During my role in StateStreet Corporation’s AMS project, I supported two applications, InfoITA and ETA, which worked on radically different set of rules making them two of the toughest applications on project. It took me extensive research, numerous trainings and months of hands-on practise to master these applications. Hence, when I was furthered for a different more complex project, I had to transfer my current knowledge to a junior, mentor her on all my tasks, and present her as the new face to the clients – all of this within a few weeks. This was especially challenging because Shikha, my mentee, was a reserved person and she had never handled such client-facing roles before. Moreover I had developed a strong rapport with the client and it was tough to convince them of Shikha’s capabilities in such short time.

For the first time in life the mentoring part of my persona came to the fore bringing out skills like leadership, motivation and personality development. I drafted a detailed training schedule with daily check points. Besides training her of the existing issues, I also taught her how to anticipate and approach any new issue. To improve her confidence in her technical skills, I gave her the lead in issue resolution, playing merely an observer role myself. Instead of spoon-feeding solutions, I gradually and eventually let her take full control.

While teaching her technical skills I also had to prepare her for the tough job of facing the clients. The ultimate hurdle was for her to give a presentation to the onsite clients and handle the intensive Q&A session, with people ranging from technical leads to senior vice presidents. It was vital for Shikha to learn how to work under pressure as the Q&A sessions can be very tough if one’s thinking wavers due to nervousness. With the help of my peers I created a simulated environment for her where we played the client’s role and she presented to us. By the end of my mentoring period, Shikha not only gave the presentation successfully to the clients and handled their questions like a champion, but she also surpassed my expectations by being better in a couple of spheres than I was.

I was, and still am, proud to have championed the art of perfecting another person – a key leadership trait, and more importantly feeling good about it. It made my thinking coherent and my approach more mature. Even my managers were highly impressed with the way I led this whole effort and carried it out in a matter of a few weeks.