



# CASE STUDY

## Investing In The Next Generation Before They're Hired



### OVERVIEW

As the technician shortage grows, leading organizations are building talent from within through structured apprenticeship programs. By connecting students directly to real-world shop experience, they're creating a reliable pipeline of skilled technicians.

This case study highlights how one national transportation organization successfully activated Mentor Mentee to transform apprenticeships into scalable, trackable programs—bridging classroom learning with real-world shop experience while driving stronger retention, clearer career pathways, and a reliable pipeline of job-ready technicians.

### OBJECTIVES

#### DEVELOP SKILLED TECHNICIANS

Address the growing need for technologically proficient diesel technicians.

#### CREATE A STRUCTURED MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Implement a consistent and scalable model to guide mentees and students through skill development.

#### IMPROVE RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Reduce turnover through growth, accountability, & clear career paths for mentees and students.

#### BRIDGE SCHOOL-TO-SHOP TRANSITIONS

Connect high school students to real-world technician roles through early exposure and continuous support.

### BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- High technician turnover
- Inconsistent mentorship practices
- Limited visibility into mentee and student progress
- Underutilized talent and shop inefficiencies

### SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

- **Adoption of the Mentor Mentee Platform:** Digitized the mentorship process with real-time progress tracking, weekly feedback loops, and skill certifications.
- **1:1 Apprentice-Mentor Pairing:** Established dedicated, consistent relationships for individualized support.
- **Pilot Program in Select Shops:** Including union facilities, to evaluate effectiveness before scaling.
- **Integration with High Schools:** Partnered with schools to align academic paths with hands-on training.
- **Operational Culture Shift:** Reframed mentorship from “extra work” to an essential part of technician responsibilities.

### OUTCOMES

- 75% retention rate
- Increased mentor engagement and mentee productivity – 694+ training hours and 1,300+ skill repetitions logged
- Improved shop performance – reduced idle time, faster onboarding, and better skill alignment
- Enhanced throughput and bay availability – real-time feedback reduced bottlenecks and improved workflow
- Clear career pathways – 3 post-program hires with more in the pipeline, including direct high school-to-career transitions



# INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION - BEFORE THEY'RE HIRED

## Executive Summary

As the technician shortage intensifies, leading service organizations are shifting their strategy: instead of competing for experienced talent, they're going up stream to catch the spawn.

Through structured apprenticeship programs—starting in high school and extending into live shop environments—forward-thinking organizations are engaging students while they are still exploring the field and developing skilled, loyal technicians from the ground up. Powered by Mentor Mentee, these programs provide the framework needed to turn student interest into long-term careers.

This case study highlights how one national transportation organization successfully activated Mentor Mentee to implement a scalable apprenticeship model—bridging classroom learning with real-world shop experience—and in doing so, created a talent pipeline of job-ready technicians.

***“Mentor Mentee drives that communication between the mentee (Student Technician) and mentor.”***  
***Director of Operations, says. “We’ve never had anything like it.”***



## The Opportunity: Solving the Technician Shortage at the Source

Traditional approaches rely on recruiting already-trained technicians. But with fewer students entering the trades, organizations are turning to apprenticeship programs in partnership with local schools and technical programs.

The goal is to *create a direct path from student → apprentice → full-time technician.*

However, without structure, many apprenticeship programs fall short of their potential.



## The Challenge:

The apprenticeship program was inconsistent and difficult to scale across the client's shops

- **Students entered shops with no defined roadmap**
- **Mentors lacked tools to track progress or provide consistent feedback**
- **Managers had no visibility into apprentice development**
- **School partnerships lacked alignment with shop expectations**
- **Students often felt underutilized or disengaged**

***“They were often left alone. There was no easy way to follow up, and no clear path to growth,” according to the VP, Training and Development.***

Without structure, even well-intentioned apprenticeship programs result in missed development opportunities and limited conversion to full-time hires.

## The Solution:

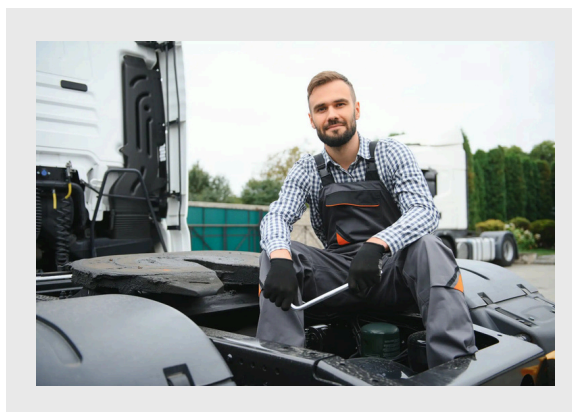
The client decided to pilot Mentor Mentee at one location and in doing so, changed the trajectory of the apprenticeship program.

