DOD Mentoring Resource Portal

TOOLS FOR EXECUTIVES IN MENTORING PROGRAMS

Information for Executives Portfolio

TOOLS FOR EXECUTIVES IN MENTORING PROGRAMS

Purpose:

To provide tools to define the role of Executives in Mentoring Programs and offer strategies to prepare Executives to serve as Mentors/Mentees.

Audience:

Executives and Managers

Context:
This resource examines four different Executive Mentoring Programs. In two of the profiled programs, *HIPO mentoring and company-wide online mentor matching, executives participate as Mentors to junior-level employees. The second set of mentoring programs is targeted for executive development, and executives receive mentors from among the top leadership ranks. All four practices include a strong element of participant preparation through mentoring tools and various training methods.

Note: The term HIPO stands for High-Potential: A "High-Potential Employee" is an employee who has been identified as having the potential, ability, and aspiration for successive leadership positions within the organization.

How to Use:

▪ **Step 1**: Share this resource with executives and managers interested in mentoring.

Common Terms

The following are common terms associated with the DOD Mentoring Resource Portal:

Mentor, also known as Advisor, is a trusted counselor or guide who is involved in the development and support of one who is less experienced.

Mentee, also known as Protégé or Learner, is the more junior person being mentored.

Mentoring Program Coordinator, also known as Mentoring Program Manager, is responsible for the overall management of the mentoring program.

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Fact Brief

Tools for Executives in Mentoring Programs

Key Questions

Profiled Institution	Industry	Employees	Revenues
A	Financial Services	50,000 – 100,000	$5 billion – $10 billion
B	Communications	50,000 – 100,000	More than $10 billion
C	High-Technology	2,000 – 10,000	$500M – $2 billion

From the Corporate Leadership Council study *The Next Generation*, tactics from the following company are presented:

XEROX.

What is the role of executives in mentoring programs?

What tools do companies provide to prepare executives to serve as mentors/mentees?

Table of Contents

A survey of CEOs by Chief Executive Magazine *reports that having a mentor is a key contributor to CEOs' success:*[4]

1. **Personal drive**
2. **Personal value systems**
3. **Having a mentor**
4. **Learning from mistakes**
5. **Being a team player**

Preparing Executive Mentors Through Actionable Tools and Training

"Mentoring . . . is no longer just a courtesy offered by nurturing executives to a few promising up-and-comers. It's a crucial strategy for transferring wisdom and growing talent in every department of the company and provides a solid foundation for advancing future business growth."[1]

—Chairman, Accountemps

Executives fail at a high rate . . .

Research by the Conference Board shows that 40 percent of external executive hires fail within their first 18 months.[2] Considering the high costs of executive failure, this statistic highlights the importance of developing executives within the organization.

Mentoring meets executives' development needs, benefiting the business . . .

According to a Council survey of 8,000 leaders, mentoring is one of the most effective leadership development programs.[3] Council research also demonstrates that strong leadership benches drive an organization's economic performance. Investing in the right development programs, like mentoring, improves business results.[4]

Executives require preparation to be effective mentors . . .

Mentoring programs are often ineffective and Council research demonstrates that formal mentoring programs for senior leaders are rare.[6] In addition, executives often lack the skills needed to serve as mentors.[7] Studies show that negative mentoring relationships in formal mentoring programs increase turnover rates and stress levels and may also lower morale.[8,9] To effectively implement mentoring, organizations should design programs that prepare participants for mentoring work with actionable training and tools, tailoring them to executive needs when appropriate. The following research profiles four programs that have strong participant training or are targeted to meet executive needs.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief examines four different executive mentoring programs. In two of the profiled programs, HIPO mentoring and company-wide online mentor matching, executives participate as mentors to junior-level employees. The second set of mentoring programs is targeted for executive development, and executives receive mentors from among the top leadership ranks. All four practices include a strong element of participant preparation through mentoring tools and various training methods.

I. PREPARING EXECUTIVE MENTORS

Executive involvement in mentoring programs benefits the whole organization in several ways. By serving as mentors, executives can support the retention, development, and engagement of high performers. In addition, executives will develop their own leadership skills as mentors.

