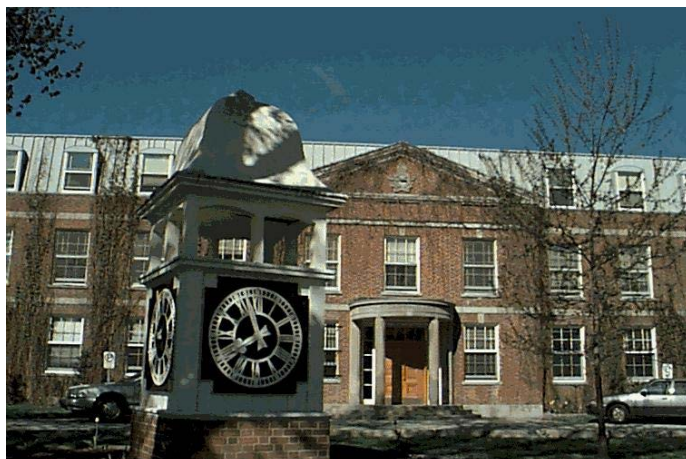


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## USING MENTORING TO STRENGTHEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NAVAL LOGISTICS OFFICERS

Lieutenant-Commander J.S.F. Turcotte

**JCSP 40**

***Exercise Solo Flight***

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**USING MENTORING TO STRENGTHEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
NAVAL LOGISTICS OFFICERS**

By Lieutenant-Commander J.S.F. Turcotte

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## INTRODUCTION

The benefits of mentoring have been tested and proven in the private sector. The widespread implementation of mentoring programs is a testament to their effectiveness. “According to the Institute for Corporate Productivity, more than half of all businesses with greater than 5,000 employees and nearly 70% of Fortune 500 companies offer formalized mentoring programs”.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, the military is interested in mentoring. Companies who make effective use of mentoring relationships can enhance corporate recruitment and retention efforts, help to bring new hires up to speed, support diversity initiatives, enhance employee satisfaction and promotion success, support strategic succession planning, and improve communication and knowledge transfer within organizations.<sup>2</sup> There is little scepticism that well-executed mentoring programs produce excellent results.

Not being oblivious to programs that prove successful in the private sector, “the CF, more than ever, realizes the importance of providing leadership development. One of the proven methods of leadership development is mentoring”.<sup>3</sup> Even though the benefits of mentoring are proven, the Canadian Military has been slow to implement formal mentorship programs. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and the Naval Logistics Officer

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<sup>1</sup> Toddi Gutner, “Finding anchors in the storm: Mentors,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 27 2009.

<sup>2</sup> W. Brad Johnson, and Gene R. Andersen, "FORMAL MENTORING IN THE U. S. MILITARY," *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 113-114.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Lagacé-Roy and LCol Janine Knackstedt, *Mentoring Handbook* (Ottawa: Canadian Defence Academy, 2007), 2.

(NLO) occupation does not currently have a mentoring program but would benefit greatly from implementing one.

This paper examines the benefits of mentoring, how they apply in a military context, how establishing a formal mentoring program for the Naval Logistics Officer (NLO) Military Occupation would be of benefit, and describes what a mentoring program for NLO could look like.

## **PART 1: DEFINING MENTORING**

### **Mentoring vs. Coaching**

Well-managed companies and public organisation pay close attention to the development of their human resources. They handle human resource development as part of a larger system of performance management that includes performance appraisals, formal training, and rewards. In the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), a similar formal process is used. For many individuals, concepts of mentorship and coaching are sometimes used as if they mean the same thing. In the military structure, institutional leaders often see supervisors as playing the role of mentors towards their subordinates, as they lead them on a day-to-day basis. The RCN interprets mentoring as being the education and development of subordinates falling within the roles and responsibilities of a divisional officer.<sup>4</sup> However, this interpretation on mentoring is incomplete as it refers

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<sup>4</sup> Royal Canadian Navy, *Guide to the Divisional System* (RDIMS # 308459, 10 December 2013)

mainly to the coaching aspect of mentoring. It is essential to note the clear delineation between the act of coaching and the act of mentoring.

