36

Developmental Relationships

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the interest of employers and employees alike in understanding and developing mentor-protégé relationships. Many articles and books have left people with the impression that in order to get ahead in business it is necessary—even critical—to have a mentor. The current research on this question is not so clear. In one study (Roche, 1979), it was determined that over sixty-six percent of the people claimed that they had had a mentor, but the definition was so broad that it left one wondering just what a mentor or a mentor–protégé relationship was. Further, the article did little to help one understand whether or not one has a mentor–protégé relationship, much less how to develop one. What we need is an idea of what a good mentor–protégé relationship (MPR) looks like, and then, more important, an idea of how to go about developing our relationships so that they become more and more like that ideal MPR.

Exhibit 36–1 outlines the characteristics of a full blown mentor–protégé relationship as described in a wide body of literature. As you read the characteristics, you will probably conclude that a "true" mentor–protégé relationship is a relatively rare phenomenon. Most researchers presently conclude that there are a variety of "developmental relationships" that vary along several dimensions in terms of their impact on the development of the younger person. These may involve "coaches," "quasi-mentors" or "partial mentors" or "career mentors," or just plain supervisors.

Exhibit 36–2 presents a grid on which these various relationships can be categorized. The important thing to note is that people learn from a variety of relationships, not just the relatively rare mentor–protégé relationship. "Quasi" or "partial" mentors are senior people who take an interest in a portion of the younger person's life and have a significant influence on them, but who do not have the comprehensive and intimate impact on a protégé's life that Mentor did on Ulysses' son, Telemachus, or that the medieval guild masters did on their apprentices.

Consequently, a much better way to think about developmental issues in relationships on the job is to think about the developmental aspects of the relationships that form naturally. The most common one, of course, is the superior–subordinate relationship. As you begin your career you will no doubt have several superiors who will be charged with the responsibility of supervising, monitoring, and perhaps developing your activities.

As Exhibit 36–3 shows, superior–subordinate relationships take place primarily in the context of an organization, which constrains the relationship in many ways. Organization structure, personnel policies, hiring, promotion, and compensation practices, like the history of relationships within the organization and the philosophy of the current senior management, all tend to affect what superiors and subordinates can do in managing the developmental aspects of their relationship. In addition, the organization and, in part, the relation-

Exhibit 36–1

An Eclectic Profile of Mentor-Protégé Relationships

1. Mentor–protégé relationships (MPRs) grow out of personal willingness to enter the relationships and not necessarily out of formal assignments. Thus, MPRs may not coincide with formal hierarchies.
2. MPRs pass through a series of developmental stages characterized as formative, duration, and fruition. Each stage has a characteristic set of activities and tasks.
3. Mentors are generative—that is, interested in passing on their wisdom and experience to others.
4. Mentors try to understand, shape, and encourage the dreams of their protégés. Mentors often give their blessings to dreams and goals of their protégés.
5. Mentors guide their protégés both technically and professionally; that is, they teach things about the technical content of a career and things about the social organization and patterns of advancement of a career.
6. Mentors plan their protégés' learning experiences so that they will be stretching but not overwhelming, and successful. Protégés are encouraged to accept responsibility, but are not permitted to make large mistakes.
7. Mentors provide opportunities for their protégés to observe and participate in their work by inviting their protégés to work with them.
8. Protégés learn in MPRs primarily by identification, trial and error, and observation.
9. Both mentors and protégés have high levels of respect for each other.
10. Mentors sponsor their protégés organizationally and professionally.
11. MPRs have levels of affection similar to parent–child relationships.
12. MPRs end in a variety of ways, often either with continuing amiability or with anger and bitterness.

ship take place within a broader environmental context. Alternatives for both individuals at other organizations in the environment, the economic demands of the current environment, the supply and characteristics of co-workers coming from the environment, and the set of societal and cultural norms and values supported by the environment all contribute to the set of forces which will affect the growth of the developmental relationship on the job. We can reconstruct this model, as shown in Exhibit 36–4, to indicate the cause and effect relationships among these five elements that produce a series of outcomes from the relationship. Obviously, there are many outcomes, only some of which have to do with development.

In one study of a major insurance company (Clawson, 1979), fifty-one managers involved in thirty-eight different superior–subordinate relationships were examined in regard to the amount of learning perceived by both the superior and the subordinate to have taken place in the subordinate on three different dimensions. Those relationships that were most effective in terms of developing the subordinates were then compared with those that were least effective and the sets of criteria that appear in Exhibits 36–5, 36–6, and 36–7 were developed.

Characteristics of Effective Coaches

As shown in Exhibit 36–5, the coaches whose subordinates learned more tended to be people-oriented and even-tempered. Their subordinates knew how they were going to respond because of the consistency in their behavior. They also had somewhat higher tolerance for ambiguity than their less effective counterparts. This meant that they were able to assign projects and tasks to their subordinates without feeling the need to watch over their shoulders every step of the way. A fourth psychological predisposition that characterized effective coaches was the value they placed on working at and advancing in their organization. This was important because it reflected a sense of loyalty which they passed on to their subordinates.

The effective coaches saw their subordinates as being capable, intelligent, and likable people. They also saw themselves as teachers and accepted as part of their managerial jobs the responsibility for developing and instructing and coaching their subordinates.