SHARING THE BENEFITS FOR EXECUTIVE MENTORS

Mentor training is a key element that prepares executive mentors for their role and the benefits that they should take away from mentoring themselves. Senior mentors should be aware of the following benefits they may achieve through mentoring:

- Develop leadership skills
- Understand leadership bench strength

HIPO MENTORING PROGRAM

At Company A, executives mentor junior-level high-potentials as an element of HIPO career development. Mentor preparation includes the following tools:

- Mentoring guidebook
- Conference call training
- Relationship timeline
- HIPO career assessments

COMPANY-WIDE ONLINE MENTOR PROGRAM SUPPORT

At Company B, over 30 executives participate in the organization-wide online mentoring program that uses electronic surveys to match participants. The system also provides the following convenient Web-based tools to prepare mentors:

- Interactive simulation course
- Online preparatory reading
- Downloadable toolkit

II. PREPARING EXECUTIVE MENTEES

Research shows that leadership drives economic performance. Among the factors that stall an organization's growth are senior team capabilities and talent shortages. Executive mentoring not only develops the capabilities of an organization's senior leaders, it can also build and strengthen the talent pool, forestalling any talent shortages.

TARGETING MENTORING TO EXECUTIVE NEEDS

The move from management to the executive level requires individuals to develop a broader mindset and to deal with the uncertainties of policy formulation, strategic thinking, and accountability. Mentoring helps senior leaders mature their skills in the following critical areas:

- Business processes
- Leadership processes
- Emotional processes

PREPARING EXECUTIVES FOR MENTORING FROM BOARD MEMBERS

To provide mentors to its senior executives, Company C reached out to retired executives and board members, tailoring the program to top-level needs. Training is provided during separate orientation sessions for mentors and mentees, so that neither group feels intimidated voicing concerns in front of highly respected leaders.

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE MENTORING THROUGH EXECUTIVE COACHING

Mentorship programs are often ineffective due to poor coaching skills and lack of time on the part of the mentor. Xerox company piloted a program that assigns an executive coach with each pair in order to enhance skill building for both mentors and mentees. The program provides mentees with the following tools:

- 360-degree assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Individual development plan
- Monthly mentorship sessions with coach present

Preparing Executive Mentors	Preparing Executive Mentees

Sharing the Benefits for Executive Mentors

One of the key factors in preparing mentors is communicating the benefits of mentoring. By serving as mentors, executives can support the retention, development, and engagement of high performers.[10] In addition, executives will develop their own leadership skills as mentors. Research demonstrates that mentors who are prepared, confident, and aware of their own skill-building will have more successful relationships with their protégés.[11] By communicating the personal benefits of mentoring to mentors, organizations can motivate mentors and improve the effects of the mentoring relationship.

Benefits for executives serving as mentors

Mentors should understand development opportunities that mentoring holds for themselves. Three profiled companies communicate mentor benefits through mentor training. Mentor benefits include improvement in the following leadership development areas, as highlighted by Council research:

Table 1. The Benefits for Senior Leaders Serving as Mentors	
Develop Leadership Skills	The Council study *Voice of the Leader* identified the most important characteristics to effective leadership. The following top qualities can be developed by serving as a mentor: [12] • Ability to inspire others • Ability to persuade and encourage others to move in a desired direction • Strong commitment to staff development
Develop and Understand Leadership Bench Strength	Not only does serving as a mentor develop the organization's leadership, it also allows senior leadership to have a better understanding of the organizations leadership bench strength.[13] In fact, experts report that the top reason mentors participate is to gain a better understanding of the more junior people that they oversee.[14]

Preparing Executive Mentors	Preparing Executive Mentees

Preparing Executives for HIPO Mentoring Programs (Company A)

Including Line Managers in Mentorship Training at Axel Johnson AB

The HIPO mentorship program at Axel Johnson begins with half-day training for HIPOs and their executive mentors. Mentees' line managers are also included in the training so that they understand the purpose of the mentorship program and so mentors will not interfere with line issues.[18]

—Mentoring Executives and Directors
1999

Many organizations include mentoring in HIPO career development programs. Senior leaders provide junior-level HIPO executives with organizational wisdom and challenging guidance to spur their development.

Tactic 1: Executive-Led HIPO Mentoring

Company A | Industry: Financial Services
Employee Size: 50,000 – 100,000
Revenue: $5 billion – $10 billion

Purpose

Partners at Company A serve as mentors to individuals in the high-potential program. Mentors help HIPOs develop the skills needed for executive positions and are benefited with a greater understanding of the rising talent.

