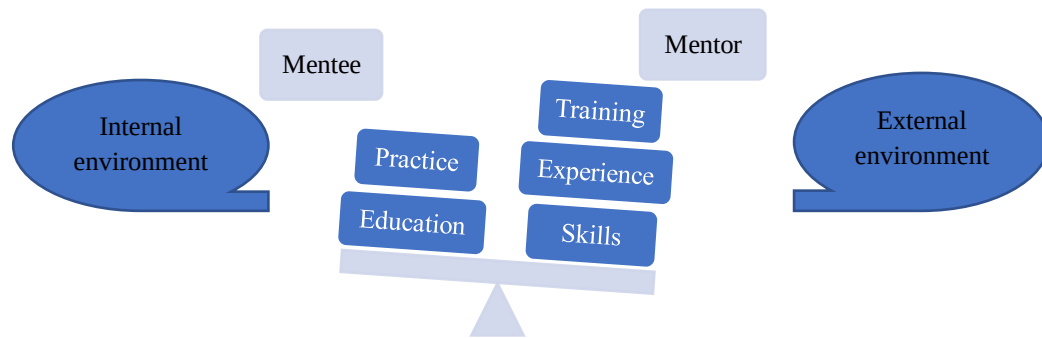


Figure no. 1. The "mentor-mentee" set

Source: author

The action and relational interaction between the subjects of the mentoring programme will be concretized in different stages/phases, namely initiation, cultivation, facilitation, reflection and redefinition. These stages/phases will determine the relationship stages and roles, including mutual expectations.

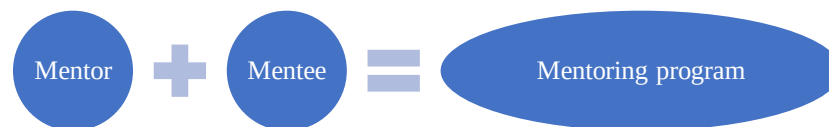


Figure no. 2. Outline of the mentoring concept

Source: author

The mentor will be appointed by the head/manager of the institution and will have the task of supporting the employee who wants to understand the organisational culture to which he/she belongs, to understand his/her role on his/her career path and to be a role model in his/her career.

4. Mentoring relationships

Interactivity in the mentoring process leads to mentoring and relationship building, which will lay the foundation for mutual trust and a personal and collegial relationship based primarily on confidentiality, respect, trust, support and motivation.

Mentoring relationships are time-dependent and temporary. The time given to provide mentoring is determined by the 'openness' of the subjects in the relationship process, as well as the awareness of changes and information exchanges.

Career advancement and the psycho-social profile of the mentees determine a relational system, which is imposed by the individual development of each one.

The mentoring relationship is based on information, which will facilitate the challenge to think and shape the professional vision with optimal resources both economically and in terms of intentions and expectations. Thus, the mentoring relationship will be dictated by the level, stage and manner of communication, and the dedication and commitment that each subject is willing and interested in supporting and relating to each other.

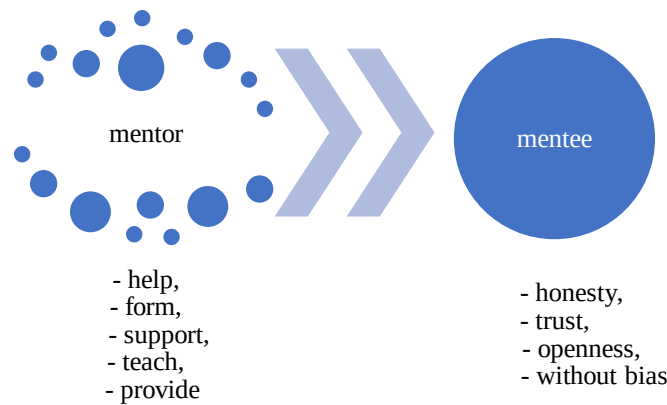


Figure no. 3. Mentoring relationships

Source: author

Although at first glance the mentor-mentee relationship is identified as a stand-alone relationship, it cannot be separated from the organisation. Thus, the influence of individual performance influences organisational performance and vice versa, which requires recruitment, training, development and management systems geared to success. The human resources available to engage in this relational process in public administration must have individual planning that is integrated with institutional planning in terms of motivation and identification of new skills and talents, competences and responsibilities. Self-development and career decisions in this relationship depend on individual and organisational values. Training, adherence and adaptation to the relationship system is important in achieving results or failures, and becomes a priority for managers and non-managers.