These psychological predispositions and perceptions are played out in the behavior of the effective coaches in several ways. They took a lot of time to stay in touch with their subordinates. They walked around the office, maintaining a real and not just symbolic open-door policy. Their communications were characterized by an informal style. They tended to use first names and to be excellent listeners, trying as best they could to understand their subordinates' points of view. They carried out their instructional responsibilities by trying to broaden the perspective of their subordinates. This meant sharing information with regard to their own jobs, setting high but

Exhibit 36–2

Two Essential Dimensions in Classifying Developmental Relationships

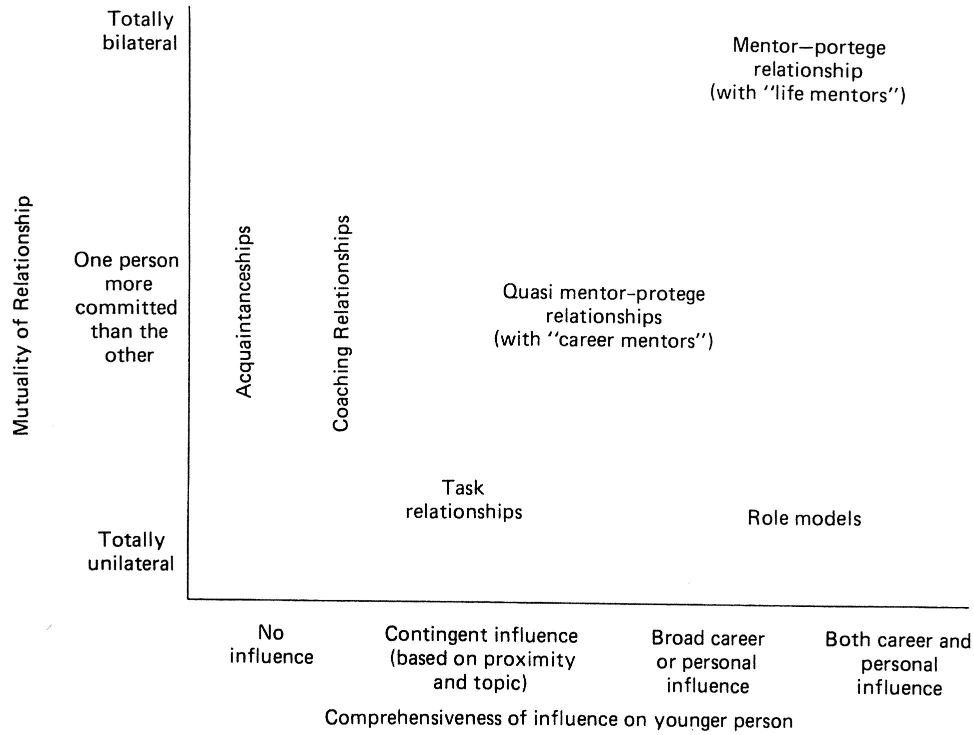


Exhibit 36–3

Basic Elements in Developmental Relationships

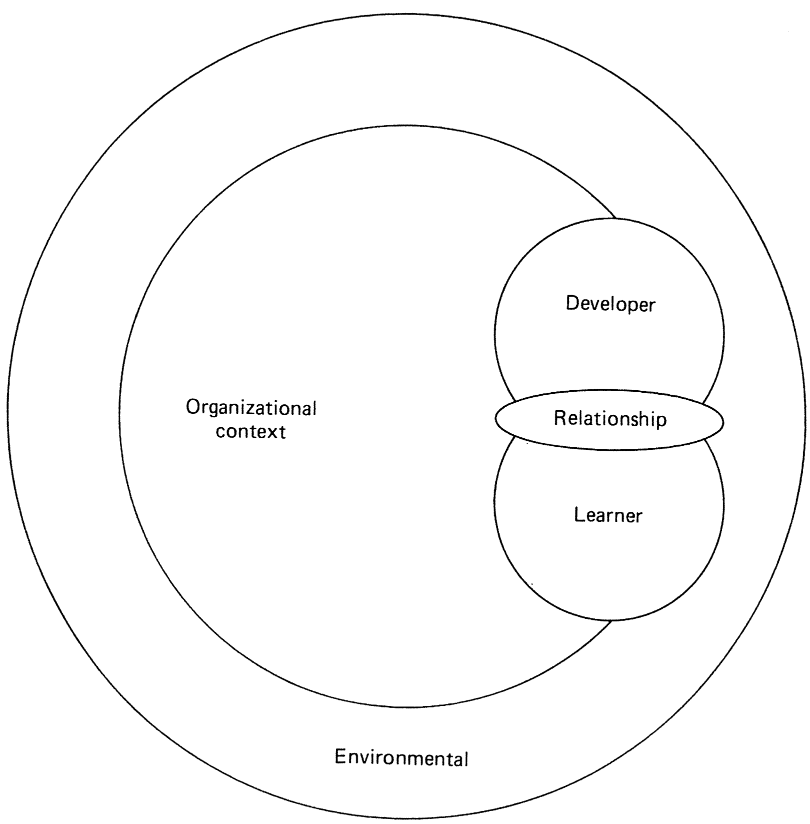
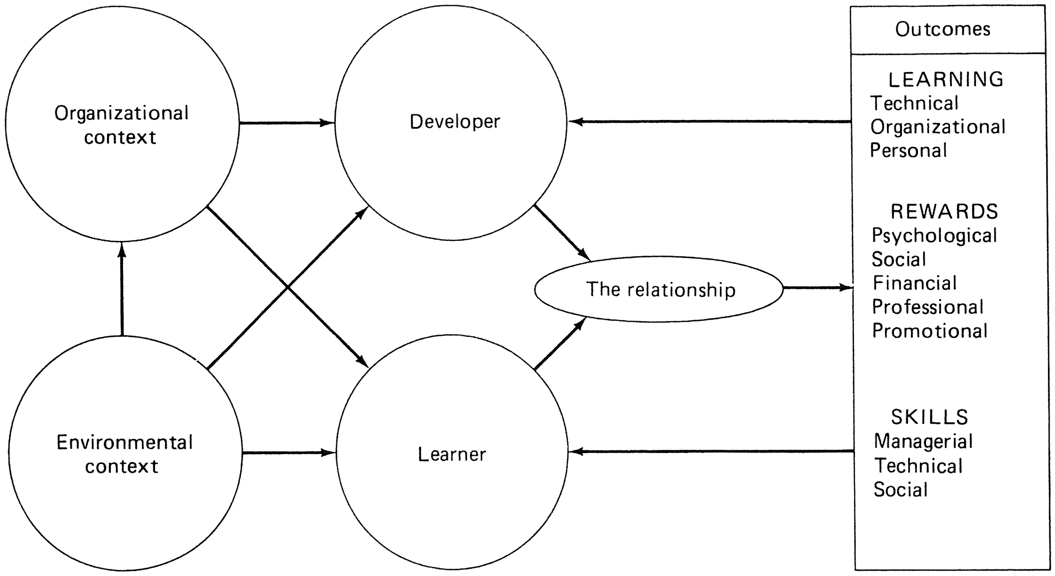


