



Mentee's Toolkit



Organizational Development

Training Documentation

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What is a mentee?

A “mentee” is a person seeking guidance from a confidant, partner, or role model in their work environment. Building a relationship with a mentor is an important step in developing a successful career. This guide includes principles to use when preparing to be successful in the role of a mentee.

This document is intended to help you understand the scope of your role and responsibilities, provide you with guidelines for your mentoring relationship, and convey useful tools and tips to prepare you for success.

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Your Role as a Mentee A mentee might be described as a protégé or a person who is advised, trained, or counseled by someone with more knowledge and experience in a role or business. A successful mentee is:

- the driver of the mentoring relationship
- open to new ideas and ways of thinking
- trustworthy and respectful
- willing to listen to and apply feedback
- an active listener
- comfortable discussing areas of improvement
- preparing and asking effective questions
- committed to personal and professional development
- interested in learning new skills
- respectful of the boundaries set by the mentor
- an agile learner
- seeking insight from others to increase self-awareness
- continually assessing personal skills and knowledge

The Role of a Mentor The word “mentor” can be used as a noun to describe a person, “an experienced or trusted adviser” and it can also be used as a verb “to advise or train”. Used as a verb, it is active, which encapsulates the dynamics of this type of relationship. An effective mentor is:

- a strategic problem solver
- accessible and available at reasonable times
- trustworthy and respectful
- able to offer shadowing and networking opportunities
- a resource for information and ideas
- a role model for leadership in the organization or industry
- an interpreter of industry knowledge
- an honest sounding board
- comfortable offering an alternative point of view
- a counselor able to provide guidance and advice
- committed to offering both positive and developmental feedback
- a role model for core competencies and behaviors
- an advocate for the mentee’s growth and success
- open to new ideas and ways of thinking

Responsibilities of a Mentee Key responsibilities for a successful mentee include:

- Identify gaps in skills and knowledge
- Set career goals
- Draft a development plan
- Ask questions, actively listen, and participate in learning and assignments
- Prepare for meetings with your mentor
- Accept feedback graciously and be open to learn from mistakes

**Mentor/Coach
Role Clarification**

Have you ever coached an employee? Have you been coached? Have you ever mentored an employee? Have you been mentored? It is important to understand the difference to coach and mentor effectively.

Coaches might focus on:

- Short-term task or skill improvement
- Performance metrics, objectives, and results
- Changing behaviors or patterns
- Knowledge and understanding of task/skill



Mentors might focus on

- Long-term career goals
- Multifaceted competency development
- Building a trusting, nurturing relationship
- Emotional Intelligence



Mentors build strong interpersonal relationships based on mutual trust, confidentiality, and respect to effectively communicate and share organizational knowledge, corporate culture, mission, vision, values, and goals.

**Preparing for Your
Role as a Mentee**

Choosing to opt into a mentoring relationship is a great first step. The more you are willing to put into your mentoring relationship, the more you will be able to gain from it.

Finding a Mentor

Some organizations offer formal mentoring programs. If so, sign up and work with the program administrator to help you maximize your experience. You can also find a mentor outside of a formal program. When finding a mentor:

- Evaluate your career goals, skill gaps, and knowledge/interests.
- Create a mentor profile to help you imagine what strengths, skills, and knowledge would be helpful for you.
- Enroll in a program at your organization or through a group.
- Consider those you know to determine if there is someone who would potentially be a good fit. Then ask to meet with them to test the waters. If the meeting goes well, ask if they will be willing to mentor you.
- Leverage your network to connect you to a mentor you may not know. This can take you outside of your comfort zone but will add new perspectives.

Formal vs. Informal Before considering which style would be most effective, one must understand the difference between formal and informal mentoring relationships. Both formal and informal mentoring relationships bring value to the mentor, the mentee, and the organization.

Formal Mentoring

- Program lasting 12-18 months
- Tied to strategic business objectives
- Set goals and measure outcomes
- Established criteria for participation
- Strategic relationship pairing
- Additional training and support
- Direct organizational benefits

Informal Mentoring

- Can happen organically
- Unspecified goals & unknown outcomes
- No set criteria
- Self-selection of mentors/mentees
- No defined length of time
- No designated training or support
- Indirect organizational benefits

Seven Mentoring Styles



One to one mentoring is the most commonly recognized mentoring style. This is a mentoring relationship between a mentor, typically older or longer tenured, and a mentee, typically younger or less tenured. The one-to-one mentoring style is often used for career development and knowledge transfer. Can also be used for “reverse mentoring”.

Purpose: Career development, leadership development, succession planning, transfer of corporate knowledge and experience



One to group mentoring allows for one mentor and 2-5 mentees. This style allows for the mentor to transfer knowledge to more than one at a time and ensures that if a mentee turns over, that knowledge transfer does not start from square one. This also creates a small peer group for the mentees to build their network and learn from one another.

