

NEOGOV

Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders:

6 WAYS TO ADD MENTORING TO YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE



There are currently five generations that make up the American workforce, more than at any other time in history. While Traditionalists and Baby Boomers are rapidly heading toward retirement, Gen X and Millennial employees make up over two-thirds of the working population. At the same time, the Gen Z population (5% of the workforce) has recently entered the working world and their presence will expand for years to come.

It's important to keep these figures in mind as you plan for the future of your workforce. In particular, you're probably already beginning to think about whether your organization is prepared for the disruption that will come from a wave of retirements. Is your remaining workforce adequately equipped to backfill those positions and take on leadership roles? How will you account for a loss of institutional knowledge? If this is a challenge you've already been proactively thinking about, you're on the right track. In either case, there's no time like the present to anticipate how you can start to prepare tomorrow's leaders to fill the gaps left by the silver tsunami.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANAGERS ARE ALSO MENTORS BY NATURE

Being a champion for individual development has a positive impact on the employee experience and can inspire employees to push themselves to new heights. It also results in greater outcomes for the organization by setting employees on a course that positions them to eventually take on roles vacated by retiring leaders.

In this guide, we'll explore six key areas of focus for managers looking to integrate mentorship into their day-to-day management approach, with the objective of evolving today's entry-level employees into tomorrow's leaders.

1 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF REGULAR ONE-ON-ONES

Mentorship only works when employees and their managers are engaged. According to a Gallup poll, employees who have regular one-on-one meetings with their managers are three **three times more likely to feel engaged with their job.**

Building this working relationship is critical. Managers should set a regular time on the calendar to meet with employees, preferably for an hour a week. The objective is to provide a dependable, standing meeting time where employees can express themselves without an audience of their peers.

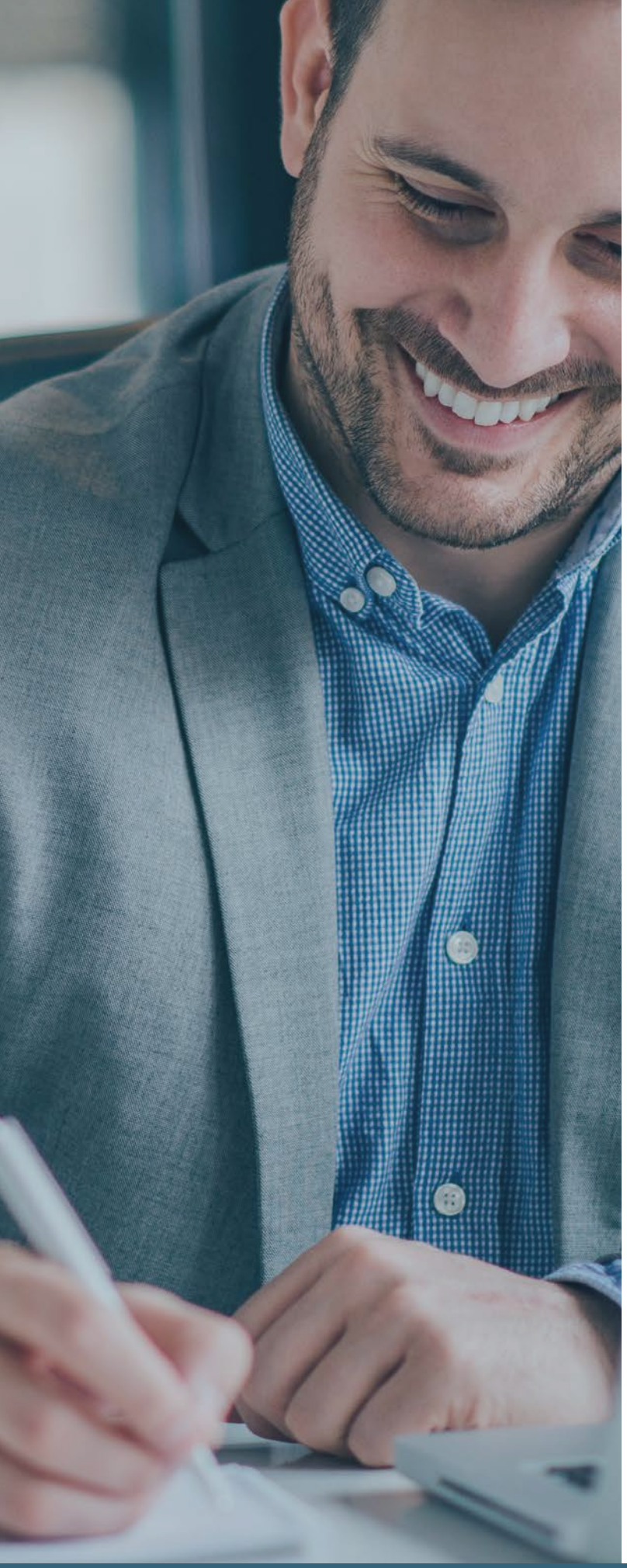
The manager should create structure and set expectations for the meeting, but also allow the employee space to bring up discussion topics, ask questions to gain clarity, or voice concerns.

If there are areas that need improvement, this is where they should be addressed and supported by as much constructive detail as possible. This is an ideal time to assign projects and check in on the status of already assigned projects.

In addition to weekly one-on-one meetings, managers should schedule quarterly and annual meetings that focus on long-term employee career goals. During these quarterly and annual one-on-ones, managers should ask questions that gauge where the employee is at in terms of desiring career advancement. Having an understanding of whether an employee is content where they are, or anxious to take the next step can provide managers with a better sense of which team members should be offered opportunities for focused growth and development.

TIME FRAME	EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK	GOALS OF ONE-ON-ONE
Weekly	• What are your outstanding assignments and what do you need to complete them? • Are there any roadblocks that I can help address with you? • What are your priorities and what do you need help reprioritizing?	• Update on accomplishments • Check on workload • Offer assistance
Quarterly	• Are you interested in any training opportunities? • What are your short term professional goals? • What do you need from me to assist in your track towards success	• Get insight on professional goals • Offer training • Assess the employee's role
Annually	• What are your future aspirations within the organization? • What have been some of your biggest successes this past year? • How do you like to be acknowledged for a job well done?	• Check on future plans • Offer long-term training • Goal setting • Ask about recognition preferences

2



THE VALUE OF DETAILED DOCUMENTATION 2

Effective mentoring managers keep detailed notes on meetings with mentees, as well as record observations on their performance throughout the week and month. We're all human – it's not uncommon for someone to forget details, particularly if a manager is responsible for supervising multiple employees. It requires diligent record keeping to provide employees with accurate, thoughtful feedback.

In the absence of notes and reminders, recency bias may taint an employee's evaluation or cause a manager to overlook accomplishments that need to be recognized. This can cause an employee to feel underappreciated or question their evaluation, and may lead to a lack of engagement or faith in the manager.

> **What is recency bias?**
> *When a manager or supervisor gives feedback related only to an employee's most recent performance as opposed to their performance over a longer period of time.*

Remember that these detailed notes should include not only positive or negative feedback, but also suggestions for improvement or action items to address challenges. For example, instead of a note that says "Casey is performing poorly," instead hone in on specifics: "Casey is struggling with attention to detail; needs to proof work before submitting it."

This practice, known as journaling, can be used to give either immediate feedback or saved for later when review time comes around. Some performance management systems come with built-in functionality for recording notes on employees, and make them available in one place to easily access at any given time.

