Get Ready to Mentor

A practical guide and toolkit for mentors





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Caroline Lark, Shelagh Smith and Alison Stubbs assert their moral rights to be identified as the authors of this work.

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About Talent for Growth

Talent for Growth are specialists in leadership development and team effectiveness.

We have deep expertise and experience in a variety of development areas, including:

- 360° feedback
- coaching
- mentoring
- change leadership
- a range of development solutions, from long-term modular programmes to short bite-size workshops

We also work extensively with teams to build effectiveness, particularly in these areas:

- new leader integration
- team facilitation
- team coaching
- cultural awareness workshops
- HR team development

We are pragmatic and flexible. We won't push a particular product: we like to co-create solutions in partnership with our clients. And we aim to develop our clients' internal capability, to ensure that changes are sustained.

To find out more, please contact us at info@talentforgrowth.co.uk, or visit our website: www.talentforgrowth.com.

About the Authors

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Introduction

You're almost certainly reading this because you're going to be a mentor. Being a mentor is rewarding and enjoyable. However, it's also a responsibility and it can be challenging.

There are already lots of books about mentoring, but we think this book is different. This is why:

- It's practical and concise.
- It challenges you to think about yourself, and build self-awareness as a mentor.
- Its layout follows the natural flow of a mentoring relationship giving you a useful framework
- It helps you develop your mentoring skills with tools, tips and resources.
- It builds your confidence and gets you off to a flying start.

Great mentors leave a lasting, positive legacy with their mentees. We hope that this book will start you on the road to being a great mentor.

How to use this book

If you are a new mentor, we suggest reading the book through and then using it as a resource for your mentoring sessions.

If you are familiar with mentoring, then you'll probably focus on the specific sections that will be most useful – perhaps aspects of the mentoring process that you've found challenging in the past.

You might be tempted to skip the self-reflection activities and questions. Please don't: lots of evidence tells us that we need clearer knowledge about ourselves, before we can develop other people.

We've designed the guide to follow the natural flow of mentoring relationships, from the first meeting through to how to bring the relationship to a close, and what to do if problems occur.

However, we've also included a detailed section at the beginning which focuses on preparing yourself to be a mentor. This section is designed to increase self-awareness and help you to understand your natural mentoring style.

At the end, we have a toolkit which offers you practical resources that you can use. We provide you with templates that you can copy, skill-building guides, and recommendations for further learning.

Enjoy your mentoring relationships – we are confident that they will provide you with some great learning along the way.



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Maintaining Momentum

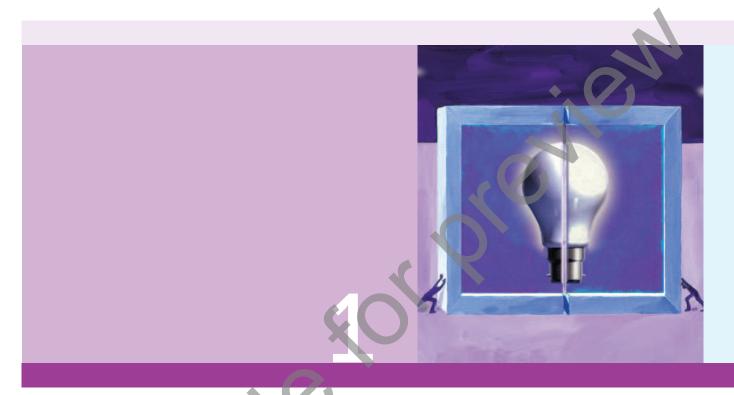
- How to keep on track
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Understanding Mentoring

1. Understanding Mentoring

Definitions of Mentoring

- Mentor, n.: 'experienced and trusted advisor' The Concise Oxford Dictionary
- "Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction" John Crosby
- "A Mentor: Someone whose hindsight can become your foresight" Anon
- It's about developing a relationship built on trust, supporting the personal and professional growth, and building the capability of the mentee. Adapted from Catherine Yang – The Importance of Mentors.

What's the difference between Coaching and Mentoring?

This is often asked, and there is no doubt that good mentors use coaching skills at times. Although there are some common skills and methodologies, the key differences are:

Mentoring	Coaching		
The purpose is the development of the	The purpose is to improve the individual's		
individual's future personal growth and career	current performance and development		
prospects			
	()		
Mentors share knowledge and experience,	Coaches draw out the coachee's knowledge		
acting as a sounding board and a trusted	to learn and develop new skills and		
advisor	behaviours		
The mentor is usually an internal, experienced,	The coach is often from a different field, and		
more senior person, often from the same field of work	may be internal or external		
Time span: usually long term; 2 years +	Time span: short or medium term		
Time span: assauly long term, 2 years 1	Time span, short of mediam term		
Mentoring provides holistic, longer-term	Coaching focuses on current issues by		
development in broad areas. It's about the	providing feedback to encourage insight and		
provision of guidance and sharing of experiences.	learning. It's about asking questions, listening, probing, summarising and reflecting back.		
ехрененова.	probing, sufficialising and reliecting back.		

Mentoring is a rapidly growing development tool - why?

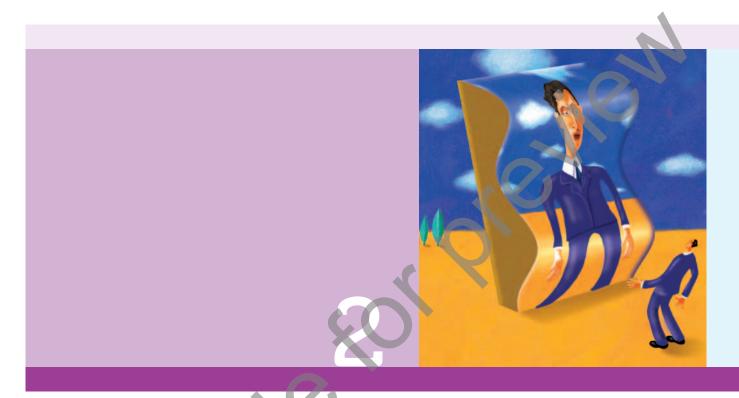
- Flatter structures mean that the move to the next level is often a big step and help is needed
- Greater requirement for low cost but high value development solutions
- Increasing emphasis on maximising the value of internal resources and expertise
- Global organisations require an understanding of local markets and cultures local mentors can provide it
- Mentoring enables people to understand increasingly important generational differences

The benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring will require an investment from both parties, so what are the benefits?