Coaching is a fragment of the leadership role specifically aimed at nurturing and sustaining performance.<sup>5</sup> It is the activity “through which managers work with subordinates to foster skill development, impart knowledge, and inculcate values and behaviours that will help them achieve organizational goals and prepare them for more challenging assignments”.<sup>6</sup> For example, during the Head of Department training phase at sea, the ship’s logistics officer acts as a coach to ensure the trainee develops the abilities and knowledge to eventually replace him or her. Therefore, coaching becomes a by-product of performance appraisal, as it takes place in the course of everyday normal business or whenever the officer sees a way to improve his or her subordinates’ performance.

Mentoring is that part of the leadership role that has learning (competence, proficiency, skill, know-how, wisdom) as its primary outcome.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the scope of mentoring is vastly greater than coaching. “It is about guiding others in their personal quest for growth through learning”.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, coaching remains only a small subset of mentoring. Hence, a mentor performs two main functions during a relationship: career

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<sup>5</sup> Chip R. Bell, and Marshall Goldsmith, *Managers as Mentors: Building Partnerships for Learning* (San Francisco: Berrett Koehler, 2013), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Harvard Business School, *Harvard Business Essentials: Coaching and Mentoring: How to Develop Top Talent and Achieve Stronger*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press Books, July 2004), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Bell and Goldsmith, *Managers as Mentors...*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Harvard Business School, *Harvard Business Essentials...*, 1.

functions and psychosocial functions. In broad terms, “career functions are those aspect that enhance learning the ropes and preparing for advancement in an organization”.<sup>9</sup> The psychological functions are those aspects of a relationship that enhance a sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness in a professional role.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, mentoring is not only limited to the development of conventional abilities or behaviours, but addresses the whole person and his or her career.<sup>11</sup> A mentor relationship has different dynamic than a supervisory coaching relationship, as the elements of performance review for formal evaluations are absent. In a mentor relationship, performance is one aspect, and it is reviewed uniquely through a constructive lens, with no bearing on an individual’s official PER.

In the CAF, supervisors do take on the role of training their subordinates, this however is not mentoring, it is simply one aspect of mentoring. In supervisor, subordinate relationships, the primary role of the supervisor is mission success. In mentor mentee relationships, the goal is supporting the mentee with his or her career progression.

### **Purpose of mentoring**

Given the benefits of mentoring, one would think all members should be mandated into a mentoring program. This, however, would be a mistake as mentoring should not be made mandatory. On the contrary, the decision to enter into a mentoring

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>10</sup> G. Joseph Kopser, “Mentoring in the Military: Not everybody gets it.” *Military Review* 82, no. 6 (November 2002): 42.

<sup>11</sup> Harvard Business School, *Harvard Business Essentials...*, 77.

relationship proves most effective when it is a voluntary act. The decision to be mentored must come intrinsically from a desire to do better. Unlike being coached, which is a necessary part of receiving essential skills training to do an occupation, being mentored is a higher, more complete, well rounded development of the whole person. Individuals who seek to be mentored tend to possess an internal locus of control, be high self-monitoring, emotionally stable, ambitious, and comfortable with authority figures.<sup>12</sup> Although mentoring is nice because it helps to develop individuals in holistic way, the coaching aspect is essential as this is the training needed to do the job on a basic level. Mentoring takes individuals to the next level, but for this they must be willing participants. If one is unwilling to be coached, this prevents them from doing their jobs. Mentoring allows them to do their jobs better. There will always be people who are happy with the status quo, mentoring most benefits individuals who desire to be more than average.

## **PART 2: HOW IS MENTORING BENEFICIAL**

### **Managing top performers**

In any organization, top performers are considered to be rare and valuable assets. Successful organisations recognize that they can't develop their talent in a vacuum. In fact, the growth of organisation often depends on having the right kind of talent, with appropriate competencies and experience.<sup>13</sup> On the topic of how to develop decision

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<sup>12</sup> Bill Wild, "Understanding Mentoring: Implications for the Canadian Forces" (The Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, The Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, 2002), 17.

makers, former U.S. president Eisenhower once said “Be around people making decisions. Those officers who achieved the top positions of leadership were around decision makers, who served as their mentors”.<sup>14</sup> Eisenhower knew what he was talking about, as he was himself the successful product of great mentoring.