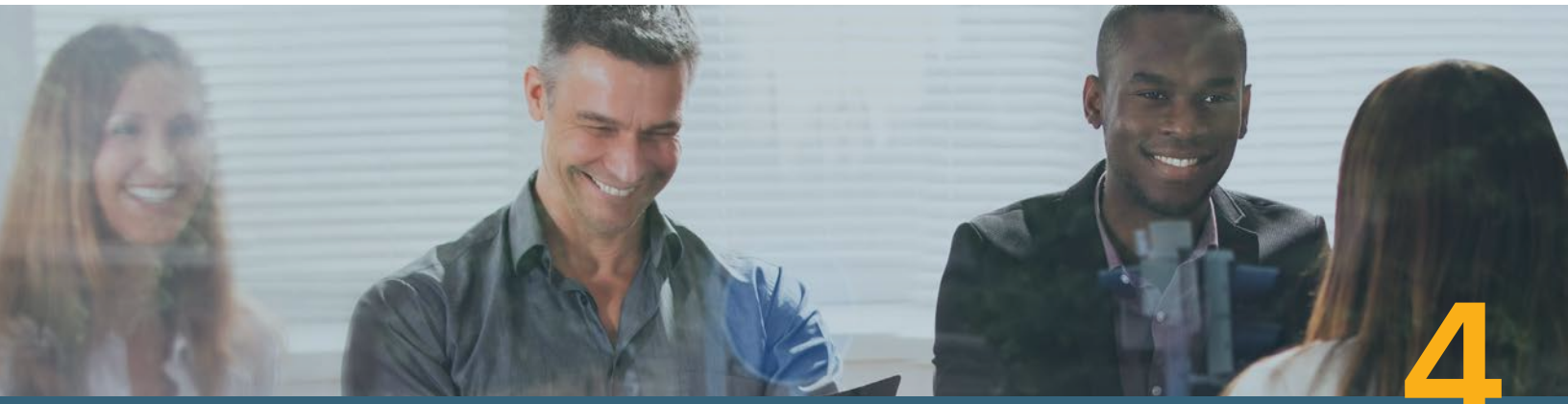
3 GET MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES USING 360 FEEDBACK

A recent NEOGOV study found that **40% of employees think their organization's current system of evaluation is subpar**, which suggests that traditional approaches should be revamped to ensure employees view them as valuable.

Sometimes, the best way for an employee to get a comprehensive picture of their performance is to have multiple people who work closely with the employee weigh in. Enter 360 feedback reviews, a style of performance review that requests feedback from other people in the organization who regularly interact or collaborate on projects with the employee.

IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE 360 FEEDBACK PROCESS, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- **What are the specific KPIs of your department and how do they serve the goals of the organization?**
  Once you have these items in focus, the 360 evaluation program should be tailored to these standards.
- **What are the key skills or attributes needed to perform their current job, and what are the ones they'd need to take the next step in their career?**
  This is helpful for providing feedback on where they need to improve now and where they need to focus for the future.
- **Who should rate performance?**
  The manager and any direct reports should certainly rate an employee's performance, but you should also get input from colleagues at the same level who the employee interfaces with on a regular basis.
- **Will employees be candid?**
  Assuring confidentiality is crucial to the success of 360 reviews, so let employees know that their feedback will be presented as anonymous. Subordinates and colleagues may feel uncomfortable being completely honest if they fear it will get back to the employee being evaluated.
- **How will feedback be shared with the employee?**
  The 360 feedback should almost always be presented verbally by the employee's manager and then shared via a printed document or email. During the meeting, make sure to celebrate wins, lock in a game plan for improvement, and set goals based on the review. Continuously follow up on progress to ensure the review serves a purpose.



4 INCLUDE THE EMPLOYEE IN THE BIG PICTURE

The best employees think about how they can grow within an organization and take on more responsibility. A manager's job is to think about that as well, but the best managers chart career paths in their minds for employees.

They then offer opportunities that lead them down those paths by continuously giving them projects that stretch their abilities. These projects provide managers visibility into employee potential and can be used to map where an employee is capable of going, given the appropriate coaching and training.

During annual goal setting is an ideal time to queue up a couple of projects that lie outside the employee's comfort zone but also align with the organziation or department's business goals. In fact, according to a McKinsey study, 91% of organizations who had effective performance management systems said that employee goals were linked to business priorities.

The results of these stretch projects can provide managers with insight into an employee's strengths and weaknesses that might not be visible in their day-to-day work.

5 PROVIDE ON-DEMAND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

A superb manager that takes a mentoring approach should regularly assign courses to employees based on observed areas of improvement, and also assign courses on topics based on the career aspirations of the employee. Demonstrating a genuine interest in an employee's long-term career goals is an essential ingredient in the mentoring process.

Since most managers don't have the bandwidth to build courses or lead training (as much as they might want to), it's important to arm them with tools that make it possible to offer continuous learning opportunities.