Benefits for the organisation	Benefits for the mentee	Benefits for the mentor	
 Fast track development for high potential individuals Maximises the use of internal resources Instils a culture of respect for experience Supports the transfer of learning from formal development programmes to everyday work Knowledge sharing across the organisation Low cost, high impact development – for both mentor and mentee 	 Guidance, support and encouragement A safe environment to talk through challenges and explore ideas Learning from someone who has 'been there and done that' Access to their mentors network Reinforces a sense of value and worth Flexible form of development Supports the transfer of learning from formal development programmes to everyday work 	 You're giving something of yourself to others You'll learn about other parts of the organisation Your coaching and mentoring skills will develop You'll gain insights and learning from your mentee 	
Now add your own			

Get Ready to Mentor



Preparing Yourself

2. Preparing yourself to be a mentor

What kind of mentor are you?

You are going to help your mentee become more self-aware. So, doing some work on your own self-awareness is important as a mentor. This section focuses on both your style and your skills, and the impact they will have on your mentee.

• What prompted you to become a mentor?

• Have you had a mentor?

• If so, what value did they add?

• If not, where could the support of a mentor have been valuable?

Who has been a role model or inspiration for you, and why? 🕊

Styles of Mentoring

We describe here two main communication preferences – authoritative and facilitative. Within them there are 6 different styles that can be applied to mentoring. Each is appropriate in certain situations.

It's important to be aware of your natural styles and their benefits, and the other possible styles available to you. Then you can develop the agility to change style, to match the needs of your mentee or the situation.

Have a look at these different styles and take time to reflect on the questions that follow:

Authoritative	Facilitative		
Confronting	Supporting		
 Giving feedback Challenging perceptions Describing how others perceive someone's behaviour Asking tough questions 	 Affirming someone's worth Giving focused attention Expressing care or concern Appropriate sharing and self-disclosure Encouraging celebration 		
Informing	Eliciting		
 Imparting information Expressing your perceptions Sharing your own experience Giving your opinion or stating your point of view Explaining Providing background Referencing other resources 	 Provoking self-discovery through reflection Echoing back what someone seems to be saying Prompting them to say more Using reflective listening to help someone express their feelings Asking probing questions 		
Guiding	Exploring		
 Describing possible consequences of particular actions Suggesting Advising Recommending 	 Asking for options and possibilities Asking about pros and cons of options or actions Helping someone to evaluate decisions before they act Asking questions to deepen understanding 		

Adapted from Ann Rolfe - Communication Styles for Mentoring and based on research from the University of Surrey.

- Which do you think are your natural or preferred styles from the 6 identified??
- Now complete the questionnaire below, giving each statement a score of 1 5 depending how accurately they describe you with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree. Put your score for each statement in the light purple box. Be honest, there is no right or wrong answer.

	Α	В	С	D	E	F
I like explaining and imparting information to others					K	
I like to ask thought-provoking questions						
I enjoy helping others make informed decisions						
I always give my opinion		.0				
I always let people know my perceptions		1				
I am good at summarising what people say						
I ask questions to explore the facts about a situation		K				
I help to build others' confidence in themselves						
I like to recommend how things could be done						
I enjoy sharing my experiences with others						
I have a genuine interest in listening to others' views and perspectives						
I encourage sharing and disclosure						
I support and encourage others in their endeavours						
I show concern and care for others						
I am good at challenging others' perceptions						
I like to offer my advice						
I give people accurate feedback						
I suggest to others how things should be done						
Lalways describe possible consequences of actions						
I ask questions to help others think things through						
I am happy to tell people how others perceive them						
I help others to learn by helping them to reflect						
I encourage others to celebrate when things go well						
I am not afraid to ask tough questions						
TOTAL SCORE FOR EACH COLUMN						

Transfer the total scores for each column to the table below: $\cancel{\text{\&}}$

Column	Authoritative Preference	Your total score
Column A	Confronting Style	
Column B	Informing Style	
Column C	Guiding Style	
	Total for Authoritative	

Column	Facilitative Preference	Your total score
Column D	Supporting Style	
Column E	Eliciting Style	
Column F	Exploring Style	
	Total for Facilitative	

- ullet Does the result match your answer to question 1? If not, how does it differ? $\hbox{\it Z}$

- ullet Which styles are you least comfortable with? $\hbox{\ensuremath{\not =}}$

How can you develop these styles as you grow in experience as a mentor? 🗷

The skills of Mentoring

What skills, attributes and experience do you bring to the relationship?

Score between 1 and 5, with 5 being the highest. Think about how capable and confident you feel in using these skills. It's quite common to know that you are capable of doing something but still not feel confident about doing it!

	Ø	Capability 1 - 5	Confidence 1 - 5
Asking great questions			
Actively listening (listening intently and paying attention to non-verbal clues)		•	
Building credibility and trust			
Being comfortable with silence (creating thinking time)		.01	
Building positive relationships			
Challenging others in a constructive way			
Networking outside the organisation			
Networking within the organisation			
Patience			
Reflecting on personal performance and how you can imp	rove		
Role modelling leadership behaviours			
Encouraging views that are different from your own			

How can you make the most of the skills you've identified? 🕊

Which skills do you want to develop? 🕊

How are you going to develop those skills?

