Profile

This project is a Records and Information Management (RIM) Mentor Program for new members of the profession was launched February 19, 2013 upon the Board of Directors approval. The intent of the project is to engage experienced professionals as mentors to be matched to protégées was based information supplied by their application. This is a Chapter Membership Committee project submitted by the ARMA Metropolitan New York Chapter

Needs Assessment

This approach for this project is structured to encourage chapter volunteerism, promote professional development and overall RIM education. There is an inherent gap in experience and perspective that new members of the profession and students wanting to enter it have as compared to seasoned professionals and critical thinkers in the field; the challenge is to bridge this gap to support new professionals as they pursue their careers.

In addition, there is a need to engage chapter members as active members, to stimulate opportunities for leadership and a desire to be proactive and supporting the profession. Providing a meaningful relationship to new members of the profession and ARMA as well as getting fresh involvement from long-term members is a need the membership committee felt challenged to address.

Solutions Defined

The solution to the two-fold challenges (bridging the experience gap for new professionals and engaging both new and veteran members) was to develop and launch a Mentoring Program. Our research included an assessment of a successful mentor program at SAA. We utilized this information, other research and our experiences to draft guidelines that were fine-tuned and made into a working document. The guidelines addressed the experience gap and structured the engagement for leadership development and other opportunities.

A sub-committee of three people drafted the procedures and supporting documents to establish the framework for the Mentor Program, which then solicited mentors from within the Board of Directors and Committee structure as well as known experienced Records & Information Managers. The Metro NY Chapter membership reflects the great diversity in the area; resources among members include adjunct professors in library science and related fields and leaders in other information professional organizations such as SLA and SAA.

The goals were to identify mentors and protégées, match them based on personal and professional interest and experience; then ensure that the process points in the guidelines were met.

Members from the Membership Committee and Professional Development Committee were requested to participate in the Mentor Project. The Chair did not have to ask twice, there was a very keen interest and commitment to do this. The Mentor Committee consisted of:

- Lauren Barnes, CRM, MLIS, Vice President, Credit Suisse, Adjunct Professor,
- Fred Grevin,  Vice President, New York City Economic Development Corporation, Adjunct Professor
- Anita Castora, CRM, CBCP, Records Manager, American Eagle Federal Credit Union.
There are guidelines and application forms for mentors and protégées outlining expectations of responsibilities and expectations to promote a successful and satisfying engagement on the part of the participants, as well as providing the chapter’s membership committee, designer and manager of the project, means to implement and measure success. See attached guidelines and applications.

Project success was reflected with the immediate response of experienced professionals who applied to be mentors and new professionals who applied to be protégés including those who joined the chapter in order to participate; one of the requirements for protégées was chapter membership. Resources required for implementation were experienced colleagues and mentors, membership list for potential participants and graduate students.

Implementation process

- Approval and publication of guidelines
- Announcement through newsletter, emails, website & the Chapter’s annual all day event
- Active outreach to long-term chapter members as mentors
- Phone interviews with all applicants to ensure optimum match
- Email introduction of mentor and protégée
- Follow up emails and phone calls to all
- Addressed any issues as they arose
- Created a program assessment survey upon completion
- Guidelines provided a minimum three (3) months engagement to ensure adequate opportunity to ensure a defined commitment on both parties and full benefit of the interaction

Benefits achieved

There were 28 people who applied for the program for both mentors and protégées with 12 pairs matched and active. At this writing, there are more mentors than protégés. Note, this outcome represents a solution to the expected excess of protégées to mentors based on the SAA program. We anticipate with the outcome of the fall season, that the balance will change.

Some chapter improvements are a renewed interest in the chapter, and a sense of accomplishment on the part of the mentors and protégées. We have also experienced a new and active pipeline of engaged members in the chapter and a new avenue of outreach to the RIM community.

Overall assessment

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The Mentoring Program is a great opportunity for new and experienced members of the information management field (and related fields) to work together and explore opportunities in the profession.