A Cloud-based learning management system with a library of courses that cover hard and soft skills can empower them to offer on-demand learning opportunities to employees that need improvement or are hungry for knowledge.

The dominant generations in today's workforce are less inclined to want traditional classroom training, but they do desire the ability to learn on their own time, particularly in an online setting where they can go at their own pace.

"79% of organizations expected to invest more in online learning in 2021, compared to 57% in 2020."

– LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report 2021

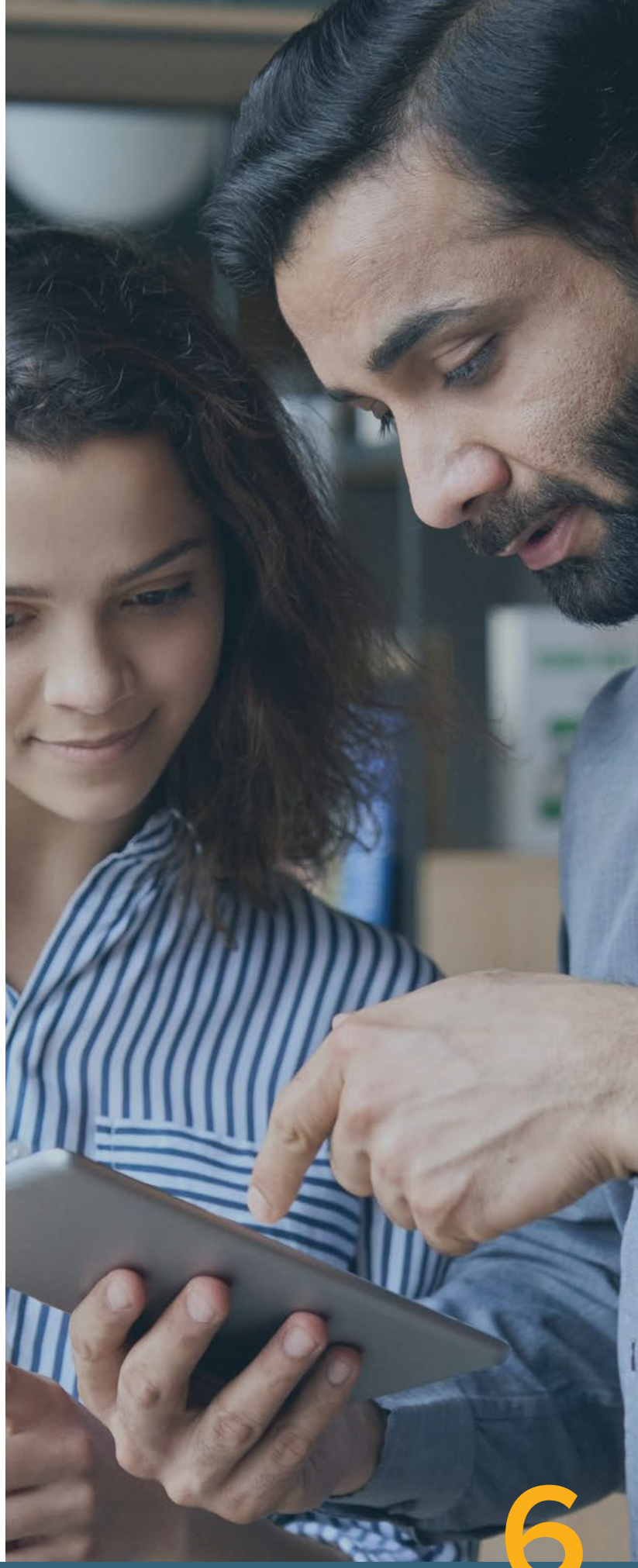
CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF TRANSPARENCY 6