What other skills and abilities do you want to develop as a mentor? ${\mathscr L}$

Being clear about roles

Four people contribute to the success of a mentoring programme:

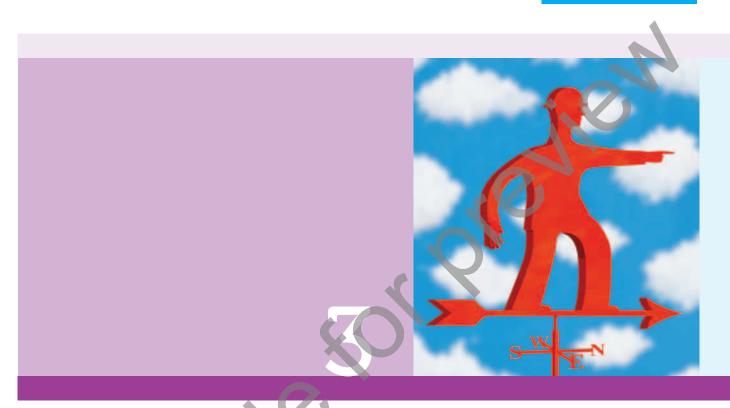
- Yourself as mentor
- Your mentee
- The mentee's line manager
- The programme organiser (e.g. HR Director/Manager)

Being clear on the responsibilities of each of party is critical to avoid confusion, overlap or missing elements. The roles of the mentee and you as mentor should be discussed as part of your first meeting. In addition, do take time to clarify the roles of the line manager and the sponsor before you start.

The role of the Mentor	The role of the Mentee
Agree goals for the programme with the mentee	Agree goals for the programme with the mentor
 Prepare for and attend meetings with mentee 	 Gain feedback from others to define a practical development plan
 Encourage the mentee to reflect and learn from their experiences 	 Prepare for and attend meetings with mentor
Share your knowledge and experience to benefit the mentee	 Act on agreed plans
Help mentees think things through for themselves	Propose the meeting agenda for each meeting, ideally ahead of the meeting
Give constructive feedback	 Be open and honest, and have a desire to learn
Take action and follow up on commitments	Reflect on own performance and skills
May also include:	Be prepared to explore ideas and new
Sharing your network with your mentee	behaviours or approaches
 Involving your mentee in events or meetings which are relevant to their development plan 	
Challenging your mentee to see new perspectives	

The role of HR/Programme Organiser The role of the Line Manager • Performance management including • Select the right mentors and mentees performance reviews Match mentors and mentees effectively • Identify strengths and development needs • Brief everyone about roles and • Provide on-going feedback on performance responsibilities • Ensure training is available for the mentor • Support development activities for the mentee Review progress and evaluate outcomes of • Encourage mentee to invest time and effort the mentoring programme in the mentoring process • Provide support to the mentor and mentee as needed

Get Ready to Mentor



Getting Started

3. Getting started

Preparing for your first meeting

When you prepare for your first meeting you may be a little apprehensive. Having a planned and structured approach is going to be very helpful. It will also give your mentee a very positive first impression, and will build their confidence in you as a mentor and the mentoring process.

There are 3 things to plan for:

- Getting to know your mentee
- Setting the ground rules
- Agreeing goals

The table below suggests your first meeting agenda, and provides useful suggestions and prompts.

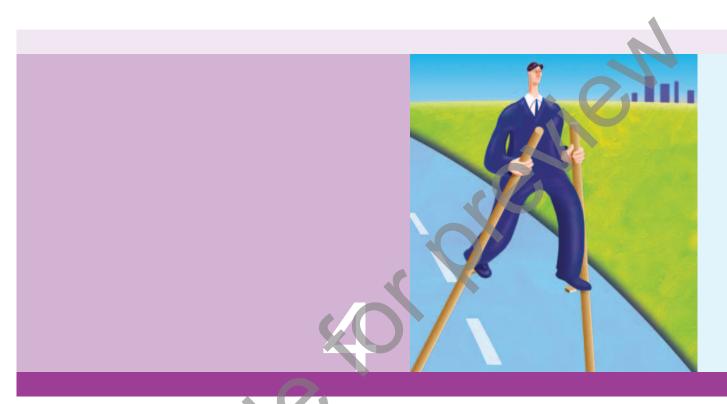
First Meeting Agenda	Prompts/Ideas
Introductions Objectives: Build rapport with the mentee Find things in common Share backgrounds and experience Explain the organisation's perspective on mentoring	 Tell me something about you that I won't read in your CV How did you get to this stage of your career? What do you enjoy about your job? What do you find most difficult or least enjoyable? What are your short- and long-term career goals? What experiences do you hope to have? What levels of responsibility do you hope to achieve? Looking back on your career to date, what has helped you grow the most? What do you see as your key strengths? What is your understanding of mentoring? What do you hope to gain from this relationship?

First Meeting Agenda	Prompts/Ideas
How You're Going To Work Together Objectives: Clarify how the relationship is going to work Provide a reference point for reviews Agree the boundaries of the relationship	 Explore your roles and responsibilities Agree the ground rules for your relationship Discuss your expectations of each other How often will you meet? Who will set up the meeting? Do you want to have a standard agenda or format? Are there "out of scope" or "off limits" topics? How often should you review your progress and relationship? What guidelines for confidentiality will you establish? e.g. for sharing company information, the content of mentoring discussions Under what circumstances may we want to meet outside of our regular meetings? Who else is involved in the mentoring process and what is their role? (e.g. mentee's line manager, programme organiser) How do you engage / involve them? If desired, agree a standard meeting agenda (see the Toolkit in section 7)
Mentoring Goals Objectives: • Agree goals for the mentoring programme • Identify the steps to achieve them	Goals create meaning and focus for the programme. Typically but not always, they may sit in any one or more of these areas: Achieving business results / success Personal Development Leadership Career The Toolkit in section 7 contains ideas for mentoring goals, which may help if there isn't clarity
Review The Meeting	 How are you both feeling? What was particularly useful / good? What might have made it better?
Next Steps	 Date of next meeting? Actions to be agreed?

Notes

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Making Progress

4. Making Progress

Good mentoring meetings don't just happen. They need planning, ideally from both of you. Although we advocate that mentees should bring topics for the agenda, it doesn't always work out that way. You need to be prepared to take the lead and create valuable learning experiences for your mentee.

Here we offer a number of strategies, and recommend that you have planned some of these in case you need to take the lead at a meeting.

Sharing Stories and Experience

One of your strengths as a mentor is the depth of experience you bring to the relationship. At times, sharing some of the stories you have accumulated over your career can be invaluable.

They can be successes or mistakes. They can be useful:

- to build trust (especially sharing a mistake)
- to illustrate a point to your mentee
- to reassure your mentee
- to improve understanding

Some examples that could make helpful stories:

- your first board meeting
- the first time you had to discipline or dismiss an employee
- how you overcame a specific challenge
- managing a challenging team
- learning to delegate
- your first few weeks as a manager
- most important lessons learnt
- challenging a senior person
- giving feedback to your boss

To make the story most effective, be clear about:

- why you want to tell the story and share your experience
 - the key points that you believe will be useful

For maximum impact:

- make it engaging and interesting
- make the link with your mentee's situation
- keep it concise and to the point

Facilitate learning through meaningful conversations

Your mentee may come to your meetings with specific things they would like to talk through, a current dilemma, or an area where they want to increase their knowledge.

You can also introduce discussion topics designed to help them learn, by:

- Expanding thinking or shifting perspectives
- Building on a previous discussion
- Solving a specific issue
- Providing the opportunity for an exchange of views
- Encouraging debate and challenge, thereby developing communication skills for your mentee

If you do this, it's important to be clear on a few points:

- Why you believe the topic is relevant, and how it fits with the mentoring goals
- What are the key issues as far as you are concerned?
- The objective is it to solve a problem or have a debate?

Some example topics:

- · Views on the broader industry sector
- A dilemma facing you
- The impact of technology on the organisation
- Customer trends
- · Values, and why they matter at work
- Learning about different age groups of colleagues and differences in career expectations
- Taking risks
- Work life balance
- The organisation's strategy and/or culture
- Stakeholder perspectives
- Financial awareness

Another very useful way to create discussion topics is to provide an article for your mentee to read. Industry journals, the Harvard Business Review, The Economist, the Institute of Management Journal and many others can be excellent sources of material.

Debriefing Mentee experiences

In the time between your mentoring meetings, your mentee will experience many opportunities for learning. There will be successes, failures, frustrations and challenges. This is a rich learning ground that is often ignored. We are often so busy "doing" that we are unable to stand back and review what's happened, and what we can draw from it.

A crucial part of mentoring is to provide the time and space for reflection and learning. Debriefing these experiences is a great way to achieve this. It's especially valuable because you are working with real experiences rather than theory.

Capture the experience

Suggest that your mentee captures experiences that they can share with you. Ensure that they include successes as well as things that didn't go so well. Encourage them to reflect and review their learning on a regular basis and, ideally, record it in a journal. This discipline will enable your mentee to:

- Think about their experiences
- · Recognise themes and patterns of behaviour
- Form a record to assist recall for discussion at your meetings
- Allow them to track progress through the mentoring programme

A simple journal format can be found in the Toolkit at the back of this book.

Record your learning as a mentor in a journal too. See what themes you can you find.

Draw out the learning

You can do this with questions such as:

- What happened?
- What caused it to happen?
- How did you feel before, during and after?
- Why did you feel that way?
- Is there a pattern here?
- What did you learn?
- Which strengths were you using to create the success
- What will you do differently next time?
- How can you apply this learning to other situations?
- How does this experience add to your skills or knowledge?
 - How could you use your strengths more effectively?

Making observations and providing feedback

Over time you will build a picture of your mentee, and therefore be in a good position to provide them with some feedback. This need not be a one way track: you might benefit by seeking feedback from your mentee too!

Some thoughts/questions

- When would your mentee value feedback from you?
- What would they value feedback about?
- How would they like it delivered?
- How can you balance positive and negative feedback?
- What feedback would you value from your mentee?

A useful feedback model is:

- Share observation what are you seeing or hearing
- Explain impact what conclusions are you drawing from the observation
- Test the reality check whether those conclusions are correct
- Explore options what could your mentee do differently to change the impact
- Agree change what option do they want to try



Opening doors and building networks

As an experienced leader, you are likely to have built up a strong network of relationships. Enabling your mentee to access this network can be a powerful gift. Your network almost certainly incorporates both internal and external people and organisations.

Networking is becoming an increasingly important way of getting support, developing learning, building influence and exploring career opportunities. Encouraging your mentee to develop their networks inside and outside the organisation is crucial – and you can help.

The Toolkit in section 7 contains more information about networking, and provides a framework that describes the different types of networks and their key components. It also provides some great coaching questions that you can ask your mentee to develop their knowledge.

Arranging an introduction to someone in your network could provide:

- A role model / expert for a specific skill that needs to be developed such as:
 - Managing organisation politics
 - Building alliances and partnerships
 - Managing effectively in a matrix structure
 - Managing remotely
- Help with a specific project
- An alternative perspective on a topic
- Information from a subject matter expert

Make sure there is clarity about:

- Why you are making the introduction what's the objective?
- How the introduction will be made
- What specific learning will be achieved





Maintaining Momentum

5. Maintaining Momentum

Mentoring is usually a medium to long term relationship. As with any such relationship, problems or hiccups may occur from time to time.