### **Mentoring Successes**

In his youth, Eisenhower’s military career was going nowhere. In fact, staff officers assessed Eisenhower as being unexceptional. Fortunately, Major General Fox Conner took him under his umbrella and started to mentor him. Eisenhower described “life with General Conner as a sort of graduate school in military affairs and the humanities, leavened by a man who was experienced in his knowledge of men and their conduct”.<sup>15</sup> Through advice and counselling, Conner guided Eisenhower’s study of hundreds of key military texts, which quickly developed the young officer’s acumen in devising strategy.<sup>16</sup> Conner remained an important mentor in Eisenhower’s life. As a high performer under great mentoring, LCol Eisenhower went from relative obscurity to the rank of supreme allied commander within three years and eventually to the position of thirty-fourth president of the United States is a testament, at least to the important role of mentorship.

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<sup>13</sup> Margaret Butteriss, *Coaching Corporate MVPs* (Mississauga, ON: Right Management, 2008), 11.

<sup>14</sup> E.F. Puryear, *American Generalship: Character is Everything: The Art of Command* (Novato, California, USA: Presidio Press, Inc. 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At ease: Stories I tell to friends* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 187.

<sup>16</sup> David S. Lyle, and John Z. Smith, "The Effect of High-Performing Mentors on Junior Officer Promotion in the US Army," *Journal Of Labor Economics* 32, no. 2 (April 2014): 240.



Understandably, not all mentor-protégé relationship will be as successful as in Eisenhower's case. Evidently, the young Eisenhower possessed substantial potential and lived in a different context, but Conner's mentorship provided him with career advice, inspiration, professional development, and introduction to key officer networks, which in the end helped him to maximise his potential.<sup>17</sup>

A more recent example of the positive effects of mentoring comes from former U.S. Secretary of State and Army General Colin Powell. Powell stated that "at various stages in his career, he has learned from a number of people, both as a mentor and as a protégé."<sup>18</sup> The fact that two highly placed American political figures can trace back their success to mentoring that they received during their military careers, further emphasises the need to more fully integrate mentoring programs throughout the Canadian Armed Forces.

Mentoring serves many purposes, "most mentoring programs are designed to shape employee development, screen for performance, leverage networks, inspire employees, and instil organizational norms".<sup>19</sup> These influences can have tremendous positive influences in the workplace, such as generating faster promotions, motivating employees and producing better-prepared individuals. Regardless of possible reasons for having a mentoring program, evidence suggests that an increasing number of

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Kopser, *Mentoring in the Military...*,40.

<sup>19</sup> Lyle and Smith, "*The Effect of High-Performing Mentors...*", 230.

organizations deem that mentoring is a valuable investment in their employees' development.<sup>20</sup>

The U.S. Army has been engaged in limited one-on-one mentoring relationship with junior officers since 1994.<sup>21</sup> Recent findings from the University of Chicago (April 2014) suggest that high-quality mentors can substantially influence the career trajectories of their protégés within the military organization.<sup>22</sup> The contrary appears also to be true, as poor performing mentors can negatively affect the development of a protégé, as they might be guided in the wrong direction. Indeed, the University of Chicago study within the U.S. military revealed that junior officers who were counselled by a high-performing mentor were 29% more likely to be selected for early promotion to the rank of major.<sup>23</sup> If high-performing mentors are more productive in developing human capital, we could presume increased efficiency in NLO development, plausibly also manifesting in faster professional growth as officers.

### **Generation Y and Millennials (A changing human environment)**

In a fast evolving world, public organisations such as the CAF must not remain static. As they evolve and change, institutional leaders are required to guide the profession of arms in a way that ensures that it remains agile, adapting rapidly to

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Carolyn J. Herbst, "Mentors and associates--change agents." *Armed Forces Comptroller* 40, no. 4 (Fall 1995): 14.

