



Mentoring Guide

Leadership Tool: Mentoring Framework for Mentees

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Introduction & Purpose

At DB Coaching & Consulting, we believe mentoring provides the opportunity to support the professional development of another by sharing expertise, values, skills, perspectives, attitudes, and proficiencies.

Mentoring relationships can look differently depending on the structure, formality, time, career level, advice sought after, and career path of both the mentors and mentees, but overall, they provide support to grow one's career. You may have one or multiple mentors. Having multiple mentors or a personal Board of Directors with different points of view provides a broader knowledge base to address challenges, development opportunities, and uncertainty in one's career path. Your Board should be made up of people who know more than you about something, be better than you are at something or offer different points of view. Putting only your buddies on the board won't help you grow and develop. Another format called mentoring circle or group mentoring entails having one mentor to multiple mentees. Mentors should provide support in different ways – challenging your thinking and enhancing your development, strategically growing your network, coaching your technical skills or job-related expertise – giving you a wholistic approach to your career development and decisions. What is important is that the relationships are tailored to desired outcomes.

Mentoring relationships are often most productive and effective when they do not involve a direct-reporting relationship during the time of the active mentoring discussions. By considering a mentor or mentee outside of a supervisory relationship, both parties are better positioned to more openly discuss current topics and challenges both on and off-the-job. You can have mentors through organizations you are involved with, previous jobs and individuals you come across through networking events and/or conferences, etc.

Prepare

- Identify mentoring goals and opportunities
- Determine criteria to look for in a mentor
- Understand roles and responsibilities for mentor and mentees

Act

- Establish mentoring relationship
- Plan for your initial and ongoing discussions

Reflect

- Be open to feedback
- Revisit your goals and reflect on key learnings
- Reflect on potential pitfalls in mentoring relationships

Review

- Document progress and re-visit mentoring goals
- Celebrate successes and identify new goals, if needed
- Decide to continue or end mentoring relationship

Prepare

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- Identify mentoring goals and opportunities
- Determine criteria to look for in a mentor
- Understand roles and responsibilities for mentor and mentees

Identify mentoring goals and opportunities

As you consider a mentoring relationship, be clear about what your mentoring goals and development opportunities are so that you identify and select a mentor/mentee best- suited to your objectives for the long or short-term.

Determine criteria to look for in a mentor

Mentoring is usually discussed in terms of the work environment for career development (interest in developing in current or future role, new employee experience or role transition; however, it can also be beneficial for other aspects of personal development.

Here are a few traits to consider when evaluating a potential mentor.

Mentor Qualities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management perspective • Organizational know-how • Personality match • Accessibility • Communication skills • Capacity to empower and develop people • Creativity • Confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthiness • Intelligence • Standing/credibility in organization • Listener • Confidant • Supporter • Challenger • Encourager

Clarify your purpose for wanting or being a mentor. As a mentee, is it specific to self-development, competency development, business acumen, understanding the corporate climate? As a mentor, is it to practice coaching/giving feedback? Mentoring relationships are most effective when a mentee has defined what he/she wants to develop and has identified somebody who is experienced and has succeeded in these areas. For example, if you are focusing on developing specific skills, identify mentors who demonstrate strength in them.

For mentees, the best fit as a mentor in this area may be someone you already know directly, someone you know of but may or may not need support in an introduction or may be someone that another person recommends to you and offers help with an introduction based on your development needs.

The success of the mentoring relationship rests on mutual respect and the mutual commitment to work together. Once the initial phase of the relationship has been established with and the purpose, goals, ground rules, etc., it is time for consideration about the components that can help or hinder the development of a great mentoring relationship.

	Mentee	Mentor
Roles	Active Participant, Communicator	Advisor, Guide, Coach, Communicator, Role Model
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drives relationship• Commits to their professional development• Understands their objectives clearly and seeks well matched mentors• Engages mentor in manner respectful of their time• Voices their perspectives• Remains open to feedback and makes changes as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plays an important role in helping one another grow and develop• Engages with mentee in format most comfortable to each – structured or unstructured, formal or informal, time-bound or not• Listens with intent to advise with purpose• Challenges mentee to think or do differently

Act

Act

- Establish mentoring relationship
- Plan for your initial and ongoing discussions

Establish the mentoring relationship

Set realistic expectations and ground rules

It is important that both people understand the purpose of the relationship. Mentees clearly state their purpose for wanting a mentor and the kinds of support they would like, and the mentors clearly state the strengths they could bring to the table. In this way, they both can discern whether there is a match between needs and strengths.

Determine accessibility

Agree about the type, duration and frequency of meetings possible between the parties. Shall the meetings be a once-weekly coffee meeting, a once-monthly formalized meeting in a meeting room, ad hoc e-mailing or weekly phone call?

Define a time frame to the relationships and achieving results, redefine as needed

Do the parties expect to achieve their goals within a particular time frame or is it more casual and on-going?

Establish a statement of agreement, address confidentiality, and implement a no-blame exit clause

This could either be a signed document, or a verbal agreement, but should contain all the elements contained in the sample agreement (See Appendix). The most important element of this agreement is the confidentiality clause, which should be clearly stated and understood.

Plan for your initial and ongoing discussions

The first meeting or two should be spent building and broadening your relationship, sharing more personal information as is comfortable to build rapport. Your other priority for the first meeting is to flesh out the mentee's career assessment and plan. Some discussion topics/questions to consider might include:

Share life stories and background information

Where you grew up, education, family, hobbies, and career history.