Selection

A majority of the mentors are identified by senior leaders, although partners may also volunteer to participate. Mentees come from the HIPO pool and are previously selected for the HIPO program.

Matching

The program coordinators develop a list of potential mentors and select partners based on HIPO development goals. The program is country-wide, so mentors and mentees are also matched according to their proximity.

Preparation Tools for Mentors

Program managers at Company A provide support to mentors throughout the two-year relationship. In particular, preparation activities help mentors align their relationship with HIPO program goals.

Mentor Guidebook	*Conference Call Training*
Mentors receive an electronic copy of the mentoring guidebook when they learn that they have been selected for the program (See Appendix A). ▪ Benefits of being a mentor ▪ Guidelines and expectations for mentors ▪ Guidelines for developing HIPO career plans ▪ Holding effective meetings as a mentor ▪ Mentoring contract (to be signed and submitted by each pair) ▪ Other articles and resources, including career assessments	Mentor training is conducted through a conference call in order to reach all participants across the country simultaneously. During the initial conference call at the start of the program, the mentoring coordinator explains the purpose of the HIPO program, and the impact of mentoring as an essential program component. Additional conference calls occur 2 to 3 times during the year to inform mentors of career development issues and address their questions.
Relationship Timeline	*Career Assessment*
In addition to the guidebook and HIPO career assessment, mentors receive a timetable for mentorship meetings and activities. This is considered a key component in the success of each relationship.	Mentors receive a copy of their mentee's career assessment, which provides them with the HIPO's goals and helps them define mentoring discussions. HIPOs complete the assessment online at the start of the program.

Evaluation

Mentees complete surveys that discuss which elements of the relationship are most useful. Mentors complete surveys that assess the program's ability to develop their mentees. The program coordinator at Company A would like to provide more mentor skill-building in the future, with additional training outside of the conference calls.

Relationship Timeline

The following displays a sample relationship timeline. Company A considers the timeline a crucial element for mentoring success.

Week 1: Receive Match

Week 2: Face-to-Face Meeting

Week 3: Sign Agreement

Week 5: Discuss Career Assessment

Preparing Executive Mentors	**Preparing Executive Mentees**

Company-Wide Online Mentor Program Support (Company B)

Online Mentoring Tools and Structure at Microsoft

Microsoft caters its online mentoring program to the preferences of its IT professionals. The mentoring site includes online tools and processes so participants feel guided through the process. Automatic e-mail surveys, sent every three months, remind participants to maintain their mentoring relationship.[19]

—*Information Week*
June 2002

Establishing a formal mentoring program for a small number of leaders can be a large investment that lacks a broad reach. One solution, used by companies like Microsoft, is a company-wide program that accurately matches participating executives with appropriate senior mentors. The online mentoring system at Company B facilitates mentoring across the organization with a sophisticated registration process that prepares participants and locates proper matches for each mentee. Approximately 30 senior leaders at the company are champions for the program and participate as mentors.

Tactic 2: Online Mentorship Program

Company B | Industry: Communications
Employee Size: 50,000 – 100,000
Revenue: More than $10 billion
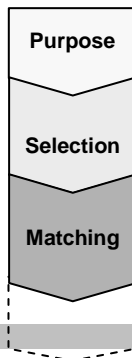
Purpose
An organization-wide mentor matching program designed to support the company's culture of employee development makes mentoring available to a large and dispersed employee population.

Selection
Employees sign-up for the program online and take a virtual assessment that tests their preparedness for mentoring.

Matching
The system initially matches protégés with proposed mentors based on the preferences they select. The pair then meets face-to-face to determine if they would like to work together. The relationship lasts for one year and is shaped by the desires of the participants.

Preparation Tools for Mentors

While the mentoring meetings are conducted in person, Company B's Web-based matching and training ensures that all mentors receive comprehensive, just-in-time tools.

Interactive Course

Prospective mentors that do not pass the initial assessment must complete a four-hour online simulation to continue with the program. The simulation prepares individuals for mentoring by helping them develop the key competencies the program wants mentors to possess through lessons, video clips, and quizzes.