Exhibit 36–4

A Casual Model of Developmental Relationships



obtainable standards, and giving their own opinions about the way things were accomplished within the confines of the organization. In a sense, this was teaching their subordinates the organization politics of their particular company. Finally, they were willing to sponsor their subordinates to other members of senior management.

Characteristics of Subordinates Who Learned

The subordinates who learned more in the study also had a higher orientation toward people and were somewhat more independent than the subordinates who learned less. This is consistent with the notion introduced earlier that subordinates who took more responsibility for their own learning and for their own joining up tended to do better and to learn more than those who expected managers and bosses to teach them what they needed to know.

The subordinates who learned more liked and respected their bosses, and had perceptions that were consistent with their bosses' high levels of regard for them. They felt appreciated, and they felt liked. Not only that, they saw themselves as learners and were willing to accept that role, particularly in the early stages of their career.

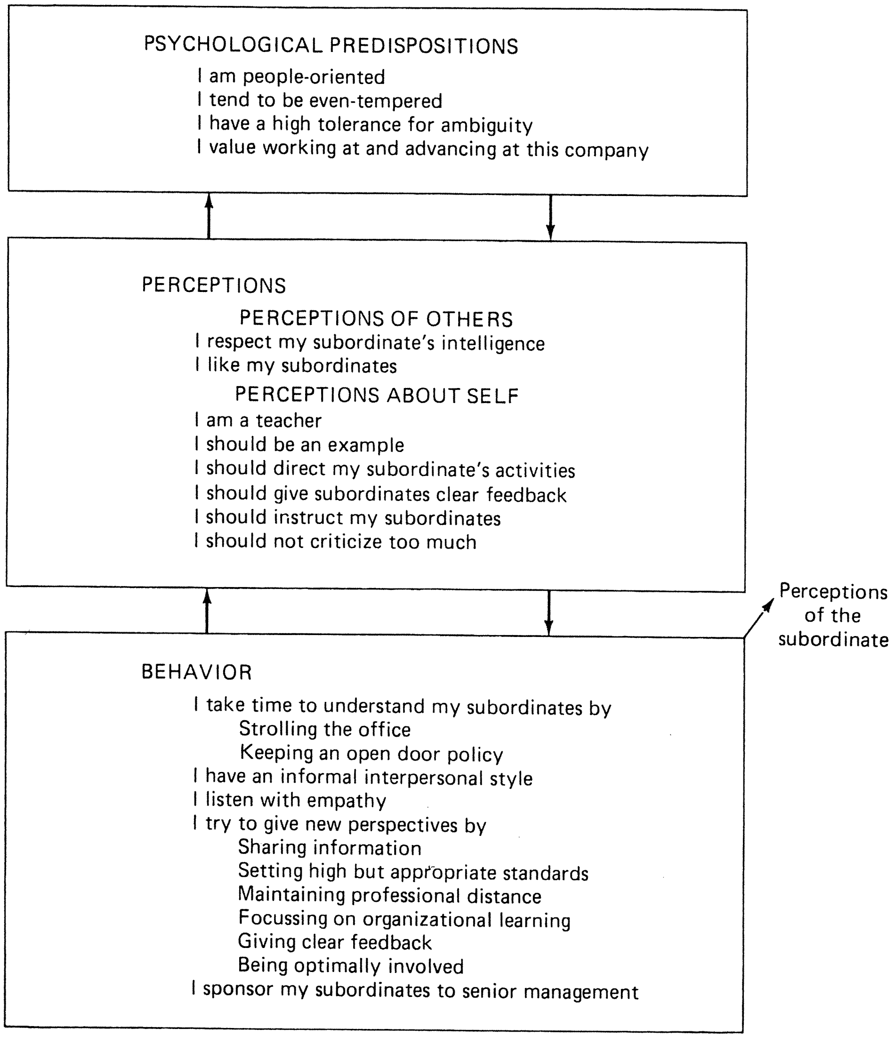
The learning subordinates were also willing to adjust their schedules in order to accept invitations by their bosses to work on particularly important or time-constrained projects. This enthusiastic response to their bosses' requests signaled to their bosses the level of commitment and loyalty they had to their work and to the organization and in turn encouraged the bosses to provide them with additional responsibilities.

