



Top Tips – Making A Mentoring Relationship Work

If you are considering entering a mentoring relationship but are unsure what is involved, then we have put together some tips to provide a better understanding and help you decide if it is for you.

Contracting

Before embarking on your mentoring relationship there are a few key aspects that you need to reach agreement on.

1. Logistics

You should have an initial discussion around:

- **How often and how long to meet for.** An hour is generally considered to be the normal arrangement, but this can be adjusted to suit individual needs. Time restrictions of both parties do need to be considered.
- **How many meetings/how long should the process last.** The usual cycle is between 6 meetings over 6 months to 12 meetings over 12 months, but this can vary depending on the complexity of the mentoring goals and individual's needs. Dates and times for future meetings can be set at the initial meeting.
- **Where to meet.** Somewhere neutral is usually preferable and should be a place where the mentee will feel confident and secure enough to discuss concerns openly. You might want to consider "meeting" by phone or virtually using something like Facetime, which can be just as effective as meeting face to face.
- **Communication between meetings.** Agree how much communication is acceptable between meetings and how this communication can be done, email, telephone etc.
- **Record keeping** – agree who will be responsible for note taking and actions agreed at each meeting.
- **Confidentiality** – discuss what your individual understanding is of what confidentiality means and check that your ideas align.
- **Prematurely ending the relationship** – Discuss how you will manage things if either of you wishes to end the mentoring relationship before the agreed time.
- **Boundaries** – Clarify how much "work" each party is happy to do between meetings and any other boundaries you may want to set.

2. The Mentoring Process

Goals/Objectives

The most effective mentoring conversation needs to focus on setting and achieving goals, exploring issues and making informed decisions.

The process begins by getting the mentee to reflect on their current situation and experience and then move towards an informed decision on how best to progress.

Define the Challenge

Mentoring needs to have a purpose, so discuss broad aims from the outset and clearly identify the scope of the issues that you need to work on. At the heart of the mentoring conversation are 2 key questions:

1. **Where is the Mentee Now?**
2. **Where Do They Want To Be?**

There are a number of tools that you can use to help you both answer these questions – these tools can also be found in our mentoring platform but are outlined below:

Where is the Mentee Now?

SWOT – This will help you to understand the mentee's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The G-Star Model – This looks at goals, current situation, current thinking, current actions and results.

Where Does The Mentee Want To Be?

Once you have clearly identified the issues and challenges that the mentee is facing, the next step is to set goals and milestones that you can work towards. This will give focus and ensure that the mentoring relationship doesn't stall or become side tracked.

Setting SMART Goals

Our mentoring platform includes a SMART Goals template to help you set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound goals and set out milestones to identify progress in achieving these goals

These will form the core of your mentoring journey and should be regularly reviewed to ensure progress is being made in achieving goals and the milestones along the way.

The Mentoring Process – The Mentor's Role

Keep the process on track

As mentor your role is to keep the process going in terms of maintaining an awareness of time, focus and boundaries and retaining a constructive tone.

Challenge – this could involve challenging inconsistencies or assumptions in what you hear from the mentee. You might challenge the mentee to stretch themselves. However, it should be done sensitively and appropriately to help them open up possibilities rather than close them down.

Encourage the mentee to explore a wide range of options and possibilities.

Share Expertise with your mentee

Action Points – encourage the setting of action points that are specific, realistic and time bound.

Review Progress – ensure action points are completed and progress is being made to reaching goals and overcoming challenges.

The Mentoring Process – The Mentee’s Role

1. Own and take responsibility for content. The purpose of mentoring is to work on your professional development. The mentor’s role is not to solve your problems for you or provide quick fixes.
2. Be open to developing your self-awareness and to making changes.
3. Be open to what the mentor has to say and to their advice; this doesn’t mean you have to agree with it. It does mean you should receive it, reflect upon it and decide later whether you agree and whether to act on it.
4. Reflect between sessions on what has been discussed and make sure you follow through on any action points

Why not start your mentoring journey by signing up to our mentoring program.