<sup>22</sup> Lyle and Smith. "The Effect of High-Performing Mentors...", 240.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*

changing requirements.<sup>24</sup> The CAF must continue to remain relevant, vibrant and effective. Each new generation of CAF members brings renewal to the organization, however we must ensure the knowledge and experience of senior personnel is efficiently transferred to new recruits.

In order to continuously adjust to new operational requirements, CF leaders must also adapt to the fluctuating characteristics of the recruit pool and the equally shifting composition of the armed forces.<sup>25</sup> Each generation has a distinctive set of values: how they view authority, how they see the world, their definition of loyalty, expectations of their leadership and ideal work environment.<sup>26</sup> According to the Harvard Business Review, Millennials - the people born between 1977 and 2000 - account for nearly half the employees in the world. In some companies, they already constitute a majority.<sup>27</sup> In Canada, this demographic presently makes up about one-third of population, and it will dominate the workforce when the last of the Baby Boomers retire in just 15 years.<sup>28</sup> This is significant because the Canadian Military must find a way to bridge the intergenerational gap, and transfer norms and practices to new members with different values and priorities than existing members. Mentoring is another way the Military can promote institutional culture and expand ties between new and experienced members.

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<sup>24</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution* (Canadian Defence Academy-Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2007), 4.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-004, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy-Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), xiv.

<sup>26</sup> Barbara St. Claire-Ostwald, "How to Coach Generation V." *Coaching At Work* 7, no. 6 (November 2012): 54.

<sup>27</sup> Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd. "Mentoring Millennials. (cover story)," *Harvard Business Review* 88, no. 5 (May 2010): 68.

<sup>28</sup> Vidya Kauri, "The Young and the Restless," *Maclean's*, November 18, 2013, 58.

Millennials do not have the same view of work as the Baby Boomer generation or generation X, they view work as a key part of life, not a separate activity that needs to be “balanced” by it. For that reason, they place a strong emphasis on finding work that’s personally fulfilling. They want work to afford them the opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills, and connect to a larger purpose. That sense of purpose is a key factor in their job satisfaction. According to a Harvard Business Review research, the Millennials are the most socially conscious generation since the 1960s.<sup>29</sup> In Canada, “about one-third of approximately 38,000 Gen-Y employees surveyed think about leaving their jobs in the first year, and nearly half think about it after two to five years”.<sup>30</sup> The use of mentoring programs strengthens an individual’s ties to an organization and reduces turnover.

Millennials also have a greater need to feel valued in the workplace and prefer more individualized attention from their employers. “Millennials have high expectations of their employers - but they also set high standards for themselves”.<sup>31</sup> Millennials strive for job satisfaction and seek promotion opportunities, they want to progress and they would respond favourable to additional guidance as to how to help them to do this. Millennials are more disengaged than previous generations and a concerning trend is that only 16 per cent of Canadians feel engaged in their jobs.<sup>32</sup> Workers who have benefitted from mentorship programs experience “better professional confidence, higher competence, lower levels of job-related stress, more positive attitudes toward work, more

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<sup>29</sup> Meister and Willyerd. "Mentoring Millennials...", 69.

<sup>30</sup> Kauri, "The Young and the Restless...", 58.

<sup>31</sup> Meister and Willyerd. "Mentoring Millennials...", 69.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Barmak, "Hire Knowledge," Maclean's, November 18, 2013, 63.

career satisfaction, and even a greater perceived chance of becoming eminent in their fields”.<sup>33</sup> Mentoring is an excellent way to integrate Millennials, build their ties to the organization, and help them to feel valued, thus increasing their retention in the CAF.

Mentoring does not solely benefit newer recruits; it has tangible benefits for senior personnel. In fact, G.E. took mentoring a step further and developed the concept of reverse mentoring, by encouraging managers to pair up with tech-savvy new employees to improve their computer skills.<sup>34</sup> Experienced members can learn new ideas from younger recruits, while at the same time being an effective means of transmitting military culture and expertise to inexperienced members.