Characteristics of Effective Developmental Relationships

Taking these characteristics of the two individuals in developmental relationships together, the characteristics of an effective developmental relationship are in many ways complementary. The superior takes an educational role and the subordinate takes a learning role. There is a great deal of mutuality of trust and respect in the relationship. The effective developmental relationships had a higher frequency of interaction than those which were ineffective. They also had a higher number of "perspective discussions," discussions in which the superior asked open-ended questions about the subordinate's view of the world and in turn shared his or her own. These discussions considered many topics that were not work-related. And finally, the relationships were much less formal than those which were ineffective: The two individuals could talk as people on a first-name basis about important personal as well as technical and organizational matters.

Exhibit 36–5

Characteristics of Effective Superiors



The Interpersonal Learning Ladder

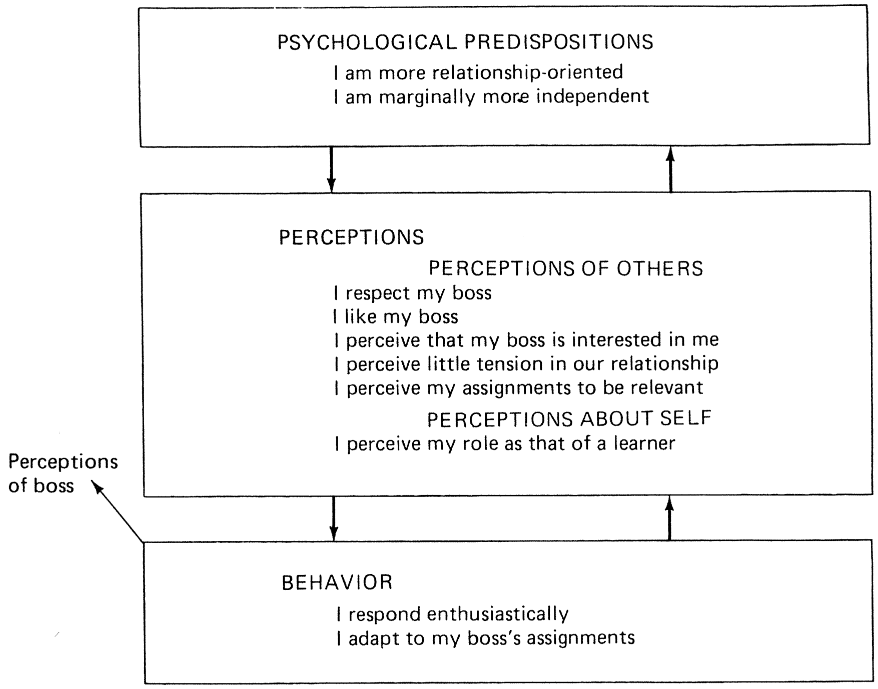
One thing that emerged from this study was the importance of mutuality of trust and respect in a highly effective developmental relationship. Consider the diagram in Exhibit 36–8. When a person learns from another person, that learning is based upon respect for the first person's expertise. If there is no respect for the coach's expertise, the subordinate is not likely to be open to what that superior has to say.

The respect may be in a variety of areas. It may relate to technical parts of the job, to organizational parts of the job, to personal characteristics, or to other specialized areas of expertise. The broader the subordinate's respect for the superior's expertise, the more likely the superior is to have a broad influence on the subordinate's life and career. Unless the respected areas are ones the trainee wants to develop, however, the respect will play a passive role. If the area of respected expertise is one the younger person wants to develop, he or she is likely to be motivated to act on that respect by emulating the coach's behavior in that area, by listening to the coach talk about that area, and by striving to become involved in the coach's activity in that area.

The third and fourth rungs in this ladder of learning revolve around the question of safety for the subordinate when he is in relationship with the superior. If the superior has two characteristics—first a concern for the general well-being of the subordinate, and second a consistency in behavior—the subordinate will begin to develop trust for the superior. The first trust is a "defensive trust" in the sense that the subordinate can rest

Exhibit 36–6

Characteristics of Subordinates Who Learned More



assured that the boss will not do anything to harm the subordinate intentionally. If one adds to that a "protective trust" for the superior's interpersonal skills—that is, a reassurance that the boss will not only not intentionally harm the subordinate, but also is skilled enough to avoid unintentionally harming the subordinate—then the subordinate is likely to lower his defense mechanisms and be open to the influence of the superior.

