



MENTORING

GUIDE

FOR



MENTEES

BY TRIPLE CREEK ASSOCIATES, INC.




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# WHAT IS MENTORING?



Mentoring is a personal enhancement strategy through which one person facilitates the development of another by sharing known resources, expertise, values, skills, perspectives, attitudes and proficiencies. It allows the learner to build skills and knowledge while attaining goals for career development. Conversely, it provides the opportunity for the experienced party to further enhance his/her skill and knowledge areas by continuously reassessing and building upon those areas.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

Mentoring relationships typically involve two people:

1. A mentee who wishes to develop specific learning areas,  
and
  2. A mentor who fulfills the role of expert for those particular learning areas.
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# WHY SHOULD PEOPLE BECOME INVOLVED IN MENTORING?

While the reasons for becoming involved in a mentoring relationship as either a mentee or mentor are numerous and may vary upon individuals and circumstances, there exist several reasons that universally apply.

Mentees may become involved in a mentoring relationship to:

- Improve a particular career area
- Learn about another division of the company
- Explore their potential in development areas yet untapped
- Acquaint themselves with the company if they are new hires
- Expand their leadership abilities
- Make valuable contacts within the company
- Enhance opportunities for career advancement

Mentors may become involved in a mentoring relationship to:

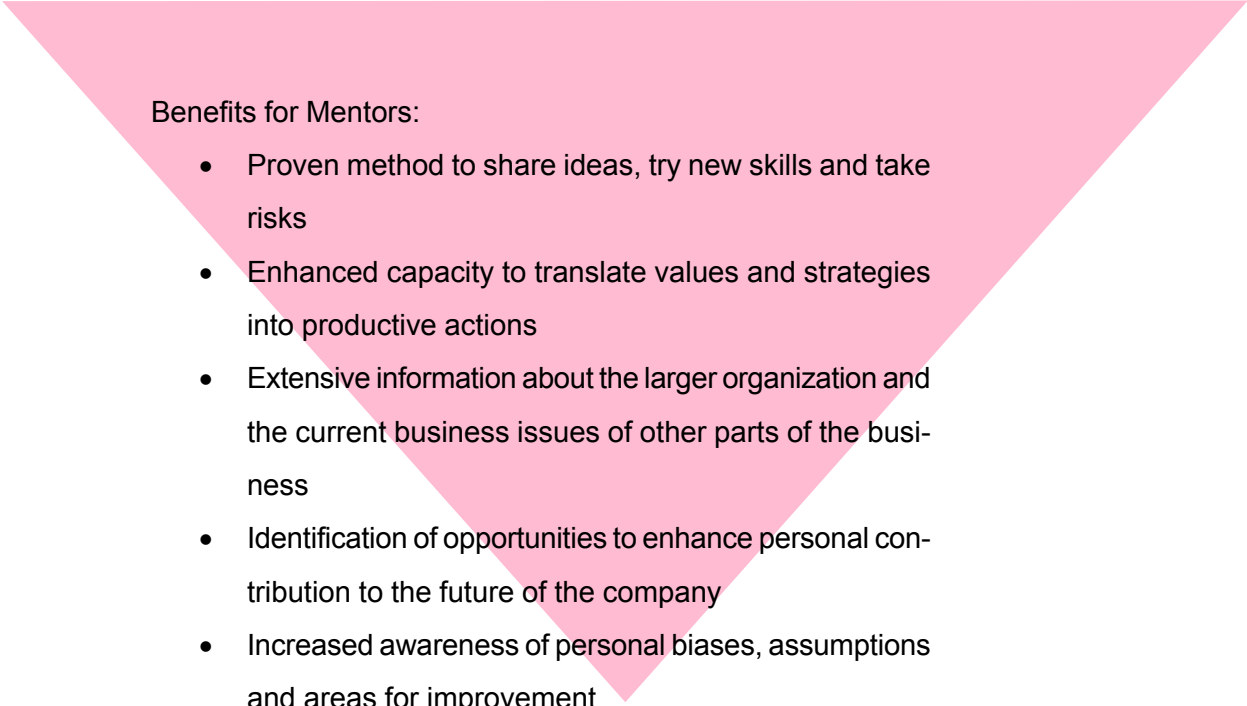
- Share their expertise with another in the company
- Prove themselves as valuable leaders
- Expand their professional network
- Invest in the future of the company
- Obtain a fresh perspective of a subject
- Enhance experience in their areas of expertise
- Cement their role as subject matter experts

# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING?