Purpose: Transfer of corporate knowledge and expertise, career development, strengthening the bench



Circle/Peer Groups consist of about 6-12 peers with similar affinity, aspirations, or development goals. Members engage in ongoing discussions and sometimes serve as a support network. There is no one mentor to the group. Rather, all are mentors to one another.

Purpose: Career development, building professional network, support, creates a sense of belonging



Onboarding Guide/Buddy

Onboarding or Guide/Buddy is the point person for the new team member(s). A safe space to ask questions that might not have come up in the interview, onboarding session, or otherwise make one worry that others will discount their credibility for asking (i.e., finding forms)

Purpose: Provide additional support and serve as a resource to new employees. Improve engagement and retention



High Potential

High Potential mentoring helps to engage top talent to help polish their current strengths, stretch skills and competencies, and learn more about what higher level leadership might look like. Can be hosted through a program or utilizing one of the applicable styles.

Purpose: Career development, engage high potential talent, succession planning, shows investment, retention



Inclusion

Inclusion mentoring focuses on connecting underrepresented groups with mentor(s) to help them define and strive for their career goals. These mentoring relationships can occur in any of the other listed styles.

Purpose: Intentionally develop underrepresented talent, career development, succession planning, innovation, creates sense of belonging, support



Flash/One-Time Skip Level

Flash/One-Time/Skip Level mentoring presents an opportunity to gain insights, knowledge, wisdom from higher level leaders without asking them to make a long- term commitment to one person(s) development.

Purpose: Career development, creates exposure for talent, keep expectations of executive engagement reasonable.

Preparing for the Relationship

How you frame your first conversation will set the tone and expectation for your relationship with your mentor. Take the time to prepare for your meeting, show up on time, and have a positive attitude. These straightforward steps will demonstrate to your mentor that you are committed to this relationship.

Be willing to share your experiences, thoughts, and opinions, but also be open to learning new ways of thinking and approaches.

The following sections show you helpful ways to engage with your mentor in conversations and throughout the mentoring relationship.

How We Communicate



Active Listening Active listening is a skill that will benefit you throughout your career and your life. Rather than just hearing the words another person is saying, active listening helps you to engage and understand what is being communicated to you. A mentoring relationship is a great place to start intentionally working on these skills.

<p>Respect the Speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be still make eye contact remove distractions avoid interruptions put away phone demonstrate genuine interest 	<p>Clarify and Build</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ask open-ended and probing questions build on the conversation clarify your understanding encourage the speaker to continue and tell you more 	<p>Restate and Summarize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to show you are listening and confirm your understanding restate basic facts and ideas using your own words summarize the big picture, ideas, and feelings 	<p>Encourage and Validate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nod when in agreement smile and/or use appropriate facial expressions to encourage the speaker to continue thank the speaker for openly sharing
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Prepare to ask Questions Preparing questions for your conversations with your mentor will help you to keep your time focused and help you get the answers you were looking for from the meeting.

- Identify what you want to learn from the conversation
- Prepare questions to get the conversation started
- Bring and/or take notes to help you remain focused as the conversation develops

Questioning Techniques During your conversations with your mentor, you may use a number of different questioning techniques. Knowing which questioning technique would be most beneficial will help you to prepare. Mastery of this skill will allow you to adjust your technique in the moment.

Closed Questions – typically have a Yes or No answer or a very short definitive response, used to keep the conversation moving quickly.

Open-Ended Questions – encourage a longer, deeper, thought out answer based on the respondent's knowledge, feelings, or opinions. Might start with *What, Why, How, Tell me, Describe to me*

Funnel Questions – start with general questions and continue to narrow focus by asking for more detail at each level. This technique is often used by detectives. Start with close-ended questions and work toward open-ended questions.

Probing Questions – help when seeking more detail or clarification. The 5 Why's method is an effective probing technique to get to the root of a problem.

Leading Questions – try to persuade the respondent to your way of thinking and tend to be close-ended.

Rhetorical Questions – are engaging for the listener but do not typically require a response.

Listen as an Ally So often, we listen as critics, seeking out the flaws in others' ideas. What if we tried listening as an ally? Although we may not be aware of it, we often listen one way to our friends and another way to strangers or coworkers. When we listen as a friend or ally, we hold back our judgment and critiques.

Listening as an ally helps build the relationship and opens doors to real collaboration. You can still challenge someone as an ally, but it is significantly different than challenging them as a critic. Allies work from the same side of the table, in partnership with each other.

From his book [Opening Doors to Teamwork & Collaboration: The 4 Keys That Change Everything](#), author and organization development pioneer Fred Miller looks at the ways in which this simple change in perspective enables people to join one another, build on the strengths of one another's ideas, and create a sense of "we" that transforms the quality of collaboration.

Notes: