

Mentoring Relationship Guide for Mentors



Overview

It is important that both you and your mentee enter a relationship that is mutually beneficial. Use the information below to guide your participation in your mentoring relationships.

Accepting a Mentee

As a mentor, you have the option to accept or decline any mentee requests. Harvard Business Review suggests considering the following three questions before taking on a mentee. You may have additional questions/criteria:

- **How motivated is the mentee?** Assess the person's drive to develop and advance. Your mentee has to be motivated if you're going to have a successful relationship.
- **How far is there to go?** Where is the mentee in terms of experience versus where she wants to be? You should take someone on with developmental gaps that you can help fill.
- **Do I have the relevant experience and time?** You never want to shortchange a mentoring relationship. Be sure you can effectively support the mentee in terms of knowledge and effort.

Developing Your Mentee

You can informally connect with a mentee at any point in your role. There are many tools available to support your mentoring, but the biggest tool is you. You are a mentor because of the knowledge, experience, and expertise that you possess. Those are the qualities your mentee is hoping to gain through the relationship.

Determine the Relationship Timeline

To build an effective mentoring relationship, you must establish what you and your mentee would like to get out of the relationship, build trust, define an action plan, and then meet on a consistent basis. You might follow the meeting template below:

1. **Prior to first meeting**
 - Identify your objectives and expectations for the mentoring relationship.
2. **First meeting**
 - Clarify roles and responsibilities; Share each of your objectives, goals, and expectations of the mentoring relationship.
3. **Second Meeting**
 - Discuss mentee's strengths and identify short and long-term development needs and create an action plan / items to complete before next meeting.
4. **Ongoing Meetings**
 - Review progress on actions items since the last meeting; discuss items of interest, current challenges, recent successes, etc.

Sample Conversation Documents

Consider leveraging these questions to ensure that the mentoring relationship remains beneficial to both you and your mentee.

Pre-Meeting Planning Questions

Where do you hope to be in five years?

What do you hope to gain from this relationship?

What role do you expect your mentee to play?

Are there any ground rules you would like to set (e.g., confidentiality, openness, candor)?

What are your greatest strengths?

What are your greatest weaknesses?

Are any topics off limits?

What do you think will be challenging about this relationship?

What would you like the regular meeting schedule to be (length, time, frequency)?

What criteria would you like to use to evaluate the success of the relationship?

Assessing the Relationship Questions

Are we meeting with the appropriate frequency and for the right length of time?

Are you following-up on our action items coming out of each meeting? Am I doing a good job following-up on mine?

What do you like most about our mentoring relationship? What do you like least?

Do you feel that I am challenging your behaviors and assumptions, not you as a person or your intellect?

Am I helping you see the big picture?

Are you learning from this relationship?

What skills are you building as a result of this relationship?

Am I providing you with the right kind of support? Enough support?

How are we progressing on the goals and objectives you set at the beginning of the relationship?