By implementing Mentor Mentee, the organization transformed its apprenticeship program into a structured, trackable, and scalable system.

Within the first week:

- **Mentors began logging real-time feedback directly from the shop floor**
- **Students gained access to clear skill pathways and expectations**
- **Managers could track development across individuals and locations**

***“It’s the best system I’ve ever seen,” said a Senior Operations Manager. “I’m in awe over it.”***



## Apprenticeship in Action: From Student to Technician

One student entered the program through a school partnership—quiet, inexperienced, and limited by age-related restrictions.

With structured mentorship and consistent guidance:

- **The student gained confidence through clear, achievable skill milestones**
- **Mentors provided ongoing feedback and accountability**
- **Progress was visible to both the student and leadership**

Over time, the student transitioned from observing tasks to performing them independently—and ultimately secured a full-time position post-graduation.

***“This student is one of the most respectful, driven students we’ve had.” Senior Operations Manager praises. “Watching him grow in confidence has been incredibly rewarding.”***

This isn’t a one-off success—it’s what happens when apprenticeship programs are built with intention.

### The Impact: A Scalable Talent Pipeline

With structure in place, apprenticeship programs become a reliable hiring engine—not a gamble.

- **Training Hours Logged:** 694.45
- **Repetitions Recorded:** 1,367
- **Competencies Earned:** 259
- **Mentor-Mentee Ratio:** 1:1
- **Mentors Engaged:** 30
- **Current Student Technicians:** 3
- **Retention Rate:** 75%
- **Post-Program Hires:** 3



***“We would not be in the position we are today without Mentor Mentee.” Director of Operations states.***



## Cultural Impact: Apprenticeship as a Competitive Advantage

The biggest shift wasn't just operational—it was cultural.

- **Mentorship became part of the technician role, not an extra task**
- **Students became invested contributors, not observers**
- **Shops became training environments, not just production floors**

Organizations began to see apprenticeship programs as a long-term strategy to:

- **Reduce hiring dependency**
- **Increase retention**
- **Strengthen shop culture**

## Return on Investment: Grow Your Own Technicians

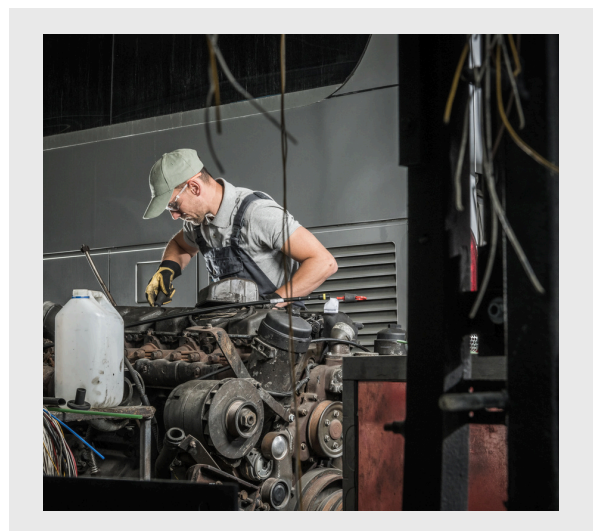
The most valuable ROI isn't just productivity—it's the engagement and loyalty from the apprentice that pays dividends long into the future.

By investing in apprentices early, organizations:

- **Reduce recruiting costs**
- **Improve retention rates**
- **Develop technicians trained to their exact standards**

Each apprentice represents more than a hire—it's a **future technician shaped from day one.**

*“It’s amazing to watch our students grow.” Senior Operations Manager shared. “They’re not just learning a trade—they’re building a future.”*



## How Mentor Mentee Powers Apprenticeship Success

Across multiple pilot locations, Mentor Mentee enables organizations to operationalize apprenticeship programs with:

- **Structured Skill Pathways:** Clear progression from entry-level tasks to advanced competencies
- **Real-Time Progress Tracking:** Eliminate guesswork with live visibility into student development
- **Consistent Mentor Engagement:** Weekly feedback loops keep students supported and accountable
- **School-to-Shop Alignment:** Ensure curriculum and real-world expectations stay connected
- **1:1 Mentorship Model:** Every apprentice has dedicated guidance
- **Documented Work Validation:** Photo uploads and repetition tracking reinforce learning

These tools transform apprenticeships from passive experiences into intentional development programs.

