

MENTOR • RESOURCES

CASE STUDY



UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
Alumni Association and Foundation



Situation

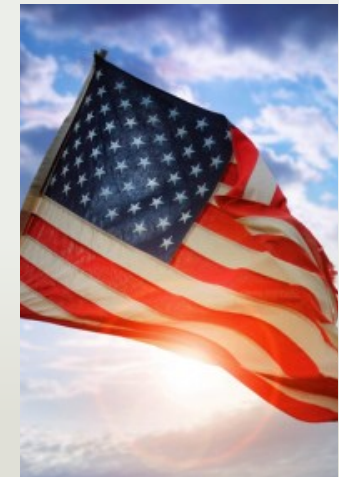
Graduates of the US Naval Academy (USNA) are commissioned officers in the US Navy or Marine Corps. They serve their country across the globe, often in difficult and dangerous assignments leading in the air, on or beneath the sea, and on the front lines.

The US Naval Academy seeks to prepare leaders for this country, first and foremost as officers in the uniformed services and then in other meaningful careers as their capabilities and desires dictate.

The leadership of the USNA Class of 1969 recognized the importance of mentoring in achieving performance excellence and proposed to the USNA Alumni Association an internet enabled mentoring program as the first step to a long term permanent program funded by the Class. To that end, they selected Wisdom Share software to help connect its alumni base across all of the different generations and geographies.

The USNA Alumni Mentoring Program (AMP) leverages the desire of the USNA Alumni to assist each other to strive for their highest contributions in command, citizenship, and government service. The aim of the USNA AMP is to inspire alumni to set higher goals, achieve more, make more informed decisions and have greater satisfaction in their military service and in selected second endeavors. Specifically, the goals of USNA AMP are to:

1. Further the achievement of the Academy's mission to have more alumni ready to "assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship, and government"
2. Improve retention in the Naval Service/ Marine Corps.
3. Energize the culture of alumni helping alumni to benefit the Country, Navy/ Marine Corps, Academy, and generations of alumni and midshipmen.



Solution

The USNA put a program administrator in place and worked with the Wisdom Share client service team to identify three areas they felt were going to be critical to their success:

1. Recruiting
2. The match
3. The quality of the relationship

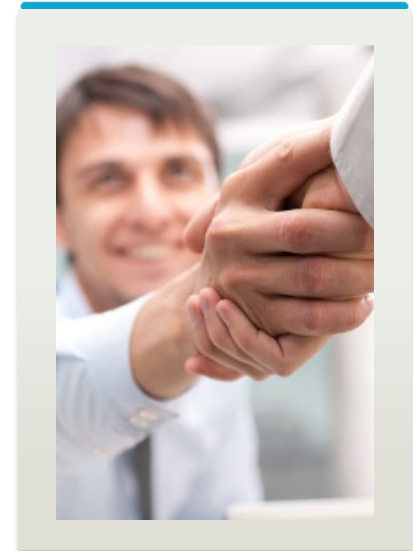
Recruiting Strategies

The recruitment process was also going to be critical to a successful mentoring program. The AMP team found that one-to-one and face-to-face referrals were the most effective way to introduce new mentors to AMP. Current participants are encouraged to share their mentoring experiences and AMP with fellow USNA alumni. At each class reunion, an AMP

representative shares a presentation on the program and current mentors and protégés stand up and share their experiences.

Other recruiting approaches include:

- Posts on the USNA Alumni Association and Foundation's Facebook page
- Articles in alumni publications
- Presentations at class reunions, Board of Trustees meeting, and an annual conference of Class Presidents.
- Program information distributed at career fairs



Solution



The Match

First, the AMP team established the matching criteria and the following profiles for participants:

Mentor Profile

- USNA classes of 1950 through 2013
- Wide range of military and civilian experiences as well as academic backgrounds.
- Eager to share their knowledge and experience with fellow alumni
- Willingness to participate in the culture of “Alumni helping Alumni.”

Protégé Profile:

- Appreciation of the wealth of leadership, experience, and knowledge found in AMP mentors
- Motivation to use this resource to support their career and personal goals.

The AMP team recognized that the matching algorithm is the lynchpin of the matching process because it “supports compatibility, which establishes a strong foundation for the initial rapport and subsequently sustains the

relationship.” Through years of research, Mentor Resources has learned that the most common factors that contribute to a high level of compatibility include:

- Personality Factors
- Industry
- Academic Majors
- Functional Expertise
- Skill and Competency Areas
- Working Motivators
- Commonalities

In particular, the inclusion of personality factors increases the success of the relationship and the satisfaction with the match. When personality questions were included in the matching algorithm, our research showed:

- Satisfaction with the match increased 18%
- More goals achieved
- Goals achieved in less time
- Communication easier

“The match algorithm supports compatibility, which establishes a strong foundation for the initial rapport and subsequently sustains the relationship.”

Solution

The Relationship

Once matched online, most participants throughout the stages of a military or civilian career, how to balance work and home life, or how to cope with life's challenges. However, they do log onto a common platform where they are guided through the milestones of the mentoring process. They can share files, communicate with each other and access common content that is relevant to their relationship.

Some pairs meet once to discuss a particular issue while others develop a longer lasting bond over time. Participants may sign up as both a mentor and a protégé and be involved with multiple mentors and protégés. The program is set up to be flexible and meet the needs of the individual participants.

Besides the match, the USNA also noted that the following factors have been instrumental in creating effective matches – ones that stay

connected and accomplish their goals:

- Consistent communication between the mentor and protégé
- Personalized Partnership Goals and Objectives:
 - The protégé needs to come to the relationship with specific goals and objectives
 - The mentor and protégé need to meet upfront to create an action plan with concrete action steps for their specific relationship
 - Action plans should include short and long-term goals as well as personal and professional goals
- Resources Guides:
 - Road map to guide mentors and protégés through the partnership
 - Shared content that is relevant and accessible



The program is set up to be flexible and meet the needs of the individual participants.