Mentoring brings value to everybody involved in its practice: mentees, mentors and the organization(s) for which they work. Mentees have an opportunity to gain wisdom from someone who has traveled the path before them. Mentors have an opportunity to invest themselves in someone who seeks what they can offer. The organization has the opportunity to share and spread its acquired learning and know-how.

## Benefits for Mentees:

- Insight into the pros and cons of various career options and paths
- Increased self-awareness and self-discipline
- An expanded personal network
- Support in the transition to a new role or location
- A sounding board for testing ideas and plans
- Positive and constructive feedback on professional and personal development areas



Benefits for Mentors:

- Proven method to share ideas, try new skills and take risks
- Enhanced capacity to translate values and strategies into productive actions
- Extensive information about the larger organization and the current business issues of other parts of the business
- Identification of opportunities to enhance personal contribution to the future of the company
- Increased awareness of personal biases, assumptions and areas for improvement
- Renewed enthusiasm for their role as expert

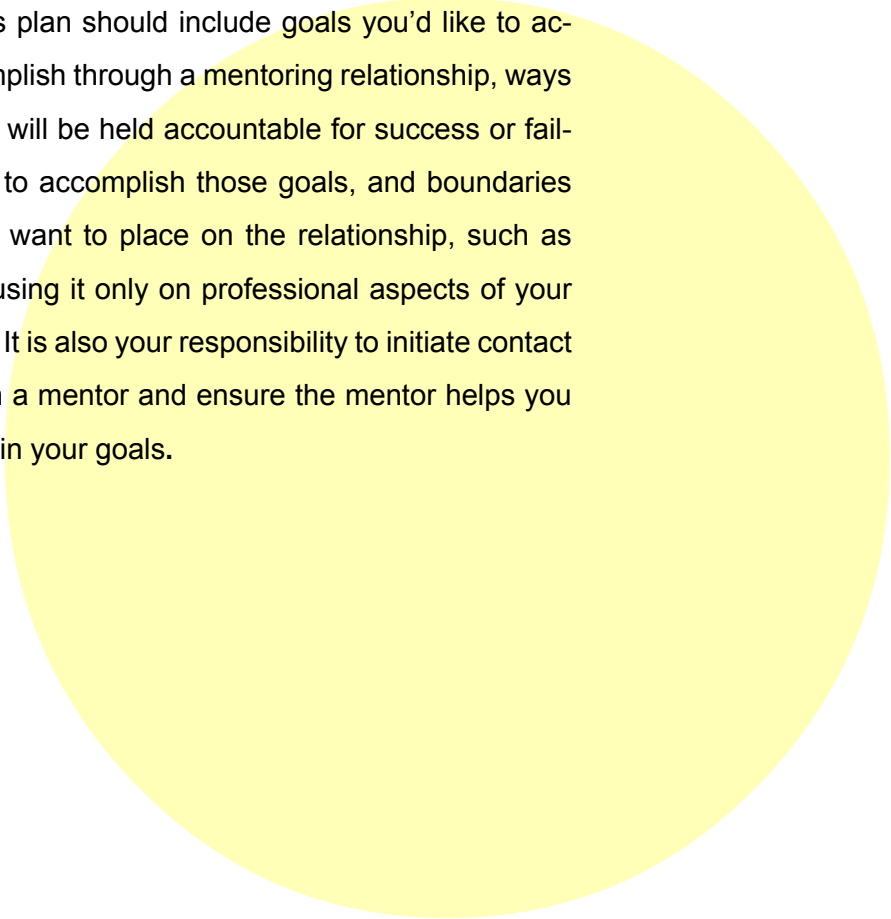
Benefits for the Organization:

- An environment that fosters personal and professional growth through the sharing of business information, skills, attitudes and behaviors
- Increased role modeling of leaders teaching other leaders
- Accelerated processes for the identification, development and retention of talent for leadership and technical jobs
- Increased job satisfaction for mentees and mentors
- Sharing and leveraging strategic knowledge and skill throughout the organization
- A means for leaders to align with one another on business direction



# WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MENTEE?

As a mentee, it is your responsibility to take ownership of your learning and development needs. You must assess your areas of strength and development so you can establish a mentoring plan and grow as a capable and intelligent employee. This plan should include goals you'd like to accomplish through a mentoring relationship, ways you will be held accountable for success or failure to accomplish those goals, and boundaries you want to place on the relationship, such as focusing it only on professional aspects of your life. It is also your responsibility to initiate contact with a mentor and ensure the mentor helps you attain your goals.



# WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A MENTOR?

Some important qualities to look for in a mentor might be that s/he:

- has experience in an area which interests you.
- possesses a strong professional network.
- has a genuine interest in helping you advance your career.
- has the ability and time to be supportive.
- is trustworthy, non-judgmental, ethical and self-confident.
- is a good listener.

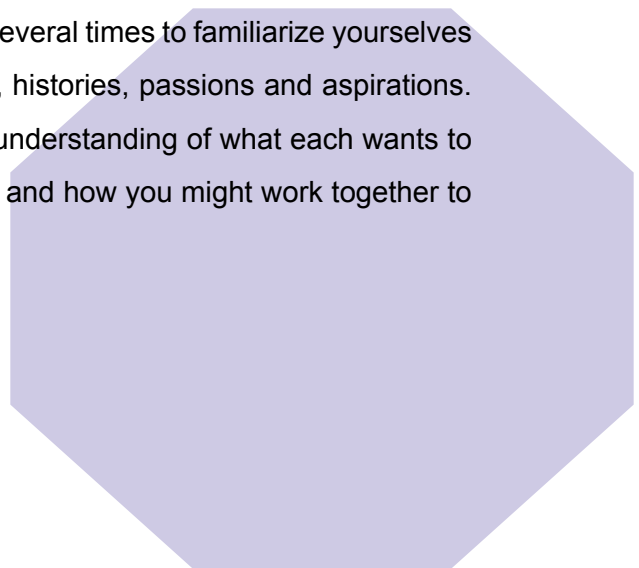
You can also follow some basic guidelines in your search for a qualified mentor. Keep in mind that you want to find someone who can help you meet your development goals.

- A mentor can be male, female, younger, older, the same age, of a similar cultural or racial makeup, or of one entirely different from yours.
- A mentor can be a professional or a non-professional and can have any level of educational, academic or skill background.
- Mentoring relationships can be short-term and informal as well as exclusive, long-term and formal.
- One person cannot be an expert in everything you need; therefore, consider having multiple mentors.
- Seek mentors to help you with particular gaps in your skills, confidence level or knowledge of the business.
- Remember, a mentor is a person who invests time, know-how and effort into enhancing your growth, knowledge and skills. S/He also responds to your critical needs in life in ways that prepare you for greater productivity and achievement in the future.

Before you make your final mentor selection, remember that an ineffective mentor can be worse for you than no mentor at all. Here are some things to watch out for:

- Your prospective mentor should be well respected by both peers and management.
- Your mentor should not be insecure about his/her own success.
- Your prospective mentor's work styles should not be too different from yours, unless the different work style is what you are trying to learn.
- You and your mentor should have a similar work ethic.
- Choose your mentor based on qualifications and mutual understanding that you both want what is best for you.
- Keep your eyes out for any potential conflicts of interest.

After you have selected your potential mentor, it is advisable to spend some time getting to know each other before establishing your mentoring agreement. You may want to meet several times to familiarize yourselves by sharing your interests, struggles, histories, passions and aspirations. This will help you both get a better understanding of what each wants to accomplish through the relationship and how you might work together to satisfy those desires.



# HOW DO I FIND A MENTOR?

Okay, you're ready to be a mentee. You have no problem handling your current responsibilities. You believe you have the potential and you definitely have a desire to learn as much about yourself and the company as you can. In short, you're ready for a mentor. Now what do you do?

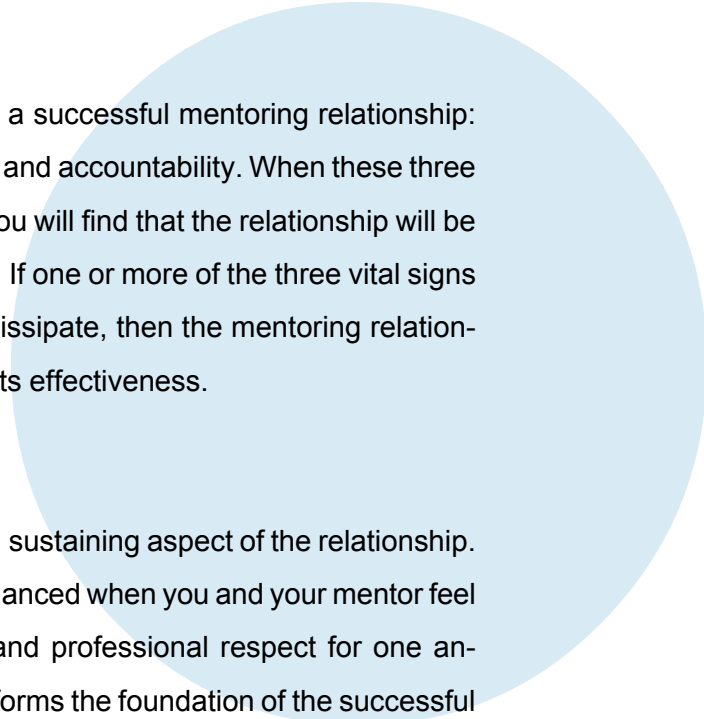
Try these 12 activities in your effort to find a mentor.

