Propelling Your Career with Mentors and Sponsors

Participant Guide

Last Updated: April 2018
Course Overview

In this session, you will be challenged to think critically about how you are managing the relationships you currently have. You will also consider the ways in which you are cultivating new relationships with others who can help you grow and become a better leader.

By the end of this workshop, you should be able to:

✓ Define and describe the differences between a mentor, coach and sponsor
✓ Identify your reasons for establishing a mentoring relationship
✓ Explain how a mentor can help you achieve your development goals
✓ Establish an action plan to help grow your mentoring network
✓ Explain your approach for getting mentors and sponsors to join your network
✓ Create an agenda for mentor meetings
✓ Describe the roles and responsibilities of becoming a mentor
Types of Mentoring

What is a Mentor?

What is a Coach?

What is a Sponsor?

What are the differences between mentoring, coaching and sponsoring?

Mentee Experience

Complete the table below to get a better idea of how your personal development has been enhanced by mentors, whether or not the relationship was officially recognized as mentoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor’s Name</th>
<th>How the Experience Helped Me</th>
<th>Mentor Characteristics that Helped Me Grow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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Myths About Mentoring
Consider the statements below. Do you agree with them? Explain why or why not.

1. As a mentee, you are a subordinate.
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

2. Once you have a mentor, they are your mentor for life.
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. The mentoring relationship has to be formal.
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. You have to find one perfect mentor.
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. Living close to your mentor is important.
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

Goals Setting Exercise
What are your goals for 3 months from now?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

What are your goals for 1 year from now?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

What are your goals for 5 years from now?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Your Mentoring Expectations

Use this worksheet to develop an understanding of what you expect to gain from your mentoring relationships. By clarifying your own expectations, you will be able to communicate them more effectively to your mentors.

The reasons I want to be mentored are to:

☐ Receive encouragement and support
☐ Increase my confidence when dealing with professionals
☐ Challenge myself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
☐ Gain a realistic perspective of the field
☐ Get advice on how to balance work and other responsibilities, and set priorities
☐ Other ________________________________

I hope that my mentor and I will:

☐ Meet over coffee, lunch, or dinner
☐ Go to educational events such as lectures, conferences, or other events together
☐ Other ________________________________

I hope that my mentor and I will discuss:

☐ Professional development subjects that will benefit my future career
☐ Career options and job search preparation
☐ The realities of the workplace
☐ How to network
☐ Personal goals and life circumstances
☐ Other ________________________________

The things I feel are off limits in my mentoring relationship include:

☐ Disclosing our conversations to others
☐ Sharing intimate aspects of our lives
☐ Other ________________________________

I hope that my mentor will help me with job opportunities by:

☐ Introducing me to people who might be interested in hiring me
☐ Suggesting potential work contacts for me to pursue on my own
☐ Other ________________________________

The amount of time I can spend with my mentor is likely to be, on average:

1  2  3  4  hours each week/every other week/per month (circle one)
Your Reason(s) for a Mentor

Identify why you want a mentor:

- Do you need specific job performance advice?
- Do you want a broader understanding of the business?
- Are you looking for a “safe” environment to test ideas?
- Do you want advice on career development or career options?
- Do you need to think differently about a situation?

____________________________________________

Determine what background and skills you need in a mentor:

- What job or industry background would be helpful?
- What specific skills would you like help in developing?
- What role will they fulfill?
- How much time would you like to spend with the person?

____________________________________________

Examine your options:

- List associates, local management and members of your professional organizations and network who might fit your needs
- List former professors, classmates and outside acquaintances
- List other people who could suggest possibilities for mentors for you (HR, supervisors)

____________________________________________

Take a “test drive”:

- Write down two specific issues or topics you would like help with from a mentor(s).
- Decide whether you can approach the person(s) directly or if you need an introduction

____________________________________________
Establish Your Network

Mentors can keep you focused on your goals, objectives and learning strategies. Multiple mentors are often necessary to get needed guidance.

Tap into your network of relationships to establish a personal board of directors to mentor you when you need information and advice. These mentoring relationships can be casual, or formal as long as you trust the individuals working with you to propel your career forward.

Think about the people in your life who may already be filling the roles below. Where are the vacancies in your Personal Board of Directors?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Name</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Who is Filling This Role?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Gives you a little push in the right direction, when you need it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivator</td>
<td>Is your cheerleader when times are tough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>Passes down knowledge and experience gained from performing the job or role you want or have just attained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connector</td>
<td>Knows the scope and who to call; you may have more than one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategist</td>
<td>Introduces various strategies and ideas to help you succeed and plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofer</td>
<td>Reviews materials and provides you with feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>Provides you with a service that requires specialized skills or talents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinker</td>
<td>Thinks differently than you and provides you with insight and ideas on a particular topic, issue, idea, or problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brainstorming Exercise

Based on the table on the last page, where do you have gaps? List the names of individuals who would be a good fit for your board of directors. Are you able to approach the person(s) directly, or do you need an introduction?

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________
Create Your Mentoring Action Plan

Taking the time to think about your career goals, developmental needs, and the type of mentor you want early on will help you get the most out of your relationship. It is important to get a better idea about where you are now and where you want to go before establishing contact with potential mentors. The mentoring action plan is a tool you can use to identify your mentor.

1) Identify a specific developmental area
2) Create a developmental objective
3) Create mentoring actions
4) List support mechanisms
5) Timing and Milestones
6) Determine Criteria for Success

Use this space to write down potential competencies you want to work on:

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________
## Self-Assessment Guide

This self-assessment is intended to help the mentee gauge competencies at certain stages along the mentoring process. As a mentee, take the time to evaluate your comfort and skill level as it pertains to your individual goals. Mentors should review these assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Mentee Assessment of Self</th>
<th>Mentor Notes and Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the core competency you have identified as your area of focus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List your current strengths within this core competency.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List your current <strong>areas for opportunity</strong> within this core competency.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the specific areas within the core competency on which you want to focus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List what success looks like for you (at the end of the time with your mentor).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What expectations do you have about how your mentor will support your development?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List the additional types of support or resources you believe will help facilitate your overall success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What challenges do you anticipate during the mentorship?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Your Mentoring Action Plan Worksheet

Once the information for the mentee self-assessment has been obtained, you can create a more strategic and targeted developmental action plan. Talk to your mentor about how they can support your development goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge, Skills, Abilities Needed to Achieve My Goal</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projected Outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Completion Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact Potential Mentors

Finding the right mentor can greatly enhance your personal and professional development. Once you have identified potential mentors, approach them with a well-developed plan for your partnership.

One approach to contacting potential mentors is to ask if you can meet with them to discuss your career. The meeting may start each of you sharing a little about your background, followed by your reason for seeking a mentoring relationship.

Consider the following points when contacting potential mentors:

- Tell your mentor about you/ask about them.
- Share a little of your personal journey/ask about their personal journey.
- Talk about each other’s current professional situation. Explain where you are and where you would like to be, also explain how mentoring might help.
- Talk about each other’s leadership values and philosophies.
- Discuss how you can provide value to the mentoring relationship.

Your potential mentor needs to know if they will be able to help you acquire the skills or competencies you want to develop. If the person agrees to schedule a meeting with you to discuss a mentoring relationship, you’ll want to have a focused conversation about what you both want to accomplish.

Lastly, you should always follow up with a thank-you note or e-mail summarizing the discussion and your plans to proceed.

Note what you might say to potential mentors:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

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Practice Scenario
Review the Scenario and answer the questions below.

SCENARIO
Sally has been working hard as an individual contributor for her company and wants to move into a different department within the company and take on a leadership role. After much consideration, Sally decides to cultivate relationships with a high performing peer, her supervisor, a senior manager within the company and an individual, with relevant experience, working outside her company.

What could Sally say when approaching her peer to discuss a mentoring relationship?

_____________________________________________________________________________

What could Sally say when approaching her supervisor to discuss a mentoring relationship?

_____________________________________________________________________________

What could Sally say when approaching the senior manager to discuss a mentoring relationship?

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

What could Sally say when approaching an individual outside her company to discuss a mentoring relationship?

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________
Prepare for Meeting

After your potential mentor agrees to meet with you to discuss establishing a mentoring relationship, it’s important that you prepare for the first meeting. The answers to the questions below will help you get your mentoring relationship moving in the right direction from the very first meeting.

To prepare for this meeting, consider the following questions:

- What should your mentor know about you in order to work most successfully with you?
- How do you learn best: by reading, observing, doing, or listening?
- What are your desired outcomes for the mentoring relationship?
- What do you expect from your mentor?
- How will you know if the relationship is working?

Likewise, ask your mentor to come prepared with answers to questions such as:

- What do you expect from me?
- What do you think will be able to help me most?
- How do you like to work with people you are teaching and developing?
- What do you want to gain from this partnership?

Use the space below to note any additional questions:

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
First Meeting Agenda Items

Be prepared for each mentoring session with an agenda. Here are some topics you may want to discuss in your first meeting with your mentor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Discuss Experience with Mentoring | • Share some previous mentoring experiences with each other.  
• Discuss your likes and dislikes. |
| Discuss Goals & Objectives      | • Share why each of you want to engage in this relationship.  
• Share your broad development goals and how these relate to where you see yourself headed. |
| Discuss Expectations            | • Discuss what each of you see as your role in the relationship.  
• Talk about your personal communication and learning style and ask your mentor about theirs. If either or both of you have your results from the Myers-Briggs or DISC, you can use these tools in your discussion.  
• Discuss expectations regarding open and honest feedback with one another.  
• Insist on confidentiality. |
| Seek Agreement of Responsibilities | • Agree upon a meeting schedule and whether you will meet via phone, Skype or in person.  
• Talk about respect for each other’s time and how best to cancel or reschedule a meeting.  
• Agree on how to communicate the need to make changes in the schedule. |
| Establish Next Steps            | • Determine action items. This is a time that your mentor may suggest you read something or complete an assessment.  
• Agree on the next meeting agenda. |
# Regular Meeting Agenda Items