Two of the challenges for any mentoring relationship are:

- How to keep on track
- · What to do about things that go wrong

Keeping things on track

This is about keeping your mentoring fresh and energising. As the mentor, you need to ensure you continue to create a learning environment for your mentee. Here are some suggestions:

- Focus on what the mentee wants from the meeting and the relationship
- Keep reviewing the development goals, and be open to changing them over time
- Conduct regular reviews of the programme with your mentee, noting what's working well and what could be improved
- Change locations
- Pick a discussion topic from 'Having Meaningful Conversations' in section 4.
- Talk to other mentors if possible, to get ideas and share reflections and learning

What to do about things that go wrong

If you suspect something may be going wrong with the relationship, it's vital that you tackle it early. What's happening may be a symptom of a larger issue that needs discussing, or that needs your support.

Failure to achieve rapport

You will know, within 2 meetings usually, if the rapport is there and you "click" with your mentee. When this happens, mutual trust can follow quickly, leading to deeper discussions. This is the best start for a mentoring relationship.

If you don't have the desired level of rapport, you may still enjoy an effective relationship providing some things are in place:

- You have a shared sense of purpose and clear goals for the mentoring
- There is mutual respect for each other
- Commitment to make it work is strong for both of you

However, sometimes it's just not a good match – and the reality is that some relationships are not going to work. Rather than soldier on, we recommend that you dissolve the relationship and help your mentee find a mentor who is better suited to them. Do enlist the support of the programme organiser early in the process. Although honesty is usually the best policy, consider carefully the feelings of your mentee when planning to discuss ending the relationship. Your goal is to leave them positive about mentoring and keen to find a new mentor.

Mentee cancels meetings

This can occur when other priorities impact on mentoring, and it needs to be explored quickly.

- Find out why and probe to get to the real reason
- Keep your meetings fun
- Check that the meeting schedule still suits your mentee
- Refocus on goals and ground rules see section 3
- Review the relationship do you need to change something?
- · Consider whether it's time to end the mentoring

You start to cancel meetings

Sometimes you may start to struggle with time pressures and find yourself moving or cancelling meetings. If this happens, you need to consider carefully how to manage the conflicts with your time, and what may need to change in your mentoring relationship.

- Do you need to revisit the frequency or timing of your meetings?
- Do you need to have a break to focus on pressing issues?
- Is this a time to introduce someone in your network who can bridge the gap with different support?

Whatever you decide is the right solution, it's important to talk to your mentee quickly and honestly. If you agree to have a break, make sure it's realistic. It would send a very negative message if you later have to make a further delay working together.

Conflict arises between you and your mentee

This is less common, but it can happen. Conflict can be about differences in values or disagreement about a work issue. If conflict is handled well, it can provide rich learning for your mentee (and maybe for you too!)

- Raise the issue quickly either immediately or in the next session
- View it as a good opportunity for both of you: it can lead to increased understanding and self-awareness
- A process for addressing conflict is:
- Provide feedback on what you are seeing or sensing, and engage in constructive discussion
- Each of you presents their side of the story
- The other one listens, keeps an open mind and aims to understand the other's perspective
- Agree on what the problem is
- Think through possible solutions
- · Agree a solution

Trust breaks down

Mutual trust is a vital ingredient for successful mentoring. If it becomes damaged, in any way, it needs to be discussed as a priority.

- Recognise the problem and discuss it with your mentee
- It's an opportunity to discuss the wider issues of trust within a business
- In terms of your relationship, explore:
 - What happened to cause a lack of trust
 - Ways to restore your trust in one another
- How to review and measure progress

Mentee brings mentoring to an early close

This can feel hurtful, and it's easy to blame yourself – even if it's without any justification. Remember there may be some good learning here and it's probably nothing to do with you.

- Identify the issues those presented and any underlying ones
- Consider options e.g. taking a break for a few months
- Refocus on goals and ground rules if appropriate
- If the relationship is to end, look through section 6 on Ending
- Discuss alternative means of development available to the mentee

Mentee brings nothing to the meetings, or doesn't do what they agreed to do

(e.g. they don't make changes or try new ideas.) Laziness, lack of motivation or crushing workload could be causes – you need to find out and help your mentee.

- Discuss your concerns openly with your mentee
- Explore the reasons
- · Refocus on goals and ground rules
- Review the relationship and any changes that need to be made, e.g. mentee to send agenda before meeting
- Identify how this situation may be a reflection on other areas of their work

As the mentor you feel 'out of your depth' or lose energy

- Identify the specific issues for you
- Consider other specialists to assist the mentee with certain topics
- Think through what you can learn from the situation
- Discuss your concerns with another trusted mentor or the mentoring programme organiser
- Look for resources to help you e.g. this toolkit, books, articles etc.

Dependency develops

Dependency is not healthy for anyone, but it is a risk in mentoring relationships. Dependency may be the issue if any of the following apply to your mentee:

- They put off making decisions until they have talked to you
- They insist on knowing what you think or what you would do in the situation
- Their line manager talks about a deterioration in their relationship with the mentee
- They are reluctant to bring the relationship to a close, even at the contracted time

Be aware of your own reactions – it can be flattering! However, if you sense dependency may be growing, you need to discuss it at the first opportunity. Helping your mentee to develop self-belief, build confidence in their ability to make decisions and deliver results should prevent dependency developing.