- Above all, show that you're worthy of consideration by presenting yourself to others with pride.
- Establish rapport with people by having casual conversations about your job, their projects, sports, food, family—anything that can lead to familiarity and comfort.
- Look for a personality match. It's easier to establish relationships with people who can understand your drive and determination.
- Ask. A legitimate question or a sincere appeal regarding an issue that's bothering you may be just the key that opens you to a potential mentor.
- Listen. This communication skill shows respect, and you just might learn something.
- Network. Ask someone who knows someone, who is close to someone, who can get information for you that you might not be able to uncover yourself. Now you have the attention of three people, where before you had none.
- Accept failure, but not for long. Try again.
- Set realistic goals.
- Follow up on any help received. There's something to be said for good manners. A sincere follow-up thank you is quite well received.
- Volunteer to solve some problem. A potential mentor will appreciate your willingness to help.
- Be open. Give people your phone number or e-mail address and encourage them to contact you.
- Your reputation does count. Develop a sincere, honest one.

# HOW CAN I ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP?

In order to be effective, your mentoring relationship needs to possess:

- Collaboration - Both you and your mentor play a partnership role in your development.
- Respect - Mutual appreciation is core—both of the mentor's knowledge and of your investment of time and energy.
- Responsiveness - As in any respectful collaboration, both you and your mentor need to be sensitive and responsive to the goals, needs and perspectives of the other.
- Confidentiality - This supports the ability to be vulnerable, yet safe, in difficult conversations.
- Joint Accountability - When you and your mentor keep agreements, this strengthens trust and helps keep the learning relationship focused and productive.
- Free and Honest Expression - You and your mentor can share your strengths and weaknesses; your dreams and goals; and your past, present and anticipated experiences. Both of you can offer and hear feedback in the spirit of building on competencies and strengthening areas of weakness.



Three vital signs exist in a successful mentoring relationship: respect, responsiveness and accountability. When these three vital signs are present, you will find that the relationship will be rewarding to both of you. If one or more of the three vital signs is missing or begins to dissipate, then the mentoring relationship will suffer and lose its effectiveness.

### 1) Respect

This is the starting and sustaining aspect of the relationship. Learning is greatly enhanced when you and your mentor feel a sense of personal and professional respect for one another. Mutual respect forms the foundation of the successful mentoring relationship.

### 2) Responsiveness

This refers to your willingness to learn from your mentor, and the mentor's willingness to respond to your learning needs. Responsiveness is a willing attitude put into action. If it is present, you will find it revealed in the consistent pacing and priority placed upon the mentoring relationship. When your mentoring attitude toward one another is positive, your relationship is more likely to be responsive.

### 3) Accountability

This refers to mutually held expectations and agreed upon mentoring activities, including activities to monitor and evaluate your progress toward stated developmental goals. Accountability supports the sense of meaning and purpose in the mentoring process.

# A FINAL WORD ON MENTORING...

As you move forward in your pursuit of a mentor and acquisition of development goals, keep three thoughts in mind.

- Mentoring is a relationship.  
The mentoring relationship is based on mutuality—you and your mentor collaborate in your development. Mentoring does not require a high degree of personal connectedness in order to pass on the desired skill, knowledge, attitudes or behavior. However, there does need to be collaborative negotiation and joint accountability about what is to be learned, how the transfer of learning will take place, and how the learning will be monitored and evaluated. In addition, if both parties are able to express respect to respond freely and honestly about strengths, weaknesses, goals and concerns, the learning will be greatly enhanced.
- Mentoring involves sharing.  
While sharing can take place over a short or a long period of time, equal participation in the mentoring relationship is a must. Effective sharing involves freely giving thoughts, opinions, concepts, ideas, experiences, hunches, techniques and learning to one another.
- Mentoring involves the development of yourself and others.  
Development in a mentoring relationship means identifying and encouraging growth. In your mentoring relationships you will want to keep your professional and personal development goals at the center of your activities and conversations. Two-way development is encouraged through the sharing of resources and time with each other.

Now that you understand the basics of what it takes to be a mentee and be involved in a mentoring relationship, we wish you all the best as you put this new knowledge into action.