This takes us to the fifth rung of the interpersonal

Exhibit 36–7

Characteristics of Effective Developmental Relationships

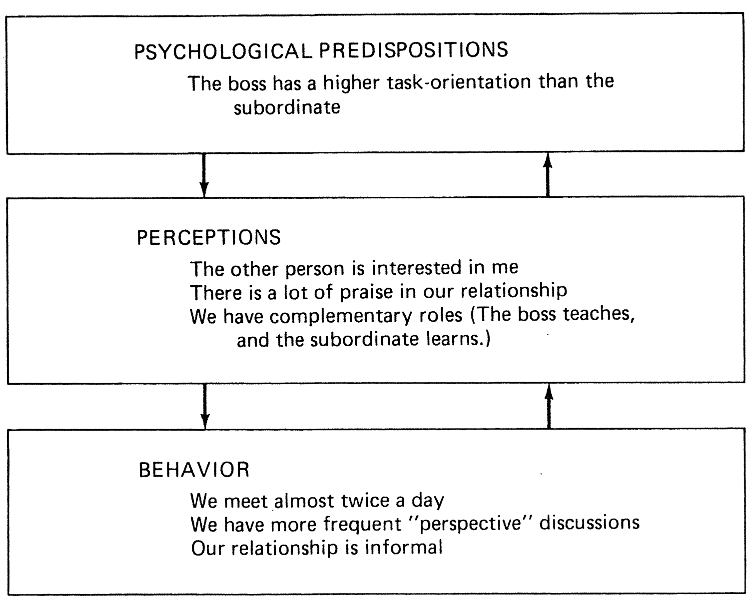
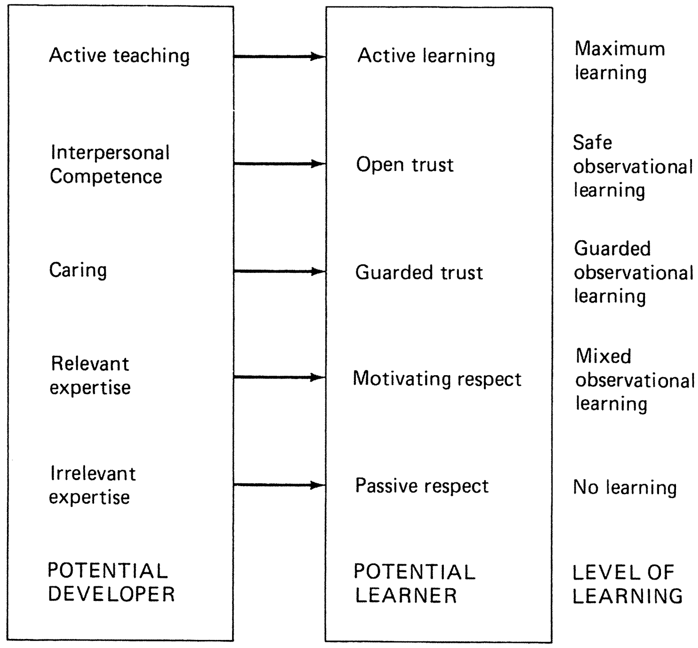


Exhibit 36–8

Interpersonal Learning Ladder



learning ladder, where the superior exerts some positive teaching influence on the subordinate who, because of the respect for his expertise and his trust in the superior's motivations and interpersonal skills, responds to those activities and is now most able to learn from what the superior has to offer.

Developing the Characteristics of Effective Developmental Relationships

The characteristics of effective developmental relationships are not necessarily natural ones. In cases where the superior and the subordinate have a natural fit, this may be the case. But there is much a subordinate and a superior can do to manage the development of these characteristics and their relationship.

Let's consider the case of the subordinate. Many new employees, particularly those with graduate degrees in business administration, feel that the strength of their education is wasted in the early months and years of their careers. Sometimes they see themselves working for people they judge to be less competent than themselves. They often do not hide their opinions and evaluations well. What they fail to realize is that in the history of business management careers in the United States and in the history of the people working above them in the organization are embedded values based on experience and proven track records that relate to credibility. In order for a senior manager to strive to develop a subordinate by giving him or her additional responsibility and instruction, the superior must first have confidence in the subordinate's capacities and abilities. In some cases, as we have mentioned above, this confidence comes naturally to the superior. In other cases it may not be so, and the subordinate bears much of the responsibility for building that confidence.

Perhaps the first and most important step in building this confidence is communicating to your boss that you have his or her best interests at heart. Letting your superior know that in any way that you are able, you will strive to make the superior look good and be successful will go a long way toward reassuring the superior as to your basic motivations and attitudes.

The next step is to demonstrate your own expertise and ability at doing this. A fundamental guideline here is avoiding surprises. Few managers enjoy surprises, even if they are positive ones. A key in business management is being able to anticipate results and to manage one's activities accordingly. In the same way that a boss's dependability and consistency in dealing with a subordinate fosters the relationship, your consistency and dependability in dealing with your superior goes a long way toward developing your superior's respect for you and sense of safety in dealing with you.

If you can add to that the excellent discharge of your current duties, even though they may be "dues-paying" responsibilities, and an additional perspective on the demands facing your boss's position, he or she will be reassured as to the commitment you have for making him or her look good. If your analysis and comments regarding the problems and decisions facing your boss's office are accurate and consistent with his or her own thinking, you probably will be invited to participate more in the formulation of those problems and their solutions.

Developmental relationships are characterized by high degrees of learning, trust, and respect, and the subordinate can do much to develop those characteristics by accepting the role of a learner, by being as dependable and consistent and concerned about his superior as he would like his superior to be about him, and by looking for ways to demonstrate expertise in areas that are relevant to the superior and his job. This process requires a multifaceted assessment of the subordinate, of the superior, and of their relationship. It requires the subordinate to refrain from making snap judgments, and to consider all the reasons why a superior might be in the position he or she is in in the first place, and to accept the possibility there is much to learn from that experience and background.

Summary

Subordinates can do a great deal to manage their learning in the early stages of their careers. They would do well to consider the managing of developmental aspects of their current relationships, rather than constantly seeking for some mentor or sponsor elsewhere in the organization.

Assignment

Read the Karen Harper case (starting below). What should Karen do? Why? What are the pitfalls she should avoid? What are the potential consequences of your recommendations?