Online Preparation

The site's mentor area takes executives and other participants through the available prepping information. The system tracks mentors as they view each tab, and will not allow them to proceed and be assigned a protégé if they skip an important tab.

Required online reading

Downloadable Toolkit

Online tools help to make mentoring relationships more focused and formalized. They include the development activities listed below:

- Conducting an individual analysis

  SWOT — **S**trengths **W**eaknesses **O**pportunities **T**hreats

- Preparing for mentorship meetings

  o **Develop Agenda**
  o **Prepare Questions**

- Creating development plans

- Establishing goals

Evaluation

Users can send e-mails for system support, which allows the program to assess the effectiveness of the site and make ongoing changes.

The Benefits of Online Flexibility

Busy executives need easily-accessible tools, like those provided with Company B's online mentoring tab and downloadable toolkits. Participants at Company B are pleased with the accessibility of online tools and the flexibility of virtual training.

—*Program Manager*
Company B

Preparing Executive Mentors	Preparing Executive Mentees

Targeting Mentoring to Executive Needs

Recommended Reading

The following book provides several case examples used in this study and is recommended by the program manager at Company C.

Title: *Mentoring Executives and Directors* (1999)
Authors: David Clutterbuck and David Megginson
Price: $47.95

The value of mentoring is magnified for executive- and director-level individuals that will lead an organization's strategy. Among the factors that stall organizational growth are talent shortages and lack of senior team capabilities.[17] Executive mentoring not only develops the capabilities of an organization's senior leaders, but it can also build and strengthen the talent pool, forestalling any talent shortages.

Executive development areas benefited by mentoring

The move from the senior management to the director role requires individuals to develop a broader mindset and to deal with the uncertainties of policy formulation, strategic thinking, and accountability. Mentoring is the ideal program to assist directors facing those challenges according to the book *Mentoring Executives and Directors*. The book argues that mentoring assists participant development on three levels: Business Processes, Leadership Processes, and Emotional Processes. In fact, Company C has found that their senior leaders most often work on their daily business- and leadership-based struggles with their mentors. Included below are issues that mentoring helps directors face, divided by level:[18]

Mentoring Levels for Executives

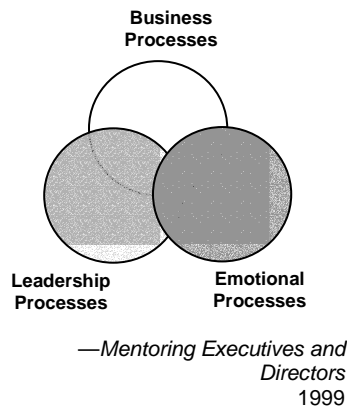Mentoring addresses three levels of development, as shown below.

Business Processes

Leadership Processes   Emotional Processes

—*Mentoring Executives and Directors*
1999

Table 3. Areas of Focus for Director-Level Mentoring	
Business Processes	▪ How do I learn how to distinguish between my roles as senior function head and director? ▪ Do I have sufficient contextual understanding of disciplines with which I have little hands-on experience? ▪ How do I ensure I know what is really going on in the organization?
Leadership Processes	▪ How do I develop the skills to become a chief executive or non-executive director? ▪ Am I providing an effective role model for the values the top team espouses? Could I do better? ▪ Is my strategic thinking significantly broad to contribute effectively to the process of creating and interpreting business vision?
Emotional Processes and Values	▪ How can I and my colleagues work together in "collaborative independence?" ▪ What am I going to do with my life/career from now on?

Preparing Executive Mentors	Preparing Executive Mentees

Preparing Executives for Mentoring from Board Members (Company C)

External Mentor Program at Instill

Senior executives at Instill Corporation also seek external mentors through the company's formalized program. Executives are encouraged to choose high-level mentors from a different company and mentors are offered stock shares in Instill for participating. Instill reports that none of the outside executives approached to participate in the program have turned down the opportunity.

—*Fast Company*
January 2001

Executives at the highest levels can realize improved performance through mentoring, although the number of available mentors within the organization is small. To provide mentors to senior executives, Company C reached out to retired executives and board members, tailoring the program to top-level needs.