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The Ending

6. The Ending

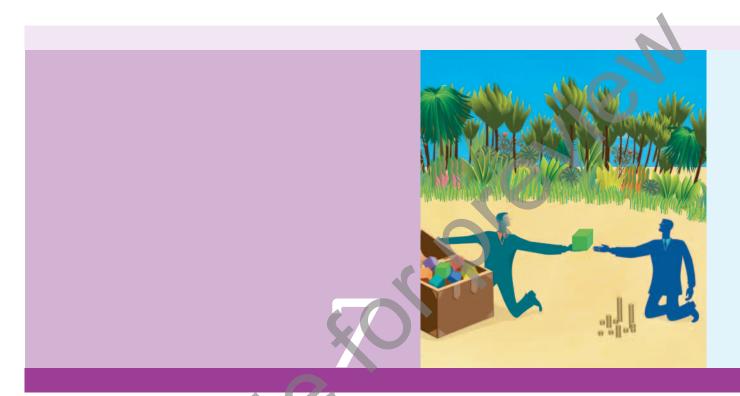
Inevitably, no matter how successful, your mentoring relationship will come to an end. This will be because you reach the contracted time, or because you have agreed that it's time for it to end in its current form. Many successful mentoring relationships last for years, even decades, although they change over time.

It's very important, as with the start of the programme, to end in a structured and considered way. Failing to do this can lead to unanswered questions, and limited feedback for you as the mentor. It can also reduce the likelihood that your mentee will continue to focus on their development beyond the mentoring relationship. Finally, it may also prevent your relationship continuing in a different form. It's the ideal opportunity to:

- Discuss what has been achieved over the course of the programme, from both your points of view
- Consolidate your mutual learning
- Share what you have valued about the relationship
- Assess how you've both grown over this time
- · Share feedback on what it was like to work with each other
- Express your hopes for the future of your mentee
- Agree how or whether to keep in touch do have this discussion, so there are no misunderstandings
- What expectations would you each have of a new relationship (e.g. you might continue to meet less frequently and less formally)
- Celebrate!



Get Ready to Mentor



Toolkit

7. Toolkit

This toolkit gives you practical resources that you can copy and use during your meetings. There are also tips and techniques for developing your skills as a mentor.

Contents

Standard meeting agenda

Which you may find useful in the early meetings

· Reflective journal

Helpful for capturing the learning out of an event

• Development plan

Simple, structured plan of action to develop skills

Questioning Tools

Tips and techniques to develop your questions to promote learning

Listening Tools

Tips and techniques to improve your active listening

Networking framework

A useful way of looking at different types of networking needs

Mentoring goals

Some ideas for potential mentee goals that can be worked on at any stage of mentoring



Standard Meeting Agenda

Without a structure, mentoring meetings can lack direction and focus. This is a suggested agenda which you can copy and use during the meeting. It may be a prompt for you to create your own. However, a note of caution: don't stick too rigidly to structure. Use it as a framework, but allow the meeting to flow naturally and to digress where that adds value. A copy of this tool can be found at the back of the toolkit.

Agenda Item	Notes
Welcome and Check-in Re-establish rapport; create a learning atmosphere, general chat about what's been happening since you last met.	
Agree Meeting Topics Discuss and agree focus areas for your meeting. Ideally, your mentee will provide these topics.	
Development Goals Check whether the agenda addresses agreed development goals or whether a diversion is needed.	
Follow-up on Action Items Review actions agreed at the last meeting and what progress has been made. Discuss reasons for lack of progress and explore any issues arising.	
Current Issues or Topics Usually the main part of the meeting, where you explore topics raised by either you or your mentee.	
Action Items Agree any actions with your mentee. These may include trying out new behaviours, doing something, etc. You may also agree to do things e.g. send an article, contact your network, etc.	
Meeting Evaluation and Feedback An informal review of what went well, and what could have made it more valuable. An opportunity for your mentee to give you feedback.	

Reflective Journal &

This tool is primarily for mentees. The mnemonic SOAP enables them to reflect and review events and draw learning from them. It also helps them to consider where they can apply the learning in the future. Encourage them to use it and bring it to a mentoring meeting. The mentee's journal can spark rich and valuable discussions. We encourage you to use this journal too – to reflect on mentoring meetings and other events.

Below is an example of a completed journal. A blank copy can be found at the back of the toolkit.

The Event Date March 26th	Leadership team meeting, when I was presenting an update on the new product launch plan.
Subjectively summarise your thoughts and feelings about the event	Nervous, because I'm not used to being at that meeting. Also presenting Alan's slides, which is something I don't like doing. I prefer to use my own. Not sure if I spent enough time with him going through all the details. Excited too, because it was an opportunity to get some time with the leadership team.
Objectively note down facts and observations about the event	Started late, so worried about being squeezed and missing the Q&A Perhaps went a little fast as a result but it seemed to go pretty well. They mostly seemed engaged and listened. Paul spent time on his Blackberry at the end, which was annoying. Mike had quite a few questions, and some I wasn't expecting, so didn't do a great job of answering them. Said that I'd go back to him. Really annoyed that I got caught out with that.
Analyse what learning you can take from it. What was good and bad about the event? How do you think the way you behaved affected the outcome? What could you have done differently?	Good: presented well given it wasn't my slide deck. Wasn't as nervous as I expected to be. Should have spent time with Alan asking him about likely objections and challenges, then I could have answered Mike's questions better. Must remember to go back to Mike with answers.
Personal LearningWhat will you do next time?Where else can your learning be applied?	Spend part of planning time thinking about likely objections or difficult questions. Perhaps find out who is likely to object, and see them in advance to understand concerns.

Development Plan 🗷

A development plan formalises your plan of action. The questions in the header guide you to ensure that your goals are SMART i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed. Development plans should be working documents – regularly reviewed and updated.

Remember that the set of goals should be achievable together – so don't try to tackle too many things at once, or make your goals too big. Below is a completed development plan as an **example**. A blank development plan can be found at the back of the toolkit.