KAREN HARPER

> I've got to know by tomorrow morning, Karen. I've got two MBAs from Harvard bugging me every ten minutes on the phone about whether or not they're going to get the job. If you say no, it goes to one of them. Besides, I'm beginning to feel a little uncomfortable around Harry when I see him in the hall—if you leave Fund Management to come work in Investment Advisory, he'll be all over me. I can handle that, but I'd like to get things settled.

Those had been Steve Ackerman's words to Karen Harper this afternoon. As she rode home on the train she began to once again make a list of pros and cons.

The Last Six Years

Karen was 28 years old and had spent the last six years in the Fund Management Group at Hingham Investment Co. Like so many other English Lit grads, she had graduated from college with absolutely no career preparation. She moved from New England to Chicago without a job and into a crowded apartment with three roommates.

On the first day of her job search she registered with a personnel agency as a junior secretary. Right now all she wanted was a job that promised a paycheck every week—she would think about a career or graduate school later. All that mattered was that she survive in Chicago. The agency sent her to Hingham Investment Co., a large, well-known investment management firm whose offices occupied a 20-story older building in the financial district. Karen was well-dressed, attractive, and articulate and didn't think she'd have any trouble getting a job fast.

Her interview took 20 minutes. She was offered an entry-level marketing slot in the Retail

Marketing Department. Her boss (and interviewer) was Harry Rosenberg, the vice president and manager of the department. Harry, who had been with Hingham for the past five years, was a modishly dressed man in his early fifties. He had started the Retail Marketing Department at Hingham, which was a departure from Hingham's traditional business of investment advisory services for large institutional and retail clients.

Karen and Harry liked each other right away. Karen saw Harry as a father-type figure who was very interested in her, both professionally and personally. He told her that she was selling herself short as a secretary and that the marketing slot was a great opportunity to learn the business. He was very concerned about her adjustment to Chicago and invited her to join him for dinner that evening. Karen was flattered and grateful. After pinching pennies for so long, it was great to go out in style. Harry talked a lot about the business and treated Karen like an old friend. Harry's general philosophy seemed to be that hard work really pays off, and since Karen was bright and willing, the sky was the limit.

The next six years seemed to prove Harry's theory. Karen worked hard, often until nine in the evening. After two years in marketing, Harry promoted her to the most prestigious and highly paid area—securities acquisition. Until Karen assumed this role, Harry had done it himself. Karen was viewed by the other members of the department as Harry's favorite. This was undoubtedly true, since no one else spent as much time with Harry, nor did he brag to outsiders about anyone else. When Karen decided to get an MBA and was considering applying to Harvard and Stanford, Harry convinced her to remain in her job and get her MBA by doing evening course work at Northwestern which the firm paid for. Karen's salary increased from $8,000 at her time of hiring to $40,000 plus a sizeable bonus six years later. Harry told her she had it made.

At times Karen believed him. She made plenty of money to support herself in a comfortable apartment. No more roommates. Her job was lots of fun and was coveted by others in the department. Harry allowed her considerable fringe benefits—expense account, free cabs home after a late night at work, after a big project she was free to take a day off. But still she always felt vaguely uneasy—why was Harry doing all this for her? Was it all in her best interests? What did the rest of the firm think? Now she had an MBA—why weren't any other MBAs attracted to Retail Marketing? There were plenty of them in Investment Advisory.

Karen knew the answer to this last question—it was because of Harry. General opinion in Hingham was that Harry was a real eccentric. Karen had to agree that Harry had a rather unorthodox management style and didn't know the first thing about delegating authority. Harry had started Retail Marketing at Hingham and could do all the functions better than anyone else in the department. He loved his work and had to get his hands in everything. Subsequently, no one in the department had much autonomy and the general feeling was that Harry was "on everybody's back" all the time. Karen found that her working relationship with Harry was smoothest when she didn't try to take over things, but instead checked every so often with Harry to keep him informed and ask his advice. Usually she didn't mind this, since it made for the most tranquil atmosphere, but sometimes she felt angry about having to ask Harry's advice on something she felt perfectly able to handle herself. Waiting to see Harry slowed things down considerably and often created problem situations.

The real zinger about Harry was that in spite of all his yelling and meddling, he paid his people exceedingly well and always gave them a sizeable bonus at the end of the year—much bigger than those given out in Investment Advisory to nonpartners. He was always ready to help out an employee in an emergency or problem situation—with either money or time off or whatever. Those who worked for him often said that "just as they were feeling real good about hating Harry for being such a tyrant, he'd go and do something really great out of the blue and totally screw up their heads."

The Investment Advisory Division

Karen's opportunity was to start out as an associate in the Investment Advisory Division. Providing investment management advisory services to clients had always been Hingham's main business. The associate position had been created in order to give young, talented individuals an introduction to money management by working closely with a variety of senior investment managers. Associates were considered to be part of a "resource pool" that was available for work on different projects as they came up. If a large pension fund, for example, requested Hingham to make a presentation on fixed income management, a senior manager in the Fixed Income area of Investment Advisory would select a group of Fixed Income specialists and an associate from the "pool" to work on the presentation. Senior managers also called on associates to assist on day-to-day work with existing clients, which could involve gathering research on a particular industry or providing market information. After a year or so of being in the "pool," the associate has the opportunity to indicate his/her preference for where he/she would like to be placed—whether it be Fixed Income, Equities, Foreign Currency, Research, etc. If this preference coincides with the firm's needs, the associate moves into the desired area. After initial placement, an individual often decides that he/she would like to try another area. If he/she has developed a strong reputation, this movement is usually easy to accomplish.