Tactic 3: Board Members Mentor Senior Leaders

Company C

Industry: High-technology
Employee Size: 2,000 – 10,000
Revenue: $500M – $2 billion

Purpose
The program was developed specifically for senior leaders at the general manager and vice president levels. Its mission is to support productivity of executive mentees, enhancing their career development.

Selection and Matching
Executive VPs on the president's team nominate star performers from their divisions who are targeted for promotion and growth. The president's team also selects mentors from among current and retired company executives and board members. The formal relationship lasts one year.

Preparation Tools for Executive Mentees

The majority of preparation occurs during orientation sessions. Sessions are held separately for mentors and mentees since individuals may feel uncomfortable voicing questions in front of their senior and highly respected counterparts. Orientation sessions last 1.5 hours and are attended by the president. Sessions include the components listed below:

Five Focus Areas
Educates executives about potential outcomes of mentorship.

- Company culture and politics
- Functional expertise
- Support by providing resources
- Support with operational issues
- Strategic thinking

Objective Setting
Stresses the importance of having an objective. Participants receive an objective-setting tool that highlights the following questions:

- What issues are at hand or what competency do I want to develop?
- What approaches could I take to pursue that objective?
- What might the results of this approach look like?

Barriers to Mentoring
Makes participants aware of the major barriers to mentoring. The top three causes of failure identified by the program are described by the following phrases:

- "I'm just too busy."
- "So what are we supposed to talk about anyways?"
- "But I wanted Boris as my mentor!"

Mentor Roles
Provides mentees guidelines for developing and interpreting the relationship.

Expertise		
Expert	**Mentor**
Friend	**Sponsor**

Influence

Mentoring Skills
Reminds mentees and mentors to develop skills rather than give advice.
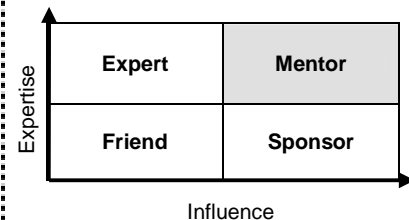
"NINJA"
Never
INterpret
Judge or
Advise

Hand-outs
Executive mentees leave the orientation with a handout packet containing the program objectives, symbolic mentorship agreement, and an objective-setting template. Mentors receive a list of sample questions they may ask.

Evaluation

The program is evaluated periodically throughout the year under two categories, "Partnership Usefulness" and "Mentor Effectiveness." There are plans to add periodic mentor gatherings.

Mentoring Should Develop Strategic Thinking Skills

"What I've observed with this group is that by default they will use their mentor to just get help with whatever is the current fire today . . . It has been a struggle to convince people that while this is fine, it is not the ultimate purpose of the mentoring relationship . . . It is really a waste if your mentor is the founder of the company and all you use him for is to help you with your daily routine . . . What we want you to do is learn his strategic thinking skills."

—Program Manager, Company C (September 2003)

Preparing Executive Mentors	Preparing Executive Mentees

Supporting Effective Mentoring Through Executive Coaching

LEX

Linking Mentorship with Business Goals at Lex

The British defense manufacturer Lex targets the use of mentoring programs to address particular organizational issues like management retention. When the succession process identifies an executive as critical to the company's future, that person is allocated a mentor from the executive team. Mentors ensure that mentees receive the following crucial elements:

- A job that is stretching
- A development plan
- Appropriate reward and recognition
- Access to the CEO
- An understanding of their value to the organization

—Mentoring Executives and Directors
1999

Mentorship programs are often ineffective due to poor coaching skills and lack of time on the part of the mentor. Adding an executive coach to mentorship relationships enhances the skill development for both mentors and mentees. The use of mentoring coaches at Xerox improves the coaching skills of senior-level mentors which enhances the executive mentee experience as well.[19]

Tactic 4: Coach-Assisted Mentoring

XEROX

Industry: Computer hardware
Employee Size: 67,800
Revenue: $15.8 billion

Purpose

Professional coaches provide assistance to both mentees and mentors throughout the mentoring relationship. Coaches help mentees to focus the relationship on key development objectives and also provide mentors with coaching skills. .

Selection and Matching

Executive committee members nominate rising middle managers from their departments, and mentees are chosen through a forced-ranking process. Each of the 12 executive committee members then selects his or her own mentee informally. Professional coaches are paired with each group based on the coaches' relevant experience and ability to assist with mentee development needs.

