

FOR EDITORIAL CONSIDERATION

Making Professional Mentoring Available Worldwide: *The IMNO Vision Applies Open Source Ideals to Professional Mentoring*

The past few years have shown that we have become a generation obsessed with social networking. Many of us now find that we are connected anywhere from two to six degrees from each other. Social Networking may have started as a way to increase your social circle, but now industry executives and aspiring professionals are also using social networks in hopes of enhancing their careers. Several sites have developed linking those who need advancement in their careers, with those who can offer a word of advice. However, professional mentoring sites of this nature are usually restricted to university alumni, members of professional associations, or the recipients of severance packages. Even if they are open for public use, they may require you to build an extensive online social network in order to fully gain access to all their listed professionals.

Some feel mentoring, which is largely a philanthropic desire, should not be burdened by so much red tape. Mentoring shouldn't be a protected privilege; mentoring should be Open Source.

In Open Source competition and collaboration work together to bring the best product available to the masses for personal and corporate use. Unlike strictly patented products, those associated with Open Source are available for immediate scrutiny and improvement. This creates a seeming endless network of volunteer contributors. The transformation from private enterprise to public development has produced a new sort of word-of-mouth wildfire. You are much more likely to access, and discuss, something you help create than something with which you have no ownership or responsibility.

So what happens when you introduce Open Source ideals into the culture of professional mentoring? You develop a system that enables individuals in both sides to contribute to the greater good. You get IMNO. International Mentoring Network Organization at IMNO.org is to professional mentoring what Linux is to operating systems. IMNO allows members to contribute to the mentoring network, not only by joining, but also by interviewing professionals, submitting interviews and making mentor requests. IMNO develops the aspiring professional not only through information available on the website (available in text, audio streaming, audio download, podcasting, and RSS news-feed formats), but by giving every individual an honorable reason to interview a professional within their own community. The proactive system promotes initiative in the members and gives them valuable experience to put on their resume.

IMNO members can access hundreds of professional mentor interviews and can publish their own mentor interviews inside a network without having to go through any of the traditional steps or procedures inherent of social networks or mentoring programs. IMNO is open to everyone.

“IMNO is *so practical, so inspiring, so uplifting*, that you need to be part of this. This site will help you become more self-reliant, more capable inside yourself to dig deeper in your education, take the toughest teachers not the easiest and get into a fundamental purpose of making a difference in life and never slowing down,” said Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

By contacting a successful professional within their own communities, conducting an interview, and publishing the interview, members have an invested interest in the quality of the information that is being delivered through the network. The result is a global community of motivated people focused on achieving their professional potential by helping others progress in their own professions.