Mentoring: Everyone's Favorite Idea Nobody's Program Transcript Summary

Transcript

https://otter.ai/u/1hh1OOrOcWlv8owWb3TRqFetQ-4?view=summary

Overview

The group discussed how to design mentoring programs with shared ownership, clear expectations, and a defined purpose.

Shared Ownership

- Mentoring should not rest solely with Learning and Development or HR; leaders and the business must own participation, protected time, and ongoing support.
- Leadership involvement should include nominating potential mentors, confirming capacity, and making mentoring part of role expectations where appropriate.

Program Design

- Programs can use voluntary participation, a finite term, and structured guidance while preserving an organic relationship.
- Match based on development needs and mentor strengths, rather than personal preference alone. Mentors may be nominated, but should agree to participate.
- The mentee should drive the agenda; mentors can help clarify goals when needed. A kickoff, written expectations, and a closing review can support the partnership.

Open Questions

- How should organizations recognize and protect mentors' time, including whether mentoring belongs in KPIs or performance expectations?
- Which teams should own each part of a mentoring program, and how should programs adapt to different roles and career stages?

Action Items

- Rework the mentoring action map to add an end-of-program celebration and mentor handoff, plus a postmortem or exit interview to capture lessons learned and improvements. (@Shannon Tipton)

Outline

Program Ownership

- **Shannon** introduced the challenge of mentoring programs losing momentum when responsibility is placed entirely on L&D or HR.
- Participants discussed shared ownership across leadership, the business, and program facilitators, including capacity and protected work time.

Matching and Participation

- Participants considered matching mentees to mentors based on development needs and areas of mentor strength.
- **Shannon** described using **Mentor Scout** to collect profiles and suggest potential matches.
- The group discussed voluntary participation, leadership nominations, and avoiding assumptions that all mentees or mentors are ready at a given time.

Partnership Expectations

- **Victoria** emphasized that mentees should drive the agenda, with mentors helping clarify goals when needed.
- The group discussed kickoff guidance, written expectations, meeting cadence, communication channels, and mentee responsibility for preparation and follow-through.
- A finite term, closing review, celebration, and possible handoff to another mentor were discussed as ways to conclude a partnership while supporting continued development.

Recognition and Evaluation

- Participants raised mentor recognition, performance expectations, and practical ways to account for mentoring time.
- **Andrew** described an organizational example where senior leaders were evaluated on developing the next generation and helped transfer client relationships and work.
- The group noted that mentoring programs need sustained leadership support and clear ownership to avoid losing momentum.