



Calling all mentors



Bruce Smith, a mortgage consultant with London, Ontario-based Future Group, offers his opinion about the importance of mentoring – both for personal fulfillment and the betterment of the mortgage industry

When I started in the mortgage business, I liked the idea of ‘doing the deal’ and helping people at the same time. There are not many professions that allow you the opportunity to radically change lives as you might with a timely debt consolidation or equity take out. Equally as gratifying – and life altering – is helping others achieve success through mentoring.

Mentoring is all about the power of giving – offering your time, knowledge, support and encouragement. The more I give, the more good I notice occurs in my life. I’ve heard it described as the law of cause and effect, or karma. Whatever you call it, it works – and not just in my personal life. Mentoring has been extremely beneficial to my business as well.

Understanding the intricacies of mentoring and truly recognizing the value in it was a learning process by itself – one that was just as likely to take place on the basketball court as it was on the stock market.

Although I’ve always enjoyed playing basketball, I never saw myself as the next Michael Jordan making the game-winning shot. Instead, the role I imagined for myself was off the court. I envisioned myself as the

general manager making that blockbuster trade and was drawn to the concept of building a successful team. I recognized early on that being a ‘lone wolf’ can bring moderate success in any profession but my core belief is that, to build a large and self-sustaining business, you need to tap into the talents of others.

Investing introduced me to the concept of leveraging – borrowing against my holdings to invest in more stocks and generate additional returns. Leveraging should be a concept we are all familiar with. Purchasing a home with little or no money down and watching it appreciate and gain in equity is the ultimate in leveraging. But leveraging doesn’t have to be about money. Maximizing your time, efficiency and subsequent results through the efforts of other people is another of my core beliefs.

Hari Sreedharan of Future Group introduced me to mentoring in the brokering industry. Unlike others in the industry, he wasn’t about commission splits, volume bonuses and share ownership.

Hari spoke of team building and asked what I knew about leveraging my results through the efforts of other people. Future Group’s compensation structure was unique

and the rewards truly amazing if I would only share my knowledge to help others replicate what I do.

Regardless of whether you were a seasoned veteran or a raw rookie, I was told everyone was respected and treated equally. The concept intrigued me. I now had the opportunity to be the general manager of my own team, manage my human assets and look for people I could invest in. I was hooked. I loved the concept, but could I be a mentor to others? Could you?

A willingness to help others is the major requirement. You must be willing to encourage and support other individuals and hold them accountable for their results. You have to be a role model and a leader, willing to embrace change and give more than you expect to receive. The technical expertise you possess becomes secondary, although a superior skill-set in the area of sales, marketing, operations, finance or human resources is always a bonus.

I know the Future Group mentoring program is not for everyone. I hear the arguments: “I am not going to train another agent to compete for the business”. In my opinion, these people are missing a big opportunity to jump-start their businesses. I wonder how many games Michael Jordan would have won with no teammates on the court? I bet he was surrounded by a lot of great coaches and mentors who helped him refine his game.

We all have a contribution to make to the industry. What will your legacy be? **CMP**