Mentoring is not exclusively for new personnel, people further up in organizations also reap benefits from having a mentor as, the higher one rises up in positions of leadership, the less feedback one receives.<sup>35</sup>

### **Leading the Military Institution**

Governance of the CAF and its many organizational entities is the responsibility of institutional leaders. The CAF Leadership doctrine: Leading the Institution, dictates to all component commanders the responsibility of maintaining professional effectiveness

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<sup>33</sup> Johnson and Andersen. "FORMAL MENTORING IN THE...", 114.

<sup>34</sup> Eric Chester, *Getting Them to Give a Damn, How to Get Your Front Line to Care About Your Bottom Line* (Chicago, USA: Dearborn Trade Publishing, 2006), 144-145

<sup>35</sup> Carson Pue, *Mentoring Leaders, Wisdom For Developing Character, Calling, and Competency* (Grand Rapids, USA: Barker Books, 2005), 32

of their element. Accordingly, Stewards of the Naval Logistics Officer Occupation have a particular responsibility to ensure that their officers acquire a complete understanding of the importance of each attribute of professionalism, how these attributes relate to each other, and, above all, how professional ideology binds the totality in a manner that makes the whole greater than the sum of the parts.<sup>36</sup> Mentoring helps to transfer the values and ethos of the Naval Logistics branch to future institutional leaders.

A big component of developing and instilling this professionalism with the NLO occupation has traditionally been obtained through the various CAF Leadership, Naval and Logistics schools, the successful completion of the sea training phase (AILK qualification) and Staff College. Furthermore, the RCN has formalized a Naval Succession Planning (NSP) process within its various occupations, including the NLO occupation, in order to process and develop its human resources.<sup>37</sup> The RCN focus is predominantly put on training and placing individuals with high potential in key job opportunities (where these individuals will gain experience and continue to advance within the organization) in order to maximise their development. NSP is based on the premise that the early identification and strategic job placements for individuals displaying the most potential will produce the greatest success in the development of future senior leaders.

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<sup>36</sup> Canada, *Leading the Institution...*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Mark A.G. Norman, VADM, "2014 Navy Succession Planning (NSP) Execution, August 2013.

Furthermore, acknowledging the requirement to look beyond a successor's successor, the NSP is aimed at processing identified individuals into a carefully crafted career path. The NSP is designed to address the identifiable gaps between the current competencies and future requirements, enabling better institutional capability and increasing the retention of highly skilled leaders.

In addition to this succession planning process, Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations also emphasizes the importance of a more informal influence of Stewards acting as teachers, mentors and coaches.<sup>38</sup> However, the CAF Leading the Institution doctrine specifies that the aim of coaching and mentoring should not develop into “cronyism,” where members try to attach themselves to “rising stars” in the interest of self-promotion.<sup>39</sup> The RCN NSP policy specifies that once selected individuals have been identified in the succession planning process, these officers can be deliberately mentored and managed into the labyrinth of Command and strategic leadership appointments.<sup>40</sup> Yet, the RCN and NLO occupations do not possess any formalized mentoring process, but strictly adhere to the fundamentals of succession planning. This disconnect of adhering fully to one strategy, while omitting another needs to be addressed with the development of formalized mentoring programs in the RCN.

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<sup>38</sup> Canada. *Leading the Institution...*, 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>40</sup> Royal Canadian Navy, *Navy Succession Planning Policy* (3371-5075-1 DHRStrat /RDIMS 182365, 2009)

## Linking succession to development

Having someone to step into an important vacancy is a critical measure of the effectiveness of succession management. We would argue, however, that helping that person make the transition in a positive manner with all the necessary skills and knowledge is as important and more challenging to execute.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, it is one thing to have an individual to fill a role, and another thing entirely to have that individual trained and ready to fill that aforementioned role. “Across organizations, settings, and research designs, those who report having had a mentor enjoy more rapid promotions and greater productivity”.<sup>42</sup> Thus, mentoring plays a key role in readiness of individuals to be promoted and to have immediate success upon promotions.