Preparation Tools for Executive Mentees

While the ongoing support and guidance of a professional coach eliminates much of the need for pre-relationship training, mentees do participate in an assessment process that identifies their personal goals for mentoring.

360-Degree Assessment	*Individual Development Plans*
Assessments are created through 360-degree reviews conducted by external coaches. Mentees receive an assessment of their individual strengths and weaknesses and use the assessment to help target mentoring sessions to their growth needs.	Mentees develop Individual Development Plans with mentors and coaches to guide the work done in mentoring sessions. Development plans focus on building strengths while addressing weaknesses.

Strengths → ← **Weaknesses**

- o **Conflict Management**
- o **Motivating . . .**

Coach Involvement

The executive coach assists each mentor-mentee pair in developing and using the tools described above. In addition, each pair meets with the coach once per month. Coaches serve as an ongoing resource or tool for participants throughout the one-year program.

Coach

Mentee **Mentor**

Evaluation

HR monitors informal feedback on the program throughout the year. The program's success is measured based on participants' progress against their development plans. The company has noticed a decrease in turnover among high potentials as a result of the mentoring program.

APPENDIX A: TOOLS FROM COMPANY A'S MENTORING GUIDEBOOK

I. Effective and Ineffective Mentor Behaviors/Roles

EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Advisor Sounding board, facilitator	***Rescuer*** Problem fixer, assumes responsibility
Protector Supports, is a safety net	***Bodyguard*** Fights mentee's battles, overprotective
Coach Provides structure, gives feedback and direction	***Svengali*** Dictates, controls learning
Diamond Cutter Suggests, polishes rough edges	***Mechanic*** Wants a quick-fix, insensitive to feelings
Broker Identifies resources, develops	***Buckpasser*** Abdicates, doesn't follow-up
Challenger Positively provokes, pushes toward highest standards	***Adversary*** Pushes too far too soon, devil's advocate
Clarifier Teaches organizational values, politics	***Minesweeper*** Removes obstacles so mentee doesn't have to deal with politics
Affirmer Gives needed support, enhances self-esteem	***Smotherer*** Gives too much feedback, discounts mentee's feelings or concerns
Sponsor Provides visibility and recognition, advertises talents of mentee	***Stinger*** Promotes mentee at expense of others

II. Holding Effective Meetings and Discussions

BEFORE *Preparing*	**DURING** *Delivering your message*	**AFTER** *Following up*
1. Collect and review feedback and information 2. Plan for the discussion 3. Confirm logistics and determine the best setting for the discussion	1. Open 2. Deliver the key message 3. Manage reactions 4. Agree on next steps 5. Close	1. Meet your own deadlines 2. Hold mentee to his/her commitments 3. Problem solve together about what can be done

THE RESEARCH PROCESS IN BRIEF

Research Methodology

The Corporate Leadership Council conducted a comprehensive search of published materials regarding the subject, drawn from previous Corporate Executive Board research, trade press journals, other research organizations and the Internet. Council staff then interviewed Human Resources professionals at three corporation. These individuals discussed the design of their organization's executive mentoring programs. This report represents the findings from these secondary and primary sources.

Project Aims

1. Does your company have a mentoring program specifically for employees at director-level and above? Please describe the components of the program.
2. Do you provide primers, introductory information, guides, or instructions to directors that will be participating in a mentorship program? Do you have workshops or training sessions?
3. How do you present the information to these senior leaders? Please describe documents provided and communication avenues used for both mentors and mentees.
4. Please describe the content included in mentorship guides. Can you provide samples of these documents?
5. Is the information provided to directors and above different from what would be provided in a typical mentoring program? Please describe any differences and their purpose.
6. What types of information do you consider critical for mentors and mentees in leadership positions as they begin a mentoring relationship?
7. How do you evaluate the success of mentoring programs? How well do you think the information that you provide contributes to the success of the program?
8. What, if anything, about your current mentoring program for senior leaders would you seek to change or improve? Will you make any changes to the mentor/mentee guides?

Guide to Tables and Figures

WAS THIS BRIEF USEFUL?	*The Corporate Leadership Council welcomes feedback as a vital part of our continuous improvement. If you would like to comment on the quality of this brief—in general, or specifically regarding usefulness—please e-mail CLCshortanswer@executiveboard.com.*

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