What is the specific development goal or objective?	How will I know when I have been successful? What will be different?	What do I need to learn, experience or improve, to achieve this?	What specifically will I do to achieve the goal?	By when?
Delegate more effectively to members of my team	I will have more time, and they will be working on things that I am currently doing	Learn to trust and accept my way isn't always right	Start to pass on work. Set objectives but resist stating how it must be done	Start by end of next week
		Discipline myself to build in appropriate review processes for each person	Agree correct review times with each person. Let them lead discussion	Agree reviews each time I delegate
		Recognise individual styles and capabilities more effectively	Hold 1:1 meetings and discuss how they like to work in more detail	First meetings by end of next week
Think more before plunging into activity	Less re-work or revisiting. More robust plans early on and others will feel more included	Realise the benefit of thinking. Talk to people who are good at, it to understand their methods	Diarise thinking time. Find which methods work best for me and build into plan	Project due to start in 3 weeks
		Talk more to colleagues, to understand their experiences and expertise	Identify who to involve at the early stage of projects	End of the month

Questioning Tools – Asking Effective Questions

Throughout our lives, questions are a powerful way of:

- Learning
- Building relationships
- · Managing and coaching
- · Avoiding misunderstandings
- Defusing a heated situation
- · Persuading people

You will use questions a lot during your mentoring conversations. They are a great way to provoke and broaden thinking. Here are a number of situations where questions are useful, with some example questions for each.

To check out assumptions

These questions are designed to tease out and challenge your mentee's presuppositions and unquestioned beliefs. This is often very powerful, because you may lead them to recognise some of their underlying beliefs for the first time. Frequently we hold views and assumptions based on our own value system, biases and world view. This is a narrow foundation, and questions can challenge your mentee to recognise this, and try to broaden their views.

- You seem to be assuming ...?
- What else could you assume?
- How did you come to those assumptions?
- Can you explain how you arrived at that view?
- How can you verify or disprove that assumption?
- · What is the belief that causes you to think this?
- What would happen if you changed that belief?

Probe implications and consequences

Views and opinions frequently lead to actions that have implications or consequences. Too often, those consequences are not thought through, and may cause problems later. Questions can enable your mentee to develop their strategic thinking and decision-making ability.

- Then what would happen?
- What could be the consequences of that?
- What are the implications of this?
- How does this affect ... ?
- How does this fit with what we learned before?
- Why is ... important?
- Are there any potential risks with this?
- What are the upsides and downsides of this position?

Probing rationale, reasons and evidence

When your mentee gives a rationale for their views or conclusions, dig into that reasoning rather than assuming it's correct. People often use un-thought-through or weakly understood supports for their arguments. Challenging your mentee can give them an opportunity to re-think in a safe environment.

In general, organisations place value on logical, considered and objective arguments. However, support for arguments is sometimes emotional rather than objective. This is not always a problem, but it may not be credible enough. Recognising this can be a useful insight and good learning for your mentee.

- How do you know this?
- What evidence do you have to support this view?
- Is this a fact or is it your interpretation?
- What are you basing your argument on?
- Can you give me an example of that?
- What do you think causes this?
- Are these reasons good enough?
- Would it stand up in court?
- How might it be refuted?
- Why is ... happening?
- What evidence is there to support your interpretation?

Questioning viewpoints and perspectives

Most arguments are given from a particular position. Sometimes it can be useful to question the position, to show that there are other, equally valid viewpoints. This will enable your mentee to think more broadly and to develop empathy – both highly valuable skills.

- Another way of looking at this is ..., what do you think?
- · What are the alternative ways of looking at this?
- Who benefits from this?
- What is the difference between... and ...?
- How are ... and ... similar?
- Why is your view better than the alternative?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your view?
 - How could you look at this another way?
- How might the other person involved be viewing the situation?

Overcoming obstacles and challenges

People with positive attitudes are engaging and inspiring. Helping your mentee to overcome obstacles – real or perceived – is a great enabler for a "can do" mentality. Mentors can sometimes remove practical obstacles for their mentee (see networking section), but questions can also remove mental blocks or perceived obstacles.

- What is standing in your way?
- What might you be assuming?
- What would need to be true for this to happen?
- What have you seen work before in similar situations?
- What options are there for overcoming these obstacles?
- Think of someone who is really good at this, how would they approach it?
- Who else could help you solve this problem?
- How else could you look at this situation?

Listening Tools – Active Listening

Hear what people are really saying

Listening is one of the most important skills you can develop. How well you listen has a major impact on your effectiveness, and on the quality of your relationships with others. This makes it a powerful tool for a mentor. By listening well, you also act as a role model to your mentee for this critical skill. We all recognise when people are listening to us intently.

We listen:

- To obtain information
- To understand others' perspectives.
- To enjoy ourselves
- To learn

Becoming an active listener

There are five key elements of active listening. They all help you ensure that you hear the other person, and that the other person knows you are hearing what they are saying.

Pay attention

Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the message. Recognise that what is not said is also very important – and listen for it.

- · Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts. Don't mentally prepare your response!
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors.
- "Listen" to the speaker's body language.
- Refrain from side conversations when listening in a group setting.

Show that you are listening

Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.

- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Notice your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small comments like "yes" and "uh huh".

Provide feedback

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgements, and beliefs effect what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is ..." and "Sounds like you are saying ..." are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say ..." "Is this what you mean?"
- Summarise the speaker's comments periodically.

Suspend judgment

Interrupting is often a waste of time. It is likely to frustrate the speaker, and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish.
- Don't interrupt with counterarguments.

Respond appropriately

Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. Think about how the person will feel about your response. Positive and constructive responses are usually the most effective catalysts for change.

- Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person as you would want to be treated.

