

Mentoring

Personal Development

WHAT IS IT

This Guide explains how to gain development value from having a Mentor or indeed being a Mentor to someone. Mentoring is when an individual shares their experience, skills and knowledge of a specific business activity or knowledge of a specific industry in order to help an individual:-

- develop their career plans
- make sound decisions on their personal development and future success
- with insight and perspective into the business and its operations

The Mentor strives to understand an individual's development needs and career goals and uses coaching skills to assist their realisation.

WHY USE IT

An individual can normally gain high quality development from a mentoring relationship by:-

- receiving advice and help with career advancement
- sponsorship for promotion
- securing challenging assignments
- provision of confidential advice and emotional support and guidance.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. WHEN TO USE

Effective organisations regard mentoring to be a key strategy in attracting, developing and retaining talent. It is based on the recognition that excellent performers normally have the potential for further growth.

Mentoring will be effectively embedded into an organisation's philosophy for effective leadership if it encourages the creation of mentoring relationships when an individual's career plans have the need for – sponsorship, networking and career advice or with other specific support.

2. HOW TO USE

The Mentor assigned to the individual (mentee) may be selected by a Senior Leader, HR or by the individual. Once both parties have agreed to a mentoring relationship it is helpful to formalise the arrangement to ensure that both parties benefit from the relationship.

1. Basis for the Relationship

The following criteria will assist an effective mentoring relationship:

- A high degree of trust and mutual respect
- The ability to motivate and inspire in realising the individual's full potential
- The ability to see "big picture" versus "small picture"
- A source of knowledge in terms of overall learning & development
- A safe environment for honest discussions

2. Typical Timescales

An initial period of 3 months is often sufficient though subsequent contact can always follow on an ad hoc basis.

3. Frequency of Meetings

Typically, meetings should take place on a regular basis and for each to last for a maximum of 2 hours. Frequency should be agreed and reviewed constantly. Often meetings start with a frequency burst and then tailor off as the needs of the mentee become clearer over time.

4. Overall Objectives of the Relationship

The Mentee should draft some focused objectives such as:

- Through guidance and support help me to establish a more objective outlook
- Being able to share challenges and issues that I am facing but through healthy debate and discussion help me to legitimise them
- Encourage me to explore alternative options
- Giving me constructive feedback that will build confidence and support me to take accountability for my own development
- Provide a role model for my guidance

(Note – The above examples are not drafted in a SMART format)

5. Effective mentoring

Do

- **Do** listen; often solutions lie within the individual.
- **Do** provide counselling in career planning with insights from your own experience.
- **Do** act as a source of information on the organisation's business goals and operations.
- **Do** share new perspectives and ideas.
- **Do** be open to new perspectives and learning
- **Do** give honest, constructive feedback.
- **Do** provide support and encouragement.
- **Do** provide feedback on areas such as job performance, relationships, technical information, and role expectations.
- **Do** consider timing when giving feedback.

Don't

- **Don't** preach, provide all the answers, listen without an agenda.
- **Don't** drive the relationship
- **Don't** report on progress to the individual's Line Manager
- **Don't** fail to develop a mentoring agreement with your mentee including:-
 - Goals
 - Development needs of the mentee
 - Immediate topics to focus on
 - First steps
 - Method for measuring success
 - Confidentiality
 - How often to meet; length of overall time commitment to each other
 - Communicating between meeting

The Ideal Mentor

Should demonstrate the following:-

- Competent 'coach'
- Interested in or is motivated from helping others develop
- Think differently to the mentee, e.g. see the world from a different angle
- Performs well in their current role
- Committed to personal development
- Keen to mentor – sees its value to both the individual and the employer

3. EVALUATION

To track the effectiveness of the relationship set tangible measures such as:

- Being able to give specific examples of how the mentee has incorporated feedback and advice
- Completion of a 360 degree questionnaire at the end of the probationary period to use as a platform if the relationship is to continue
- Meet at the end of the relationship to review achievements and evaluate relationship

4. TOP TIPS

For the Mentee

- To drive the relationship
- To prepare and circulate an agenda prior to each meeting
- Take ownership to goal set
- Be open and honest with how I'm feeling
- Accept feedback in a constructive way and learn from it

For the Mentor

- Provides a sounding board
- Ensures the 'mentee' defines the agenda
- Can be completely relied upon to keep conversations confidential
- Actively listens
- Responds in the interests of the mentee
- Offer specific advice when asked by the mentee
- Makes themselves available when needed
- Works in the interest of the individual (first & foremost) and the employer
- Is tough with the individual if commitments are not delivered
- Keeps in touch informally & occasionally
- Provides a 'different' perspective (neutral, more senior, older/younger, customer, specialist)
- Ensures that an agreed 'contract' is in place between the two individuals (reviews progress versus the contract)
- Supports and challenges

NEXT STEPS

We trust that this Success Guide will assist your personal development and help build your capability and performance

You may find some of our other Success Guides of value for your Personal or Career Development. For your convenience we list these below and you can access the index for these via the link below:-

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Author & Profile

Written by [Stephen A Isherwood](#)