Each subsequent level of promotion is a move away from specialization and towards generalization, an emphasis on strategic over tactical thinking, an increased need for cross-functional knowledge, and an increased need for leadership skills. Even at the top levels, the move from general management to senior management or even partnership brings with it a whole new set of expectations. So world-class successions systems are not simply concerned about having found the right developmental opportunity for a candidate. They are concerned about a successful transition into the new role and provide high levels of support to make it happen.

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Fulmer and Jay A. Conger, *Growing your company's Leaders: How great organizations use succession management to sustain competitive advantage* (New York: American Management Association, 2004), 122-123.

<sup>42</sup> Johnson and Andersen. "FORMAL MENTORING IN THE" ..., 114.



Organisations that fail to prepare employees for these transitions and to mentor them through the process risk losing, to one degree or another, their investment in that employee.

### **Mentoring would enhance the succession planning process**

According to a recent research from the IMD, the Lausanne based business school, mentoring can have a substantial effect on senior executives and result in increased confidence, better decision-making and improve organisational performance.<sup>43</sup> A proper mentoring process within the NLO occupation would enhance the succession planning process that is already in place. Indeed, officers passing through the career path of Naval Succession Planning gain tremendous exposure and develop strong competencies through various assignments. However, as the IMD institute states in their latest report: "executives running the largest companies are under significant pressure to perform and that the cost of failure at the top ranks is high. Many of the skills required to lead an organisation are different to those acquired along the journey to the top".<sup>44</sup> Consequently, this is where mentoring becomes essential and enhances the succession planning process.

The RCN currently bases its succession planning as it always has, by focusing on replacement planning and personnel forecasting. However, nowadays, most jobs must

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<sup>43</sup> Global Investor, "Executive level mentoring is important." *Global Investor* no. 274, January, 2014, 91.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*

change to keep pace with on-going market fluctuations, changing demographics, organizational streamlining, political shifts and new leadership requirements. Too many organizations push high potential people into the succession planning, and this can cause damage because many of these individuals could become unable to perform at appropriate leadership levels. “The concept of a talent inventory drives some succession planning, but it’s a flawed concept from a pipeline perspective”.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, it was found that high-potential people don’t necessarily translate into high-performance people at higher level.<sup>46</sup> “Talent management is about attracting, developing, and retaining the best people; succession planning is about directing attention to the systematic development of people for higher-level responsibility”.<sup>47</sup> Mentoring is an approach to help individuals, or talent pools of people, to develop and reach their potential in order to assume higher positions.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, creating a philosophy and an integrated talent management framework is a key requirement for the NLO community. Consequently, an integrated approach in the NLO occupation between the succession planning policy and a proper mentoring process would enhance individual’s preparedness for senior positions.

### **PART 3: PROPOSED MENTORING PROCESS FOR THE NLO OCCUPATION**

The Naval Logistics Officer occupation is a relatively small branch compared to other occupations in the CAF. Therein lies an opportunity to incorporate the benefits of a

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<sup>45</sup> Ram Charan, Steve Drotter and Jim Noel, *The Leadership Pipeline: How to build the leadership powered company* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 207.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>47</sup> William J. Rothwell, *Becoming an Effective Mentoring Leader: Proven Strategies for Building Excellence in your organization* (United States: McGraw Hill, 2013), 163.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*

mentoring program with ease. The NLO occupation's size also necessitates the importance of doing as much as possible with the few officers available, by maximizing individual potential.

In recognition of the importance of mentoring, the CAF has published a "Mentoring Handbook" to assist members with the informal mentoring arrangements that form naturally. At the time they wrote their mentoring handbook, Lagacé-Roy and Knackstedt acknowledged that there were not a formal mentoring program currently in place in the Canadian Military.<sup>49</sup> Since then, some military occupations have established their own mentoring programs. This CAF Mentoring Handbook should be used as a guide in developing a mentoring program for NLO occupation.

