

Best Mentors: Alan 'A.C.' Nash Learns the Motivations of His Mentees Before Guiding Them

"A good leader recognizes his strengths and weaknesses. Everyone on my team has multiple skills that they are better at than I am," Alan Carroll "A.C." Nash said.

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By Raychel Lean

Alan Carroll "A.C." Nash is a shareholder at Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin in Fort Lauderdale.

Name a secret ingredient or two for effective mentoring.

Cultivation and desire. Mentees are individuals with varying life experiences and motivations. Having the desire to want to learn their motivations is the cornerstone of mentoring. Once captured, the mentor is tasked with cultivating their mentee and directing them to their best outcome.

What's the most important leadership lesson you've learned and why is it so valuable?

That a good leader recognizes his strengths and weaknesses. Everyone on my team has multiple skills that they are better at than I am. My job is to identify these skills, rely on the team and their unique skill sets and appreciate that our game plan will be effectively executed.

Which leadership skills were the most difficult for you to develop?

Patience and recovery from a failure. My working pace is couched in my desire to have tasks completed immediately. It took time to develop patience that other team members operate at a pace that is different than my own. However, their results often equal or surpass mine. Recovery from failure has always been a challenge as I am competitive. However, I learned from a mentor long ago that you "follow a win with a win and a loss with a win." There is always another "win" on the horizon.

How do you teach negotiating skills?

Negotiating begins with understanding what stimulates the opposing party. Is it monetary? Is it a policy change? I teach that we are to speak to these motivations with an aim to find the resolution.

When trying to obtain buy-in for something new or sustaining, what tactics work for you?

My new ideas are generally couched in empirical data. If I am able to show a well-researched objective trend that is devoid of a counterpoint, I have found that my team is open to new application. However, the goal

is to show how it will enhance their working or life experience. Otherwise, I am delivering a failed speech based in my own motivations.

Do you have any quick tips for re-energizing an overworked team?

The leader needs to discover who on the team is “overworked” or disorganized. I have found that some team members who believed that they were overwhelmed were simply out touch with their current workload. The leader should take the time with each team member to outline and chart their current load, and offer suggestions to more efficiently manage tasks. However, if the team is objectively overworked, the leader

needs to find a way to fight for his or her team. Hiring decisions, overtime pay, working flexibility, etc. are tools that an effective leader may need to use.

What are the best ways for people to stay connected to a key mentor over time and locations?

Set routine in-person meetings with milestones that need to be met before follow-up meetings. Remain engaged in your mentee’s development.

