

# MENTORING

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## FOSTERING BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS

**In its general form the mentoring partnership is an agreement between two people, sharing experiences and expertise to help with personal and professional growth. Usually a mentor is someone of substantial experience, talent, or professional standing, who nurtures the career of a mentee.** There are many types of mentoring relationships, the following are just a few examples:

**Informal mentoring** is probably the most commonly known mode and typically takes the form of a senior giving the benefit of experience and acting as a role model. Such mentors usually have significant personal experience as managers although this may or may not be in the same field as the mentee.

**Supervisory mentors** are often line managers who share valuable information about the organization and provide meaningful work and developmental learning opportunities. They expose employees to the values of the organization and help employees position themselves with the skills necessary for the job.

**Situational mentoring** is the right help at the right time. It is built around spontaneous connections and offers just enough help to solve a particular problem or uncover a hidden talent.

**Formal mentoring** is usually a short-term relationship, based on clearly defined skills or behavioural issues. Here mentors use current situations to examine recurrent patterns and help the mentee explore their way of handling issues allowing them to gain insights and self-awareness.

The key to any successful mentoring relationship is for both parties to recognize and respect each other's strengths and differences. Mentoring should be more than just an informal chat every so often. At the outset of the mentoring relationship both parties must clarify expectations and roles, establish clear goals and set out a mentoring action plan.

## THE PROCESS

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The ACHIEVE mentoring model suggests a systematic approach to developing the mentoring relationship that is logical and easy to apply:



**Step 1 :** **Assess the Situation.** The mentor establishes a rapport and begins the dialogue using open questions. The mentee becomes aware of their current situation and quite often starts to recognize behavioural patterns that hinder success.

**Step 2 :** **Brainstorming** of alternatives to the current situation. The mentor asks unexpected questions that take the mentee out of their usual thought pattern. Brainstorming should be as free as possible with no limits on what is suggested.

**Step 3 :** **Hone Goals.** The mentee must try to set SMART goals that are meaningful to the individual. Significant time should be spent defining and refining what the mentee really wants to achieve.

**Step 4 :** **Initiate Option Generation.** The mentor will ask open questions and let the mentee generate a range of new options for action and behaviour.

**Step 5 :** **Evaluate Options.** The mentor helps the mentee develop a set of criteria to evaluate the options.

**Step 6 :** **Design Action Program.** The mentee works to build a bridge between where they are at present and where they want to be. It is then up to the mentor to gain the mentee's commitment to the actions and to help them put in place milestones.

**Step 7 :** **Encourage Momentum.** Finally the mentor must continue to remind the mentee of the goals by providing the necessary prompts to keep them on target.

Whether or not you choose to apply the *achieve* model, within the mentoring relationship it is important that both parties commit and play their roles adequately:

The MENTOR should:

- Identify areas of expertise
- Be receptive to developing a learning relationship
- Discuss expectations
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be accessible
- Be honest and professional in interactions
- Motivate and support mentee in achieving goals
- Advocate and advise
- Help the mentee develop a supportive network of colleagues

The MENTEE should

- Identify areas of learning (SWOT)
- Be receptive to developing a learning relationship with mentor
- Be honest in establishing and discussing realistic and attainable expectations
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be receptive and proactive
- Take responsibility for your own growth and development
- Be punctual and conscientious in conducting exercises

In a successful mentoring relationship both the mentor and mentee reap benefits.

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