EVOLVE Mentor Program

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Tim Wells, Transportation Systems Research Section Manager

Road School - March 8, 2016
What is EVOLVE?

A mentor program piloted with early-career engineers at INDOT

Includes group mentoring
How EVOLVE began

- Need expressed from Engineers-in-Training (EIT’s)
How EVOLVE began

Executive Staff

High employee turnover rate

Job Economy

Need to grow and keep our talent
Engagement and Connectivity

- Designed the process
- Planned the pilot
- Collected the survey data
- Created support materials
- Administered and evaluated the program
Research & Development Phase

- List of PE’s is created
- List of EIT’s is created
- Surveys created and sent
- Data is compiled
- LOGO and mentor manual developed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engineers-in-Training</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>45 (of 54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requested a mentor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of respondents requesting a mentor</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licensed Engineers</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>146 (of 302)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. who volunteered to mentor</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of respondents wanting to mentor</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
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Program Development

Further defining mentoring

Pairing the mentors/mentees

Preparing for an EVOLVE Launch
EVOLVE Manual Created

Mentoring to Encourage Growth & Excellence

Mentor/Mentee Manual

Facilitated by Talent Management
Contents:

- Executive Letter of Support
- What is a Mentor?
- Mentorship Roles & Responsibilities
- Advice for a Successful Mentorship
- Initial and Subsequent Mentorship Meetings
- Mentorship Discussion Questions
- Mentorship Problem-Solving Guide
- Developmental Guide
- Program Regulations
- Program Support
Ready to Launch!

MENTORS + MENTEES

Increased Guidance & Support
Nurtured Career Development
Improved Employee Retention & Engagement
EVOLVE Kickoff Event

5 hour kickoff

Included:
- Keynote speakers
- Panel of mentors
- Break-out sessions for mentors/mentees
- Lunch and time for pairs to get acquainted
- Call for group EVOLVE suggestions
(Posted Jan. 14, 2014) INDOT employees from across the state met at the Indianapolis Traffic Management Center on Dec. 4 to officially kick off EVOLVE, a new mentoring program that is helping young engineers, and the agency, prepare for a successful future.

EVOLVE is an INDOT agency initiative to support early-career employees by offering one-on-one or group mentoring activities. Program goals are to provide support and guidance, nurture career development, and improve employee retention and engagement.

Deputy Commissioner of Engineering and Asset Management, Jay Wassen, welcomed the group to the official program launch.

Wassen explained that the EVOLVE program was created to help “bridge the gap of support” that existed between the completion of the Graduate Engineer Development Program (GEDP) and the time an engineer is eligible to apply for their Professional Engineer license.

“This gap wasn’t identified by those of us sitting on the west end of the seventh floor (of Central Office). It was identified by a group of INDOT Engineers in Training who reached out to me and demonstrated a courageous commitment to making INDOT a better organization,” said Wassen.

Wassen worked with INDOT’s Employee Development division to develop interest surveys and create a pilot program for EVOLVE. Each volunteer mentor was paired with an Engineer in Training employee with less than five years of INDOT experience. The pairs are encouraged to meet at least monthly to explore needs and problems, discuss cultural norms in the agency, and plan for career development.

LaPorte District Traffic Engineer, Alan Holderness, served on the Core Advisory Group that helped form the mentoring program. Holderness, a four-year INDOT employee, believed that young employees were struggling to prepare for their next professional steps within INDOT.

“Veteran employees not only have technical knowledge, but they are able to easily navigate INDOT’s system. This is an
Benefits of Mentoring

Ed Cox
Corridor Engineer, Traffic Management Center, Indianapolis
## Current Program Components

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor/Mentee pairings</td>
<td>Engineer + Engineer-in-Training (less than 5 years experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVOLVE  manual</td>
<td>Distributed to all participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVOLVE Group Mentor Activities</td>
<td>Initially planned monthly and sponsored by districts Workshops</td>
</tr>
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Creating the Mentor/Mentee Matches

In the beginning:

- Involvement of Deputy Commissioners and Directors

Now:

- Suggested by the EVOLVE Coordinator based on volunteers available.
- Approval through mentor’s supervisor
- Seen as a development opportunity for the mentor.
Mentee Application

What are your primary job responsibilities?

What are your career aspirations?

In what areas do you excel professionally?

In what areas do you hope to grow professionally?

Is there any additional information you would like to provide to aid in the selection of an effective mentor for your needs?
## End-of-Pilot Year Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Data November 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentors/Mentees upon kickoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-district matches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee survey response rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor survey response rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 matches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>85%</td>
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Benefits of Group Mentor Activities

Tim Wells, Transportation Systems Research Section Manager
Research & Development
West Lafayette
Group Mentoring

Activities are planned by the EVOLVE Coordinator in collaboration with local EVOLVE sponsors.

Both mentee and mentor are encouraged to attend together.

Activities have included:

- Workshops Offered (preparing for the PE exam, career development, etc.)
- Construction Site Visits around the state
- Brown bag lunches with speakers
- Other visits such as Federal Highway Authority
Group visit to a Bridge Project
Tour of S-Brite
What we Learned from the Pilot

Positives

- Strong feedback received from most matchups.
- Most were meeting, in some format, monthly.
- Group mentor events were popular.
- Employees from other departments requested mentors.
- It was extremely beneficial to involve supervisors in selecting the ‘just right’ mentor.
Key Takeaways from the Pilot

**Concerns**

- Cross-district matchups were not as successful.
- Mentees were not as comfortable initiating contact with their mentor as we had hoped.
- The group mentor activities required efforts by many and took significant time to plan.
Current Marketing

Mentoring to Encourage Growth and Excellence

The EVOLVE Mentoring Program contributes to an agency-wide initiative to support employees by offering individualized and group mentoring opportunities. EVOLVE mentees are supported professionally and interpersonally through the mentoring relationships they are able to share with seasoned employees. The benefits of the program are threefold: providing support and guidance to employees, nurturing career development, and improving employee retention and engagement. The relationships established through the program have proven to benefit both mentee and mentor, alike.

Program Details:

- [EVOLVE Manual](#)

EVOLVE Links:

- [I want to volunteer as a Mentor](#): To send your request, [CLICK HERE](#)
- [I want to be paired with a Mentor](#): To send your request, [CLICK HERE](#)
Where are we now?

- Getting requests for mentors beyond the engineering discipline
- No formal list of mentors exists
- Districts/departments can do on their own. The EVOLVE manual is generic.
- EVOLVE Coordinator assists as needed and maintains list of match-ups.
Types of Mentors

A 90-Day Onboarding Mentor

A Career Development Mentor
Talent Pipeline Programs

Cooperative Education Program

Co-Op

IES

INDOT Engineering Scholarship

GEDP

Graduate Engineer Development Program
Additional Development Opportunities

- Tuition Reimbursement
- Professional Licensing & Certifications
- INDOT 70-20-10 Adult Learning Model