

**\*\*Read how Rockwell Collins uses Open Mentoring® to advance and support diversity\*\***

---

## Case Studies: How Mentoring Changed My Life



By Barbara Frankel

Third of a three-part series on mentoring

[Part I: 5 Mentoring Best Practices](#)

How do mentoring programs impact mentees and mentors? When they are successful, they literally change lives by drawing out and developing talent, creating cross-cultural awareness, and forming lifelong relationships.

In addition to these two companies, DiversityInc identified 10 other top mentoring programs from the 352 companies that participated in The 2008 DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity survey. Those companies are (with their 2008 DiversityInc Top 50 rank): Bank of America, No. 3; PricewaterhouseCoopers, No. 4; Johnson & Johnson, No. 8; IBM, No. 9; American Express, No. 10; Deloitte LLP, No. 16; Ernst & Young, No. 17; KeyBank, No. 33; Abbott, No. 37; and Rockwell Collins, one of DiversityInc's 25 Noteworthy Companies. We surveyed them to find out how their mentoring programs work, and in this three-part series, we share their responses.

In this third part of our monthly series on mentoring, we look at mentors and mentees at two companies: Rockwell Collins and Abbott. They tell you, in their own words, what these programs have meant to them.

### **No. 1 Rockwell Collins**

Apryl Broach, who is Black, is a systems engineer who was new to the company and to full-time employment in corporate America. She sought out mentoring because she wanted "to seek guidance in navigating this company, which was unfamiliar territory, and also to begin to build a strong network of leaders in other areas of the company."

At Rockwell Collins, company leadership directs matches to put individuals together based on development needs. The goal is to educate mentees about the culture, develop knowledge and broaden skills, and achieve and expand career development. For mentors, the goals include developing skills in coaching, giving and receiving feedback, sharpening business acumen, expanding horizons and sharing best practices.

As an engineer, Broach expected to be placed with informal mentors with technical backgrounds, "but what I really wanted was a different perspective of the company and, more importantly, a sounding board and source of feedback that communicated differently than I or most engineers would."

She sought a mentor who wouldn't let her use "engineer speak" and would help her learn to communicate effectively with non-technical people, a skill she would need if she wanted to become an effective manager. She also recognized that she might want to shift careers at some point and would need to be aware of other functions and have relationships with others in the company in different areas.

She was paired with Sue Daughtery, a Korean-American manager in the Finance People Development and Projects department. Daughtery is an experienced mentor who has mentored individuals in engineering, finance, accounting, operations and human resources.

Daughtery says all her mentees have been of different backgrounds than hers, whether it's by age, race, gender or professional background. The relationships last anywhere from six months to forever. "I've always had a passion for relating to individuals, watching them develop in their careers, and helping them experience success," she says. "The most satisfying aspect of mentoring comes from seeing an individual achieve success in their current role and their future development."

Broach says the pairing has been very successful: "I've learned so much from Sue. I have always been comfortable in my own element as well as confident in my understanding of other roles, but Sue helped bridge a gap of a more global understanding."

Specifically, Daughtery invited her to discussion events and seminars, outside of the engineering community, and included Broach in her own programs as a speaker or presenter to help her develop leadership and communication skills.

"I also like that Sue can dissect a situation that I am confronted with and give feedback on different ideas to approach it, while always allowing me to discern a solution for myself ... I've developed higher standards of myself and my future as a leader here, just seeing Sue in action and how she communicates with her team," Broach says. "You know she is not going to tell you what you want to hear about yourself or professional choices but what you need to hear in order for you to think more wisely or from a different viewpoint."

Daughtery notes that what surprises her in these relationships is that "there's always common ground and a learning opportunity. In every relationship, I learn something new, whether it's about me, the business or the mentee."

Would Broach like to become a mentor? Absolutely. "I want to be like Sue when I grow up," Broach says. She has started by sharing many of the same conversations she's had with Daughtery with junior engineers and her peers. "The knowledge and encouragement is very transferrable," she says.

## **No. 2 Abbott**

At the pharmaceutical company, a formal online mentoring program was launched for the U.S. organization in April 2005. It offers mentors and protégés the option of including a preference for the race and gender of their partner, and they may include personal comments about themselves in their profiles, such as orientation or disability.

The formal program is a structured, year-long "developmental partnership," says company spokesperson Matthew J. Bedelia. "Participants benefit from each others' experiences and expertise in a number of ways, including developing or enhancing skills or competencies, sharing institutional knowledge, navigating the organization, forming networks and making important business connections."

The company surveys the participants at the three- and 12-month points for satisfaction and measures success in the number of partnerships formed and the percent of protégés matched. In addition, after their mentoring relationship has formally ended, participants are surveyed.

The company offers as an example Michael Wood and Saeed Motahari, who both are long-term employees but who worked in very different areas. Wood was a sales representative working out of his home in southern California. Motahari is a divisional vice president who works at Abbott's corporate headquarters in suburban Chicago.

They were matched through the online mentoring program. After participating, they developed a professional relationship and Motahari hired Wood to work in his group.

Another Abbott mentee, Yolanda Spann-Morgan, an associate research data coordinator in the global pharmaceutical research and development department, said this: "Before I began my mentoring relationship, I had only a vague idea of where I wanted to go professionally. My mentor has been instrumental in helping me to concentrate on my chosen career while discovering a role that would complement my skill set and qualifications. With his guidance and assistance, I am positive my career path will extend further than I initially imagined."