After you establish your mentoring relationship, your meetings should focus on helping your professional goals. Consider the following meeting agenda for any additional meetings you schedule with your mentor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Recap Last Meeting              | • What did we do at the last meeting?  
• How do each of us feel about it? Are there things we might have done/said differently now that we have had time to think about it?  
• Review any action items that you both had agreed upon. |
| Provide Update                  | • Provide an update on your current situation particularly as it relates to the plan.  
• Provide a progress report on action plan items.  
• Discuss what’s working and what is not working as it relates to achieving your goals.  
• Discuss how you are feeling about your progress. |
| Ask for Feedback                | • Discuss value of open and honest feedback and ask for feedback or advice.                                                                 |
| Establish Next Steps            | • Agree on actions to be completed before the next meeting.  
• Agree on the next meeting agenda. |

Note any additional agenda items or meeting topics:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Practice Activity

Use the space below to write down what you will discuss in your first meeting. Use the First Meeting Agenda Items as a guide.

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Qualities of a Good Mentor

Many people feel that being a mentor requires special skills, but mentors are simply people who have the qualities of a good leader.

• Compassion: Approaching others with a sense of understanding and true caring
• Integrity: Living the values you subscribe to
• Leadership: Inspiring others to grow
• Empathy: Able to approach matters from another perspective
• Openness/Candor: Warm, open, and willing to be candid
• Empowering: Letting others do their best without controlling every detail
• Commitment: Following through and delivering on promises
• Passion: Having a zest and energy regarding particular subjects
• Honesty: Truthful and consistently demonstrating integrity
• Friendliness: Being warm and approachable
• Communication Skills: Able to communicate in such a way that is easily understood
• Demonstrated Success: Having a strong track record in the area they are mentoring
• Self-Awareness: Having a strong sense of who you are, how others see you, and areas of strengths and weaknesses

Use the space below to note any additional qualities you value in a mentor.

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

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Mentor Responsibilities

Understanding your role and responsibilities within the mentor/mentee relationship will better enable you to reach all of your desired goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Mentor is responsible for ...</th>
<th>Example mentor activities include ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Filling knowledge gaps in a variety of “how to” situations Identifying ways to work smarter rather than harder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Writing notes or calling to give compliments, encouragement, and praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating</td>
<td>Listening, asking questions for clarity Sharing experience or resources, and guiding as situations develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Reviewing personal goals and aspirations Developing and critiquing professional goals and progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding</td>
<td>Sharing files, books and/or work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>Discussing conflict, reaction characteristics and comfort levels Modeling resolution skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Brainstorming, evaluating, modeling, reflecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing &amp; Receiving Feedback</td>
<td>Evaluating oral and written communications Reviewing, planning and implementation of programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting</td>
<td>Scheduling personal talk time; debriefing; sharing stories; documenting events, activities, and incidents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective Conversations Techniques

Effective listening and questioning techniques are two of the most powerful skills mentors use to help mentees obtain knowledge, deepen understanding and refine skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Get mentee to say more about an issue and to explore it in more depth</td>
<td>&quot;You said ..., could you explain in more detail how you mean this?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothetical</td>
<td>Introduction of new ideas on the part of the mentor; making suggestions</td>
<td>“What about...?” &quot;What if...?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying</td>
<td>Obtaining further information on reasons, attitudes, feelings</td>
<td>&quot;Can you elaborate on what makes you think that?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probing</td>
<td>Discovering motivations, feelings and hidden concerns</td>
<td>“What would you perceive as the cause of this?&quot; &quot;When did you first experience that?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking</td>
<td>Establishing whether the mentee has understood clearly</td>
<td>&quot;Are you sure about that?&quot; &quot;Why do you feel this way?&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tips for Mentors

- Interact and share – share your mistakes and struggles, as well as your successes
- Share your specific expectations for the relationship up-front with your mentee
- Invest time in learning about the aspirations, attributes and preferences of your mentee; the better you know your mentee, the more detailed guidance you can provide
- Periodically identify special learning opportunities in your organization or in professional networks for your mentee
- Actively assist the mentee in developing his/her own personal network of professional contacts
- Honor any commitments to, and confidences of, your mentee
- Be clear about purpose and boundaries
- Periodically validate with your mentee the value of the information and counsel you are providing
- Provide honest, caring, regular, and diplomatic feedback to your mentee
- Listen deeply and ask powerful questions
- Maintain and respect privacy, honesty and integrity.

Note any additional tips for being a mentor:

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Reflection
What have you recently done for your self-development?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

What insights did you gain today regarding your self-development?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

What immediate actions will you take based on your insights?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________