At the present time, nearly all the associates in the "pool" were recent graduates of top business schools. Investment management was generally regarded as a prestigious field, and the possibility of being made a partner lured many MBAs who were eager to earn big dollars over a period of time. Hingham had recruited at the top business schools for many years for the Investment Advisory Division. No MBA had ever been hired to enter any other area of the firm, including Fund Management.

Associates were expected to work long hours in the first few years. Most associates stayed until early evening at least and were often in the office on weekends. The hours one put in were viewed with a certain degree of pride and indicated how committed one was to the firm and to getting ahead. Associates were often called upon to travel with senior managers to clients' offices. Often this travel was on very short notice. You never really knew where you were going to be the next day.

The Retail Marketing Department

Retail Marketing seemed to be viewed as an amusing curiosity by the rest of Hingham and the investment community. The product was portfolios of securities which were assembled and sold through a broker network to small individual investors and were subsequently not managed. They were sold on the basis of providing steady income and safety through diversification. Its very nature was in contrast to Hingham's traditional business, which was to provide expert advisory service to very wealthy clients and institutions on managing their investment portfolios. By its design, Retail Marketing was a very profitable department for Hingham. Although other firms had tried to imitate the Hingham product, none had been as successful. Most observers attributed Hingham's success to their high-quality and long-standing reputation in the investment community and access to extensive brokerage sales networks. But Harry Rosenberg, the partner in charge of Retail Marketing, insisted that it was his genius that was responsible for the success and that he could do the same at several other firms.

Only about 40 people worked in the Fund Management Department—of these about 10 could be considered to be professionals, either in buying, marketing, or research. The majority of the staff had been there for several years—several had come to Hingham with Harry about 11 years ago when he had joined the firm. Hingham employed close to 500 people, of whom about 100 were professionals and 28 were partners.

The major part of Karen's job was selecting securities for the "packaged pools" of securities Hingham marketed. The purpose of the "pools" was to allow small investors to participate in the attractive yields offered to institutional investors without having to select their own individual portfolios. The product was very successful—popular with both investors and securities brokers and very profitable for Hingham. In fact, during the bad times of 1974–75, it was Retail Marketing which kept Hingham in the black.

Due to the Fund's popularity, there was an almost constant need to accumulate more securities for the pools. Karen bought about $50 million each week. The process of buying securities involved following credit market rates, checking with the department's research team on the current creditworthiness of individual issuers, maintaining a balance of different types of issues in the portfolio, and most important, trying to get the best price on every security purchased. Karen bought stocks and bonds from a wide variety of brokerage firms—she had direct phone lines to eight of the largest firms. Every day involved taking phone calls from about 20 different bond salespeople—mostly aggressive, smooth-talking salesmen. These people worked on commission and had a vested interest in keeping Karen happy, since she was such an important customer. They were continually offering theater tickets, dinners on the town, party invitations, etc. Although they could be a nuisance, Karen enjoyed this part of her job a lot—most of them were reasonably bright and funny. She had to keep reminding herself, however, that their attentiveness was due solely to her buying power, not her personal charms.

Because of her close relationship with Harry, Karen was involved in all the strategic decisions of the department—something which was not a strict function of her job. In the past Karen had helped develop new concepts for pools to expand on the theme. Harry valued Karen's opinions very highly and often designated her as his spokesperson at meetings both inside and outside the company.

When Karen tried to analyze her feelings about the job, it boiled down to the old joke about "not wanting to join any club that would have me as a member." She suspected this might be silly, but she had learned this job almost five years ago without any MBA or financial background—how difficult could it be? Harry made such a big deal about it—in moments of hyperbole he called her the "most important woman on Wall Street." She really enjoyed the job itself, but she didn't feel that she was really "growing" any more, and wasn't growth supposed to be essential? Karen's doubts were exacerbated by the fact that Hingham was practically unique in both the size and the activity of its Retail Marketing Department—no other firm offered a position similar to hers, so there was no way of comparing herself with others. She got a lot of attention from salesmen, but nobody else really knew anything about the pools—it wasn't a well-known glamour position like investment advisory or investment banking. She was worried that she would become a high-priced but "illiquid" commodity. If something went really wrong with the department, where would she go? To sum up, she felt like a very large fish in a very small pond.

The atmosphere in Retail Marketing could best be described as "chaotic." Harry Rosenberg's personality definitely contributed to this situation. His moods seemed to determine the group mood. He involved himself in all areas of the department and delegated very little authority but much responsibility.

Harry Rosenberg

Harry usually arrived in the office at ten or eleven in the morning after calling his secretary and key people at least once by phone from home. Everyone knew when he arrived and there was always a "mood check"—is he in a good or bad mood?—which would be relayed verbally throughout the department. Harry spent most of the day in meetings and on the phone and always left the office at one o'clock for a two-hour lunch. Since so little authority was delegated, workers in the department had to consult Harry before making important decisions and this resulted in a line of people outside his office all day. Once you did get in to see him there were constant interruptions—phone calls, secretaries (three of them) walking in and out to extricate papers from his jumbled desk, urgent questions from underlings who didn't know what Harry wanted done about this or that. Harry liked to stay in the office late—often until eight or so, and several people regularly stayed late in order to get to talk to him without the constant interruptions. Often Harry would take an employee out to dinner to continue these discussions. He expressed great disdain for "nine-to-five-ers" and commented that they would "never get ahead in his department."

