Robert Half Canada

Mentors: The Valuable Career Guide that Many Professionals Appear to Lack

80 Per cent of CFOs Say It's Important to Have a Mentor, Yet Few Workers Do

Toronto, ON -- For those whose New Year's resolutions have already fallen by the wayside, here's an idea to help you get back on track: Find a mentor. In an Accountemps survey, 80 per cent of chief financial officers (CFOs) said having a mentor is important for career development, yet only 13 per cent of workers have one. Only 12 per cent of male and 14 per cent of female professionals surveyed said they have a mentor. Among the greatest benefits of having a mentor, according to CFOs, is learning firsthand from someone in a role to which you aspire.

CFOs were asked, "**In your opinion, how important is it to have a mentor for career development?** Their responses:

Very important	27%
Somewhat important	53%
Not too important	19%
Not at all important	1%
Total	100%

CFOs also were asked, "**Which one of the following would you say is the single greatest benefit of having a mentor?** Their responses*:

Learn firsthand from someone in a role you aspire to	56%
Get introductions to new contacts	8%
Get help navigating office politics	8%
Have a neutral sounding board for your ideas	7%
Learn the unwritten rules of the company or industry	7%
There are no benefits	9%
Don't know	4%
Total	99%

**Responses do not total 100 per cent due to rounding.*

Workers were asked, "**Do you have a mentor?**" Their responses:

	Total	Male	Female	18-34 years	35-54 years	55+ years
Yes	13%	12%	14%	18%	9%	9%
No	87%	88%	86%	82%	91%	91%

"Guidance from mentors continues to be incredibly valuable for career development at all levels," said Dianne Hunnam-Jones, Canadian president of Accountemps. "As a means of sharing tenured insights and encouraging professional development, the support that mentors provide can be formative in the midst of career or workplace challenges. Often their professional know-how and confidence will directly influence the mentee's growth within the company."

Hunnam-Jones added, "Mentorships tend to be reciprocal opportunities for learning, with the mentors themselves also benefiting from the unique experiences of their mentee. Companies shouldn't underestimate the impact that this collaboration can have in contributing fresh ideas for business growth, and may want to consider offering formal mentorship programs for their staff."

Read the infographic text.

Accountemps offers five tips for fostering mentor relationships:

- **Pick the right mentors.** Think about individuals you'd like to emulate. An advisor within the company may be better equipped to help

you navigate personalities and politics, while an external mentor can serve as a sounding board and help you stay current on industry trends.

- **Follow up regularly.** Make it a priority to stay in touch with your mentor at a frequency that works for both of you. Send an occasional email update or ask a question when you run into a challenge.
- **Come prepared.** Use time with your mentor wisely by setting an agenda in advance of the conversation. What do you want to take away from the meeting? The more specific you can be, the better the outcome.
- **Show appreciation.** Mentoring requires commitment – make sure you show gratitude. Tell your mentor how his or her guidance has helped you on your career path.
- **Identify when it's time to let go.** Busy schedules, changing career paths and major moves could all change the relationship. When you see signs that the mentorship has run its course, it's okay to part ways. Just don't sever ties completely – your mentor will always be a valuable contact for you.

About the Research
The surveys were conducted by an independent research firm. They include responses from more than 270 CFOs from a stratified random sample of companies in Canada, and more than 270 Canadian workers 18 years or older and employed in office environments.

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