Adapted from mindtools.com

Networking Tools

Definition of networking:

Creating a group of acquaintances and associates and keeping it active through regular communication for mutual benefit. Networking is based on the question "How can I help?" and not with "What can I get?" (Business Dictionary.com, 2011)

The changing shape of networks:

As a manager moves into a leadership role, his or her network must reorient itself externally and toward the future. Successful leaders have a nose for opportunity and a knack for knowing whom to tap to get things done. These qualities depend on a set of strategic networking skills that non leaders rarely possess. (Harvard Business Review, January 2007)

Managers who think they are adept at networking are often operating only at an operational or personal level. Effective leaders learn to employ networks for strategic purposes. (From: Harvard Business Review, January 2007)

Developing networking knowledge and capability

These questions will prompt your mentee's thinking, and enhance the networking skills/attitude that they deploy:

- What does your network mean to you? What is its greatest value?
- How long do you spend each week seeking and maintaining a good network of contacts?
- What are the challenges you experience when it comes to building your network?
- What would you like to do differently, to help build new professional relationships?
- Identify a couple of examples when networking proved successful for you.
- Who do you interact with mostly? Is there anyone you need to update? Thank? Ask a question? Share information with?
- What is the balance of give and take with your network? Do you help others more than you ask for help?
- What are two networking actions that you will commit to do within seven days from today?

A Networking Framework

The framework on the next page describes three different types of networks: operational, personal and strategic. It defines the differences and will help your mentee to understand where they should focus their networking efforts. What people need from networks changes and evolves as they progress through different roles in the organisation.

	Operational Network	Personal Network	Strategic Network
Purpose	Getting work done efficiently; maintaining the capacities and functions required of the group	Enhancing personal and professional development; providing referrals to useful information and contacts	Figuring out future priorities and challenges; getting stakeholder support for them; building alliances
Internal or external	Contacts are mostly internal	Contacts are mostly external although a few may be internal	Contacts should be both internal and external
Orientation of time	Contacts are oriented toward current demands	Contacts are orientated towards current interests and future demands	Contacts are oriented toward the future
Players and recruitment	Key contacts are mainly non-discretionary; they are prescribed by the task and organisational structure; so it is very clear who is relevant	Key contacts are most discretionary; it is not always clear who is relevant and the degree of relevance is likely to evolve	Key contacts follow from the strategic context and the organisational environment, but specific membership is discretionary; it is not always clear who is relevant
Network attributes and key behaviours	Depth: building strong working alliances and relationships	Breadth: reaching out to contacts who can make appropriate referrals	Leverage: creating inside-outside links

Ideas for Mentoring Goals

Mentoring, as stated earlier, does not always require goals. Some mentoring meetings can have no agreed goals but still be very valuable. However, goals are helpful for many mentees and they provide structure, a sense of purpose and focus. They will almost certainly change over the course of the mentoring programme. One of the skills of a good mentor is to balance the need for focus and the need for flexibility and fluidity.

If your mentee is struggling to articulate goals, here are some typical developmental areas that may be suitable.

Business

- Developing strategic thinking
- Understanding politics and culture
- Building a network
- Getting support for operational issues

Personal Development

- Developing influencing skills
- Increasing self awareness
- Building resilience
- Managing relationships

Leadership

- · Developing functional expertise
- Increasing range of leadership styles
- Understanding authentic leadership
- Managing remotely

Career

- Exploring options
- Getting ready for a promotion
- Managing transition and change
- Changing direction
- · Breadth vs Depth

Summary

We hope we've provided you with some food for thought, and a suite of practical tools to use.

A mentoring relationship is fluid and personal – no two are the same! As a relatively new mentor, it's easy to be concerned with how you are doing, whether you are being helpful enough, etc. We encourage you to relax, focus on your mentee, and fully engage with them. In the hectic pace of today's work environment, simply having someone's focused attention is a powerful and very valuable gift for your mentee.

As you progress as a mentor, you'll develop the agility to know when you need to be structured, and when to go with the flow. You'll instinctively understand when tools and resources will add value to your sessions, and when simple discussion is all that is required.

We hope that you enjoy your experience as a mentor, and that it provides you with rich learning as well as satisfaction and positive results.

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Get Ready to Mentor



Tools Templates

This section contains blank templates of the following tools:

Meeting agenda
Reflection journal
Development plan
Notes pages

Please feel free to copy these templates and use as often as you wish.

Meeting Agenda

Agenda Item	Notes
Welcome and Check-in Re-establish rapport; create a learning atmosphere, general chat about what's been happening since you last met.	
Agree Meeting Topics Discuss and agree focus areas for your meeting. Ideally, your mentee will provide these topics.	
Development Goals Check whether the agenda addresses agreed development goals or whether a diversion is needed.	
Follow-up on Action Items Review actions agreed at the last meeting and what progress has been made. Discuss reasons for lack of progress and explore any issues arising. Current Issues or Topics	
Usually the main part of the meeting, where you explore topics raised by either you or your mentee.	
Action Items Agree any actions with your mentee. These may include trying out new behaviours, doing something, etc. You may also agree to do things e.g. send an article, contact your network, etc.	
Meeting Evaluation and Feedback An informal review of what went well, and what could have made it more valuable. An opportunity for your mentee to give you feedback.	

Reflection Journal

T. F .	
The Event	
Date	
Subjectively summarise your thoughts and feelings about the event	
Objectively note down facts and observations about the event	
Analyse what learning you can take from it. • What was good and bad about the event? • How do you think the way you behaved affected the outcome? • What could you have done differently? Personal Learning • What will you do next time? • Where else can your learning be applied?	

	By when?			
	What specifically will I do to achieve the goal?			
Development Plan	What do I need to learn, experience or improve, to achieve this?			
De	How will I know when I have been successful? What will be different?			
	What is the specific development goal or objective?			

Sample for preview

Get Ready to Mentor



Get Ready to Mentor is the second publication in the *Get Ready* series.

Talent for Growth has also published *Get Ready* for Coaching – a book that helps people prepare to work with a coach.

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