Share expectations of the mentoring process and relationship

- When and where will you meet? How often?
- What are the three to five most important things to focus on throughout the relationship?
- What is the best way to communicate with each other?
- What should the other person do if they are having trouble contacting you?
- How will you address mixed expectations with each other?
- How will you handle the discussion if the relationship is not progressing as expected?

Review the mentee's development plan and/or items

- Be prepared to coach, encourage, push, critique, teach, and celebrate
- Come prepared with challenging or thought-provoking questions
- What strengths can you continue to leverage, and where can you improve?
- What skills or behaviors does your ideal leader demonstrate?
- Are your goals a big enough stretch?
- Are target dates realistic?

Reflect

Reflect

- Be open to feedback
- Revisit your goals and reflect on key learnings
- Reflect on potential pitfalls in mentoring relationships

Be open to feedback

Feedback is a powerful motivator. Feedback encourages goal accomplishment, influences the right behaviors and helps to continually improve performance while enhancing one's drive toward continuous learning. Listen and be open to each other's perspective. Reflect on what was said and decide how to reach to it in a way that progresses the relationship and your development.

Revisit your goals and reflect on key learnings

As you reflect, think about your goals. Have you reached the goals you set for yourself? Have you enhanced or improved how you demonstrate competencies in your current role or any others you aspire to hold? Have you completed new development experiences? Based on how you have met or are still meeting those goals, you may have a decision to make about the state of your current development and your current mentoring relationship(s).

Reflect on potential pitfalls in mentoring relationships

There can be several reasons why a mentoring relationship may go astray, have pitfalls, or become a barrier to success:

- Personality differences- mismatch
- Lack of availability
- Mentor suddenly has competing priorities.
- Mentee or mentor does not commit and put in the time
- Relying on just one mentor vs. more than one
- Heavy workloads
- Too superficial and friendly, doesn't move into realm of personal development
- Mentor does not have the skill set to coach
- Mentor moves immediately to solutions without fully listening to the problem

Regardless of the reason(s), most importantly, have open lines of communication and be open and honest with one another about what is and/or isn't working and be open to giving and receiving feedback.

Review

Review

- Document progress and re-visit mentoring goals
- Celebrate successes and identify new goals, if needed
- Decide to continue or end mentoring relationship

Document progress & revisit your mentoring goals

Act to update your existing plan. Write down and capture what you have learned. As you actively update the plan, you will determine your success in attaining your goals and determine if a new plan is needed based on if you have met your established goals and/or if your objectives are the same or have changed from when you originally started.

Celebrate successes & identify new goals, if needed

Congratulations! Once you have made progress and/or accomplished your mentoring goals, celebrate! by writing a thank you note or invite them to lunch to discuss accomplishments and progress, talk to your manager

about your success and encourage your mentor to provide feedback directly to your manager. If you are initiating new mentoring goals, you've reached your previous ones and are continuing on the path of career development. Continual learning throughout your career will help you lead yourself, and others, in a way that contributes toward your own personal success.

Decide to continue or end the mentoring relationship

Mentoring relationships maybe formal or informal, there is an understanding that it is ongoing and less structured where you reach out when needed. For more formal relationships you can refer to the Initial Discussion Guide in the Appendix to help discuss the length of the partnership. For more structured relationships, sometimes at the end of the relationship period, it's time for the mentor and mentee to recognize the end and celebrate the learning that has occurred.

Even as mentors and mentees agree to continue the relationship, it may take on a different form. However, if the mentoring relationship does not continue, a final meeting could be spent reviewing progress and working out where to go from there for the mentee. Learning is a lifelong process and many mentees go on to act as mentors themselves.

Appendix

Initial Discussion Guide: Establishing Your Relationship

Use this template to help guide your discussion during your first meeting. This is designed to help create structure for those relationships seeking it.

Mentee		Mentor	Responsibility
Mentee expectations		Mentor expectations	
Questions to Ask Mentee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What are your career goals? •What else have you done in your work experience? •What other education or special training have you had thus far? •What are other special skills or knowledge do you possess? •Are there any special considerations that you have that will affect your career planning? •What are your proudest achievement stories to date? •How have they changed throughout your life? •Is there one point in time when you felt “at the top of your game?” 	Questions to Ask Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Share with me your career path. •What was your best/worst career decision? •What would you do differently with regard to your education and career if you could go back in time? •Can you suggest other people in the organization/field that I should get to know/network with? Would you be willing to introduce me to them? •What are your observations about trends and smart career paths? •Are there professional memberships that would positively impact my development? •Are there specific development opportunities you would recommend?
Mentee goals			
Frequency of meetings		Length of meetings	

We have discussed the basic expectations of our mentoring relationship and agree to revisit these expectations periodically to ensure mutual satisfaction. We agree to keep confidential the specifics of our discussions, unless given permission to share this information with others. We will maintain confidentiality unless a breach of confidentiality is necessary to maintain someone's personal safety. We agree to a no-fault conclusion of this relationship if necessary.

Career Development/Goal Setting Worksheet

The following questions will serve as a guide to facilitate goal-planning for mentee and mentor:

Goal-planning for mentee and mentor	
What are your personal career goals for the next three years?	
How do you plan to achieve these goals?	
What are possible barriers to achieving these goals?	
How does the mentee propose to overcome these potential barriers?	
What can the mentor do to help overcome potential barriers?	
What do you consider personal strengths?	
What you feel needs strengthening?	
What can the mentor do to help enhance strengths and improve weaknesses?	



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