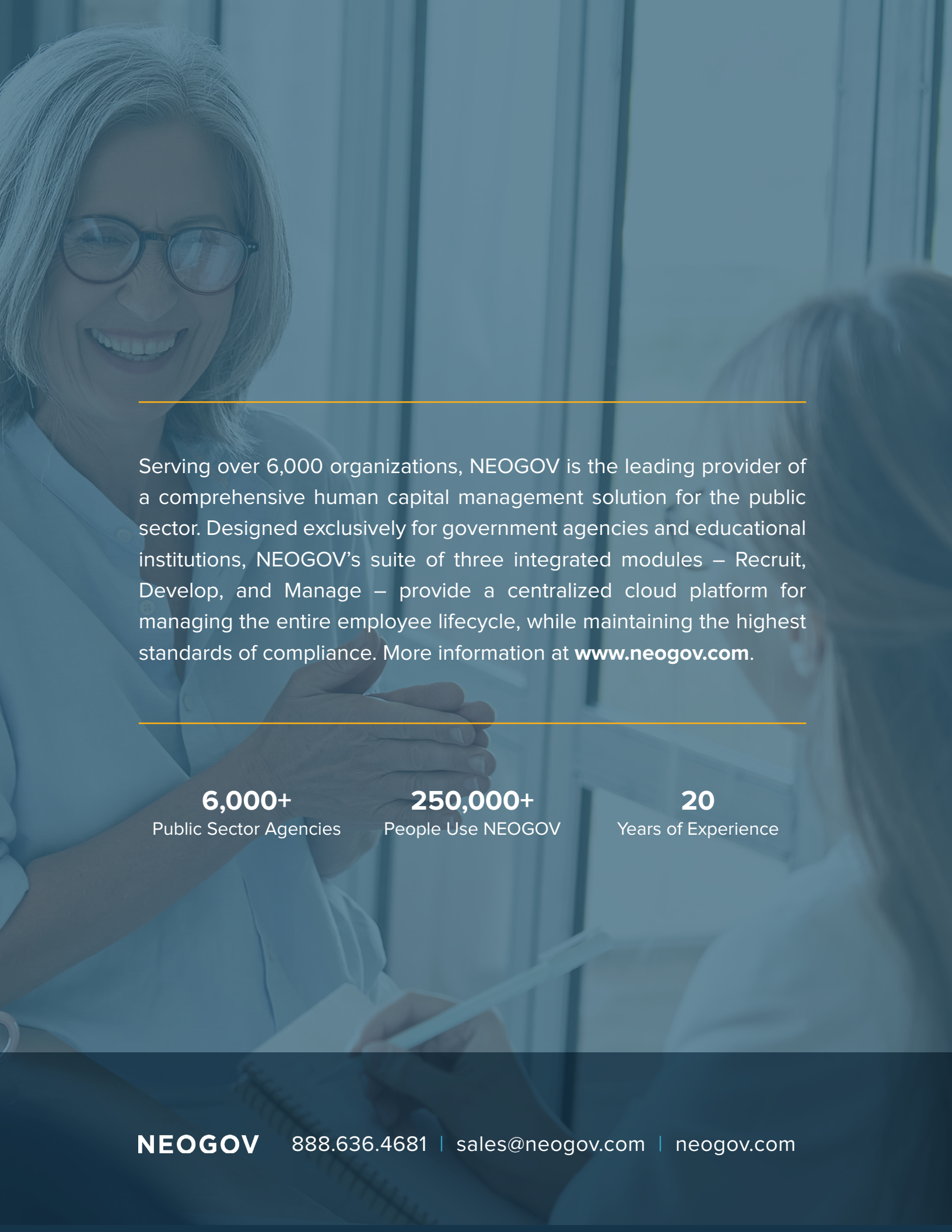
According to a study conducted by Slack, 80% of employees reported wanting to know more about how decisions are made in their organization. This indicates that employees are much more interested in the goings-on of their workplace than perhaps managers or even HR previously expected.

Creating an environment of transparency is essential for building trust. Managers should share the organization's annual goals and major initiatives, provide regular updates from leadership meetings they attend, and convey insights into how organizational decisions are made, and why they are made.

More in-the-loop employees understand the role they play in achieving the organization's goals, and are more likely to understand how their individual success is measured. When managers and leadership are transparent about the inner workings of the agency and what is needed from employees to succeed, they are more likely to constantly evaluate themselves and strive for more.

A manager that incorporates mentorship into their management style can help employees reach their full potential, whether that's gradually moving up the ladder into a leadership position, or being a dependable individual contributor for years to come.





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