Results

More than 1,000 alumni are participating in the USNA AMP and enrollment continues to increase. Survey results show that the USNA alumni are experiencing greater satisfaction in their lives and careers as a result of mentoring through AMP. One survey participant wrote, “I have learned so much through my mentor. He helps with big picture issues and day-to-day difficulties. My only regret is that I didn’t join this program earlier.”

Another alumni wrote, “Joining the Alumni Mentoring Program is one of the smartest decisions I’ve ever made...My mentor and friend is invaluable. He inspires me to be my best and true self—for that, I can never thank him enough. To the Class of ’69, thank you for your gift. It has changed my life.”

Best Practices

Besides a focused strategy on recruiting and the right matching algorithm, the USNA identified the following factors as keys to establishing a successful, growing program:

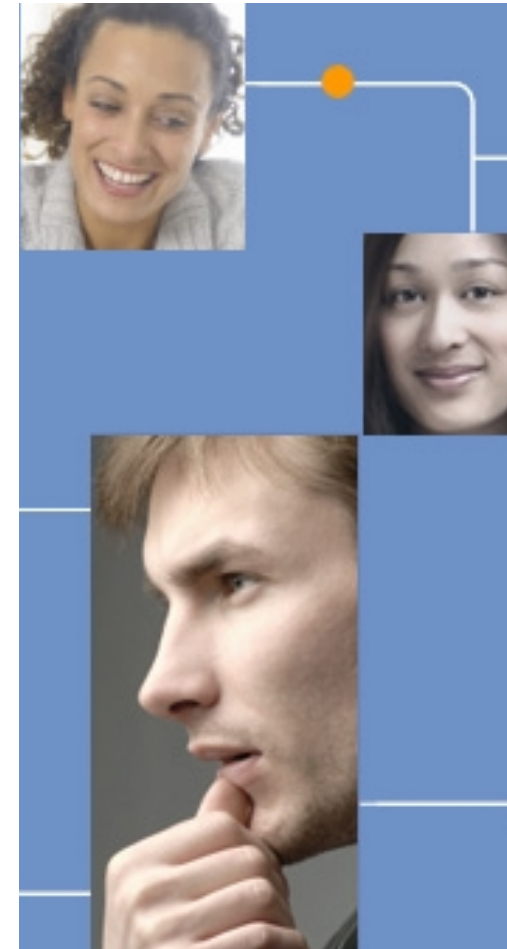
- Strong and consistent focus on alumni helping alumni, which links back to the Academy’s mission. This also relates to fostering buy-in from high level administrators of the institution.
- Partnering with class presidents, the Alumni Association, and other alumni to build understanding of the program and broaden outreach efforts
- Program administrator as a point of contact for questions with access to leadership team
- Team that is committed to the program’s success and believes in the value of mentoring (team members who have personally experienced the benefits of mentoring)
- Effective match criteria algorithm that results in compatible pairings
- Tools and resources to support successful mentoring outcomes
- Clear expectations for participants about the program
- Surveys to gather information from participants to improve the program
- Options to be able to connect for longer-term formal matches or for less formal, shorter-term dialogues
- The ability to be able to track progress through reporting is key to being able to take quick actions in response to issues and to determine recruiting and outreach needs. The ability to track enrollment; those who have registered, but not matched; pending match requests; matched pairs; and closed matches.

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About Mentor Resources

Mentor Resources is the premier provider of tools for mentoring programs, using Wisdom Share™ an online SaaS matching system. Our goal with each client is to help them develop mentoring programs which combine the best possible match for the Mentor/Protégé pair, with clear guidance and measurable goals which are strategically aligned with the organization's long-term goals. In addition to Alumni Associations and University Career Centers, clients include Fortune 1000 companies, professional associations, government departments and non-profit organizations.

For more information about Mentor Resources, visit www.mentorresources.com or call (415) 380-0918.



About US Naval Academy Alumni Association:

The mission of the US Naval Academy Alumni Association is to serve and support the United States, the Naval Service, the Naval Academy and its alumni by furthering the highest standards at the Naval Academy; by seeking out, informing, encouraging and assisting outstanding, qualified young men and women to pursue careers as officers in the Navy and Marine Corps through the Naval Academy; and by initiating and sponsoring activities which will perpetuate the history, traditions, memories and growth of the Naval Academy and bind alumni together in support of the highest ideals of command, citizenship and government. For more information about the Naval Academy Alumni Association's Alumni Mentoring Program, visit www.usna.com/amp.



Authors

Kim Wise, Founder

Kim Wise is Founder and CEO of Mentor

Resources. In this role, Kim heads the strategic direction of the company's products with primary responsibility for managing the Fortune 500 client base.

Prior to founding Mentor Resources in 2001, Kim was the Managing Director of Mentium Corporation in San Francisco, a mentoring organization devoted to the advancement of women in business. She gained her experience in mentoring and in understanding the unique needs of businesses through her years of training and sales in retail and consumer markets. Considered an expert in the field of mentoring, Kim has been profiled in the *New York Times*, *Business Week* and *Chief Learning Officer Magazine*.

Cindi Frame, Product and Marketing

Cindi oversees product strategy and marketing at Mentor Resources. She has a passion for creating meaningful products for her customers and most recently spent 6 years at Market Metrix building and managing their Employee Feedback division.

Cindi also works very closely with sales and marketing to determine the most effective ways to reach and communicate with prospects and clients. She draws from her experience as a brand manager at The Clorox Company as well as from many years doing marketing (and just about everything else) at several start-up companies in the bay area.



Kim Wise, Founder