Unfortunately, the CAF Mentoring Handbook is insufficient, as it does not provide an avenue for people who lack the necessary contacts to seek out a suitable mentor (but instead offers helpful tips to assist members in finding a mentor or a mentee).<sup>50</sup> For NLO a formal database of individuals seeking to be mentored and individuals willing to act as mentors would need to be created. This database of potential mentors and protégés would facilitate more mentor relationships. The program and the pool of candidates would need to be overseen. The task of coordinating mentorships could be added to the responsibilities of the Director of Naval Logistics (D Nav Log) as this would fall under the scope of efficient succession planning (rather than career

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<sup>49</sup> Lagacé-Roy and Knackstedt, *Mentoring Handbook...*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Lagacé-Roy and Knackstedt, *Mentoring Handbook...*, 18.

management, as a career manager should be a separate entity from this mentoring process).

In his highly praised best selling book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collier identified 5 levels of leadership within organizations. The highest level of leadership that an individual can reach is the Level 5, called Executive leadership. Individuals possessing this level of leadership channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great organisation.<sup>51</sup> “These leaders want to see their organisation even more successful in the next generation, comfortable with the idea that most people won’t even know that the roots of that success trace back to their efforts”.<sup>52</sup> These level 5 officers in an NLO occupation context can easily be identified as their track records speak for themselves. For example, individuals that have reached the rank of Commander have a path where they have previously demonstrated they were highly capable individuals, extremely dedicated toward the CAF, had reached a high level of competency in their field and, finally, were effective leaders. A good guideline would be for mentors to be two ranks higher than the person they are mentoring, or at least have reached significantly more career milestones. As an example, a Cdr or a LCdr post JCSP with at least one successful command tour could, be a mentor for a Lt(N). The important thing is that mentors have more experience than the person they are mentoring.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Jim Collier, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Business, 2001): 20.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>53</sup> Lagacé-Roy and Knackstedt, *Mentoring Handbook...*, 18.

What should be avoided when determining the suitability of a mentor is conflict of interests, such as the near possibility of the mentor and protégé achieving the same rank over a short period. Also, a member with poor performance evaluations and or past disciplinary records should never be accepted as a mentor.

Current NLO succession planning addresses long term requirements for the branch and has identified those officers with potential for successful fulfilment of future senior command positions, staff, and key strategic-level appointments. Officers who have been identified with that type of potential should be given priority for being assigned a mentor. That being said, they must first request a mentor.

The NLO mentoring program would be co-ordinated by the D Nav Log organisation. Once the mentoring relationship has reached the point where both parties have benefitted as much possible, the relationship will come to an end and the program coordinator at D Nav Log would be advised. The program coordinator would at this point inquire into further pairings that are suitable for a member's current stage of development. For example the US Army at Fort Detrick mentoring program functions as follows; "there is a post-development phase where the mentor and protégé agree that there is little more to be gained from the relationship resulting in a formal discontinuance of the process."<sup>54</sup> At Fort Detrick, the mentoring process may continue as, "although this is the termination cycle of the process, it often leads to the development of new mentor

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<sup>54</sup> Kewyn L. Williams, "Mentorship The Need for a Formal Program" (USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 2002), 7.

relationships”.<sup>55</sup> Some mentoring relationships may be of short duration and others may persist over an entire career or longer.<sup>56</sup> The duration of a mentorship, or the amount of mentors over a career will also vary among individuals. It is important to note that “each mentoring relationship is unique, a direct result of the individual personalities of the two participants”.<sup>57</sup> The mentoring program coordinator must do his or her best to take into consideration each individual when creating mentor protégé pairs and have members periodically assess the suitability of their pairing.

By using such a constantly evolving mentorship program, by the time a NLO reaches the rank of commander, he or she, will have had the opportunity to have benefitted from many years of personally tailored guidance towards his or her career development and professional growth from one or more suitably experienced mentors. This program will strengthen the NLO organization and produce more competitive officers for promotions to Capt(N) and beyond and for reaching strategic CAF appointments.