Harry had a very controversial management style. If something or someone displeased him, he would let the offender know exactly how he felt. He had a violent temper which didn't last very long. He seemed to explode only with those workers from whom he expected a lot and had disappointed him. In spite of all his noise, he had never fired anyone. There was a continual rumbling in Retail Marketing that Harry was "absolutely nuts" and that he was "driving everybody crazy." Key people would threaten to leave from time to time, but actual turnover was very low.

Harry gave the impression of having absolute authority in his department and gave little indication that he was concerned about any hierarchy at Hingham that was above him. The partnership structure at Hingham was actually quite stratified, and Harry was several rungs down from the top of the partnership group. He found this structure exceedingly frustrating and was very critical of top management. The senior partners tended to stay away from Retail Marketing—it was not the mainstream of the firm's traditional business and, though it was extremely profitable, was not fully understood by many of the older partners. Most of the professional staff in Retail Marketing had had limited, if any, exposure to the partners above Harry's level.

Most sources attributed Harry's managerial autonomy to the profitability of the product. General sentiment was that "as long as Harry brings in the dollars, nobody's going to tell him what to do." Harry enjoyed running the department as a little profit center and did many things which were not "standard Hingham policy."

> I like to think of Retail Marketing as my little family and I'd do anything for my people. I pay them much more than they'd get anywhere else and they feel they're working for me, not Hingham and Company. Yeah, I know I don't do things by the book but I don't want this place to be just a regular department of a stuffy, impersonal firm where everybody gives 50% of their energy and ability and gets a raise every year and a vacation. People here know that if they put out the maximum effort, they'll get rewarded—and that any job in the department, including mine, is open to anyone who shows me they can do it.

Karen's Dilemma

I know Investment Advisory *seems* to be appealing to Karen, but it's dead wrong for her. She's got it made here if she'd just wise up and realize it. That's the trouble with young people in business today—they think they've got to keep moving all the time—get titles, etc. If they'd just plug away at something and be patient they'd be a lot better off. Look, I've been in business for 30-odd years and I've seen just about all there is to see. If Karen just sticks with me and accepts the fact that I've got her best interests at heart and have the experience to know what's the best course for her, she'll be fine. She's a bright kid, but when she gets all this MBA rhetoric in her head, she's dangerous. What happens if she goes to Investment Advisory? She'll be just one MBA in a sea of them—and they're all after the same thing—to be a partner. Well, the existing partners would have to be hit by the plague for spots to open up fast enough to please these kids. She'd be working her ass off for a whole bunch of people, none of whom would be able to give her the kind of close direction and support I can. I'm not going to be alive forever; I'm 57 years old—somebody's got to take my spot—and Karen's the obvious choice if she doesn't lose her head and do something stupid.

Karen had heard Harry's thinking a million times. She thought he was sincere, but seriously doubted that if she stayed in Retail Marketing a senior partnership would ever open up for her. The rumor mill had it that the senior partners were concerned about Harry's management style and were just waiting until he retired to put someone into that spot who was "one of them"—someone who could integrate Retail Marketing better into the Hingham mainstream. Karen felt sure that no matter how competent a manager she was, she would always be viewed as "Harry's girl" and would be considered suspect. She thought a lot about how she could stay in Retail Marketing and get more visibility with top management, but was at a loss as to how to accomplish this. Day-to-day business did not put her in much contact with the rest of the firm and it was Harry who met with the partners at the weekly luncheon and planning sessions. She knew that he always spoke highly of her but didn't know if that was a positive or negative fact, given the partners' general reaction to Harry.

Maybe she should grab at the associate's spot while it was available. She had known Steve Ackerman, the junior partner in charge of the training program, for several years and they had always been cordial. After a particularly frustrating day last week, she had called him on an impulse and asked to meet him for lunch. She had guardedly confided her frustration in working with Harry to Steve. He seemed to understand completely and said that he himself could never work for someone like Harry. This made Karen wonder if there was something wrong with her—why was she putting up with this situation? The more she thought, the madder she got. Before lunch was over, Steve had offered her the chance to enter Investment Advisory as an associate. He warned her that initially it might seem like a step down—taking orders from everyone and doing grunt work after she had been largely on her own, not counting Harry's influence, for the past few years. The move would mean an initial pay cut of $5,000, which would still make her the most highly paid associate. Steve explained that this was the best he could do, since he didn't want the newly hired MBAs to think that someone doing the same job, although experienced in another area, was being paid $10,000 more than they. Besides, Steve had explained, the salary would increase over time and her chances of making a partnership were definitely enhanced.

Karen felt depressed and confused. The idea of entering the competitive world of an associate in Investment Advisory really didn't appeal to her. She felt she had proven her ability and didn't want to go through the initial stages of having to make a big impression again. Besides, Harry was her mentor, wasn't he? And from all she'd read about women in business, wasn't the mentor system supposed to be an essential ingredient in helping women move to the top? Was she looking a gift horse in the mouth and just being a spoiled brat? After all, without Harry's guidance and support, she might be still typing somewhere.

The flip side of this argument was that Karen felt that she was getting too old to be involved in the paternalistic relationship with Harry. If she didn't stand on her own now, when would she? She knew that some of the partners had definite opinions as to the nature of Harry and Karen's relationship. Even though Karen knew that their insinuations were unfounded, she still felt a little embarrassed. The rumor mill also postulated that the reason why Harry was so supportive of Karen was that she was a woman—and in Harry's macho mind that meant "nonthreatening." Why had Harry never taken a bright young *male* under his wing and pushed him along?

Karen knew she had to decide tonight. She didn't want to throw a great thing away—but she didn't want to get trapped in a childlike relationship either.