



My Own Coach Ltd

Mentoring Guide

A short guide to creating and implementing your own
Mentoring Programme

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This framework presents thoughts and ideas for each stage of creating a mentoring scheme.

Each part builds into a comprehensive guide to help you launch an effective programme into your organisation.

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The Aim Of Mentoring

The main aim of Mentoring is to assist an individual's development and to support the future needs of the business.



The specific aim of your mentoring programme will be unique to your organisation, but may include one or any of the following:

- pass on skills, knowledge and experience
- improve the quality of thinking in the organisation
- develop communication and understanding between different areas of the organisation and with people at different levels
- help people at key transition stages to settle more quickly and easily
- support the effectiveness of other training and development activities

An Outline for Mentoring

The word mentoring is used to describe the close and confidential offline relationship between a Mentor and Learner, which aims to make changes in the quality of work practices, knowledge or thinking.

More and more organisations are turning to mentoring as a key part of their People Development Strategy.

After all, mentoring has a proven success in building capability and improving performance, helping people achieve their potential with targeted support and guidance.

However, it is important to realise that a mentoring scheme is designed to complement, not replace, the various development support that may already be available.

Mentoring is a positive, powerful and popular way for people to share information and ideas in order to learn a variety of personal and professional skills.

The agenda is driven by the Learner, setting and agreeing objectives for the mentoring with the Mentor at the start of the programme.

Subsequent sessions offer a safe environment for the Learner to discuss and explore issues, relevant to the goals that have been set, though not confined to them.





*"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen,
and a push in the right direction."*

Using coaching skills, the Mentor helps raise the Learner's awareness of strengths, areas for development, communication methods and learning styles.

Although the principal aim is to help the Learner find his or her own solutions, the Mentor may also share their first-hand experience, ideas and suggestions, as well as connecting them to other people and resources.

This helps the Learner gain valuable skills and confidence, and helps towards achieving their goals.

Invariably, the Mentor gains personal satisfaction through helping someone else to achieve his or her goals, which in turn helps increase their self-confidence, and communication skills.

The Role of the Learner

The Learner is the student who needs to absorb the Mentor's knowledge and have the ambition and desire to know what to do with this knowledge.

Mentoring is designed to help Learners set goals for the future and achieve those with the assistance of a Mentor, who will support and guide in response to those needs.

It is a partnership, encouraging understanding by sharing different views and ideas to achieve the agreed goals and personal development plans.

In this, the Learner will need to:

- recognise his or her strengths and areas for development;
- be willing to learn and benefit from his or her Mentor's ideas;
- be open minded about suggestions made and respond constructively;
- retain the responsibility for any decision made.

Benefits to the Learner

Among the benefits for the Learner are:

- builds confidence;
- becomes more self-reliant;
- develops informal networking contacts;
- learns from his or her Mentor's experiences;
- enhances personal skills or competences;
- identifies appropriate training and development solutions;
- expands understanding about the wider business.

The Role of the Mentor

A Mentor has to be a trusted and experienced individual, not managerially responsible for the Learner, and willing to commit time to the mentoring relationship.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word Mentor as “an experienced and trusted counsellor” and is commonly used to describe someone who assumes a guiding and coaching role.

A Mentor does not have to be more senior, simply more experienced in the topic or area in which the Learner is keen to develop.

An effective Mentor needs to demonstrate the following:

- give accurate, specific feedback without being judgmental;
- good communication skills, act as a sounding board;
- build & maintain trust;
- accept what the Learner wants to achieve, whilst stretching and challenging thinking;
- Share his or her own experiences;
- be a confidant, advisor, friend and role model;
- be honest about what is relevant;
- use his or her contacts to assist the Mentee.

Benefits to the Mentor

- enhances business performance and unlocks potential;
- provides an opportunity to re-examine his or her own values and beliefs;
- develops their own coaching and mentoring skills.

Matching Learners and Mentors

It is important to recognise that there are also wider benefits of mentoring that emerge by working with someone with a different background and perspective to you!

The aim is to always create effective mentoring partnerships, which provide the Learner and the Mentor with a forum to explore and try out longer-term career and developmental plans.

To make this work, it is important to match up the development needs of the Learner with the skills, knowledge and experience of appropriate Mentors, to develop the quality of their thinking.

This information is explored in the first instance by having detailed conversations with the Learners and Mentors about:

- what they specifically want out of the mentoring programme, and
- any working styles or personal preferences they may have

Then, recommendations can be made about who will be the most likely match, both in terms of their specific skills, needs, background and experience, and also any preferences either party may have.

Finally, both individuals are offered details about their suggested match, and if they both in agreement, the first meeting is set up.

"Mentors, by far, are the most important aspects of businesses."

The Initial Mentoring Meeting

The quality of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee is what holds the mentoring partnership together.

From the start, both the Learner and Mentor need to be clear on the purpose, roles and process of their mentoring relationship.

Prior to them meeting, checking out the assumptions of both partners will help manage expectations, as well as build a foundation for candid communication and trust.

When they meet, setting a positive tone in this initial meeting is critical to the success of the relationship.

Consider these guidelines help set an agenda, to form a 'contract' for the programme over time:

- agree boundaries of commitment, confidentiality and punctuality;
- get to know each other, build the relationship by discussing backgrounds, personal and work experiences;
- discuss and agree what the Learner wants to achieve, setting outline objectives for the meeting;
- identify the Learner's current skill levels and discuss how to (i) enhance current strengths, (ii) build on areas where further development is needed
- agree specific goals and produce a performance improvement plan for the next meeting with timescales

Line Manager Involvement

Involving the Learner's line manager from the start is important to the success of the scheme, so they can agree how it fits in with their responsibilities for managing the work and developing staff.

The nature of the Learner's relationship with their Mentor will be one where they feel comfortable about discussing issues without fear of being judged.

A Mentor does not allocate tasks and, although they usually provide feedback for their development review, they do not assess the Learner's performance in the same way as a line manager.

Therefore, learners need to understand that the Mentor does not replace the line manager's role in giving feedback on performance.

They may value the Mentor's feedback, but the line manager is the person they should speak with to clarify specific work related issues.



"Many organisations have a mentoring scheme, but they don't really do it justice. Their idea of mentoring is someone issuing advice or simply having a chat!"



Further Information

This guide is offered as a broad outline, from which you can start to create your own mentoring programme.

Should you require further information, or to discuss how we may help support your programme, please get in touch.

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