### **Potential difficulties when implementing mentoring**

Mentoring programs produce many tangible benefits, but that is not to say that there are no risks associated with a mentoring program. As with any special program, including the NSP, when individuals are chosen over others, jealousy may occur. Indeed,

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>56</sup> Mark A. Melanson, "The Mentoring Spectrum." *U.S. Army Medical Department Journal* (October 2009): 37.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*

“sponsorship, protection, choice of assignments and exposure to influential senior managers may lead to jealousy among peers and feelings that career opportunities are slim for other than the chosen few”.<sup>58</sup> Hence, every effort must be made to connect those that wish to be mentored with a mentor to avoid an atmosphere of jealousy and distrust. That being said, the pool of suitable mentors may be limited and it is reasonable to prioritize those officers who have the most potential for success.

It is important to note that even if a formal mentoring program was not put into place for NLO, informal mentoring relationships tend to develop on their own (as recognized in the CAF Mentoring Handbook).<sup>59</sup> Establishing a formalized mentoring program is important because “peer resentment can and likely will exist in any organization that does not provide a mode of mentoring, or at least the option, equally to peer groups”.<sup>60</sup> Establishing a formal mentoring program for the NLO enables that equal access for all interested parties.

Another concern with a mentoring program is the potential for a mentor to be placed into a managerial role over a past or current protégé.<sup>61</sup> This risk can be mitigated by formalizing the mentorship program and by tracking past and current mentor relationships.

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<sup>58</sup> Wild, *Understanding Mentoring: Implications for...*, 29.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>60</sup> J. Jeffrey Hutchinson, “Accelerating Future Leader Development Through the Implementation of a Mentoring Construct in the Maritime Surface and Subsurface Occupation” (Master of Defence Studies, Canadian Forces College, 2011), 41.

<sup>61</sup> Kets de Vries, *et al.*, *Coach and Couch: The Psychology of Making Better Leaders* (New York, N.Y. : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 27.

Protégés must also be mindful that they do not become overly dependent on mentors, as this would be counterproductive in developing them as leaders. Members should be cautioned against overreliance on their mentors. Furthermore, a mentor should never be in a supervisory position over someone they are mentoring as, “the mentee has to feel free to discuss issues openly and honestly, without worrying about possible negative repercussion on their performance appraisal and their career”.<sup>62</sup> Potential conflicts of interest should be avoided at all costs, as should placing individuals in positions of potential vulnerability (for either party).

The benefits of having a mentoring coordinator are that more people who want to take part in mentoring will have a venue through which to do so. It will also increase transparency in the process and reduce incidences of favouritism, as mentor relationships will be documented.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many Stewards of the profession of arms in the CAF now begin to see mentoring as part of their leadership responsibilities. Nevertheless, in line with the CAF leadership doctrine, current NLO institutional leaders are responsible for ensuring the relevance of the NLO occupation through developing the leadership capacities of their successors. The millennials, the generation that contains future CAF institutional leaders, seek mentorship opportunities and look for successful career pathways. In order to better prepare the way

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<sup>62</sup> Lagacé-Roy and Knackstedt, *Mentoring Handbook...*, 20.



ahead, the NLO senior leaders have to better understand millennials. A formalized mentoring process will facilitate mentoring opportunities, create transparency in the mentoring process, speed and strengthen the development of officers, transmit institutional culture to new members, and increase cohesion between different ranks.

The NLO has traditionally focused exclusively in developing officers through the naval divisional system and naval succession planning policy. By omitting the mentoring aspect, the NLO occupation is missing an integral part of maximizing individual potentials of CAF officers. The strength of the Naval Logistics community will always reside in the quality of its people. Therefore, the most important strategic responsibility of the NLO occupation is to adequately prepare and maximize the talents of this next generation of institutional leaders.

Implementing a mentoring program within the NLO occupation requires organisation, a systemic effort to guide mentoring, and a willingness of senior NLO officers and institutional leaders to participate in the mentoring program. It is important to reiterate that the benefits of mentoring will occur when both individuals are willing to partake in the process. As previously highlighted; individuals who have had strong mentors enjoyed more rapid promotions, greater productivity, more positive attitudes toward work and better professional growth. Developing more of these types of leaders will strengthen the NLO occupation and increase support capabilities for the RCN.

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