In public administration, management or executive staff is qualified and tends directly or indirectly towards the development of organisational culture.

The relationship system identifiable in the management of mentoring in public administration is influenced by the relationships that are established by the mentoring needs, during the course of the mentoring planning activities, during the mentoring programme and in the mentoring evaluation process.

5. The usefulness of mentoring in public administration

The dynamics of the flow of staff in public administration, as well as the complexity of the work in each area of the public sector, require recognition of professional, theoretical, practical and motivational gaps. Those involved in public mentoring need to provide a channel/channels of information to facilitate knowledge transfer and the development of specific professional skills. Regardless of the age of the parties involved in mentoring, there must be an identification of mutual needs and a mutual acceptance of the transfer of information, ensuring the promotion and adaptability of different generations of staff, regardless of the category of staff.

The usefulness of mentoring in public administration is influenced by the needs of the mentee of the mentoring programme. Thus, psychological and professional needs will require the examination and causality of future actions included in a set/sets of existing procedures in each public entity.

For public administration, this concept can be designed, structured, applied and used as part of an ongoing programme of formal and non-formal training for managers and non-managers, following the identification of new educational elements based on the experience and motivation of those involved. Mentoring can influence the training, development and improvement of human resources in public administration and support the achievement of public administration and/or managerial or non-managerial performance.

The mentoring process can have positive effects on mentees, mentors and public entities and thus contribute to meeting the needs of the community. The rapid acceptance of mentoring in the private sector leads us to believe that it will be well adapted quickly and operationally in public administration. Its efficiency and effectiveness, compared to traditional training methods, justifies its adaptation to administrative requirements and will allow employers a practical and sustained system to legalise and increase employee motivation.

Of course, like any activity, mentoring can also have negative effects, with adverse influence on the parties involved. One of the negative aspects is imposed by the existing management regime and institutional policy practised by managers. The self-interest of the subjects involved is another element that can negatively influence the success of the mentoring action.

The development of mentoring management in public administration will be required by the development of the institutional culture and the implementation of a strategy developed for this purpose. There will have to be a link between organisational strategy and mentoring strategy, becoming part of the institutional process. Managers will join in and get involved, while also establishing a long-term relationship system with employees, so as to develop specific procedures, processes, techniques or methods for employee development. Through management based on mentoring programmes, managers will achieve sector performance and achieve positive organisational visibility and organisational culture development.

Fostering the development of skills and emphasising the qualities of managers and non-managers will result in the shaping of individual professional identity and the identity of organisational culture.

6. Conclusions

Mentoring management must be linked to organisational management in local government and employees must be supported to participate in mentoring programmes. Recognising mentoring as a method of achieving performance will systematise institutional perspectives and require managers to manage it.

Mentoring in public administration can be seen as a managerial process oriented towards individual career development as well as institutional development. Such a managerial mentoring process requires a mentor with theoretical and practical experience, with psycho-educational skills to help and motivate individual and institutional performance orientation.

Mentoring management in public administration can be provided through managers/non-managers providing career development counselling, implementing career monitoring programmes or a mixed career counselling and management system that ensures individual success and institutional performance. It can "save" public administration from plateauing, from oblivion and from generalising the concept that "it just works".

Optimisation of mentoring management is required by the flow and mobility of staff in public administration, which can achieve performance through the adaptability of the mentoring process to the demands imposed by social, economic, cultural, political and professional conditions, as well as by the conduct and demands of citizens towards public administration.

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