BeMyHelp

Handbook

BeMyHelp – mentoring of women returning to the labor market

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Contents

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1. Why mentoring: Some basic concepts

A. What is mentoring?

For centuries, we have been looking for mentors, people richer than us in knowledge and experience who will inspire us and show us the paths leading to development.

According to the latest definition created by European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) *"Mentoring is a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences."*[2] So mentoring is a process, in which a more experience person (mentor) gives support and shares their experiences with a less experienced person (mentee) in order for the mentee to achieve educational, professional and personal goals. The purpose of mentoring is to connect an individual who has a lot of knowledge and experience with someone who hasn't gained the same knowledge or experience—yet.

> **The role of the mentor**
>
> What does a mentor actually do?
>
> A mentor is someone who supports another individual, the mentee, to clarify her/his professional development goals and devise a plan to achieve them by sharing their experience & knowledge, acquired during her/his own career. The mentor provides guidance and advice to the mentee, who is -usually- less experienced or knowledgeable in a particular field. She/he shares their experiences, both successful ones and those that did not lead to a positive outcome and can facilitate networking opportunities for the mentee. Mentors can be found in various settings, such as professional and academic, and they can often serve as a role model to their mentee(s). The main goal of the relationship is the mentee's professional development.

What mentoring is not

It is essential that both mentors and mentees understand what does **not** constitute a mentoring relationship, i.e.:

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i. Mentoring is not coaching.

According to The International Coaching Federation (ICF), the world's largest organisation of coaches, *"**coaching** is defined as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential, it focuses on setting goals, creating outcomes and managing personal change."*

A mentor is instead an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Both mentoring and coaching involve working with individuals to develop strategies for achieving their goals and reach their potential. Mentoring may include coaching methods but not otherwise.

Although both approaches focus on learning and development, they differ a lot. The chart below highlights some of the major differences between mentoring and coaching.

COACHING	MENTORING
Usually a shorter-term process.	Often a longer-term process.
Coaches are professionally trained, often have relevant certifications.	No qualifications are required for mentoring (but mentoring training is recommended).
Non-directive, which means that it is about asking the right questions, providing the space, trust and confidence for the coachee to consider how they can reach their objectives and find their capabilities.	More directive. It is about the mentor sharing their knowledge, experience and skills, as well as guiding the mentee through the process.
The coaching agenda is created by both the coach and the coachee to meet the specific needs of that coachee.	The mentoring agenda is set by the mentee. The mentor supports that

	agenda (e.g. by answering the mentee's questions).
Coaching is more structured and formal.	Mentoring is more informal and conversational in nature.
Coaches don't need to be experienced in their coachee's exact line of work.	In a mentoring relationship, mentors lean heavily into their career or life experiences and make those past experiences a central part of the engagement.
Feedback is typically provided by the coach to the coachee.	Feedback is a two-way street, with both the mentor and mentee providing feedback to each other.

<u>ii. Mentoring is not just giving (or receiving) advice.</u>

It is not the mentor's role to create an exact path for the mentee. A mentor is there to listen and support but not to solve the mentee's problems or make decisions for them. Mentoring is about motivating and empowering the other person to identify their own issues and goals. The aim is to help them find ways of resolving their issues, or reaching their goals, while understanding and respecting that the mentee may do things differently to the mentor.

"In my own experience!"
A mentor should always have the "in my own experience" mindset, when sharing their personal experience or perspective on a particular issue or challenge that the mentee is facing. This can help foster the idea that the mentor is not there to offer solutions or impose their point of view, as well as recognize that one's personal experience is not necessarily representative of the experiences or desires of others, and that there may be multiple valid perspectives and solutions on a given issue, challenge and way(s) forward.

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iii. Mentoring is not therapy.

While there are some similarities between mentoring and therapy, such as the emphasis on personal growth and development, the two approaches are

fundamentally different in their goals and methods. The goal of the relationship is not to treat mental disease or challenges nor to process mentees' experiences from the past, but instead to focus behavioural choices and decision making in the present and future.

THERAPY	MENTORING
A therapist is a licensed healthcare professional trained to diagnose and resolve destructive beliefs, behaviors, relationship issues and responses.	No formal qualifications are required for mentoring (but mentoring training is recommended).
Focus on exploring deeper psychological and emotional issues.	Focus on overall development or progress of the individual.
The therapist may coincidentally benefit from the relationship, but that is not the purpose of therapy.	Mutually beneficial relationship.
Therapy focuses on a shift from the less functional to the more functional.	Mentoring focuses on growing or expanding the already functional.
Therapy assists people in dealing with their past.	Mentoring is about actively guiding in their future growth.
Therapists can't offer business guidance or career-planning advice to their clients.	Mentors are usually more experienced at working in the same or a similar organisation/situation, they possess knowledge, skills, networks and experience useful to the mentee

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Therapy relationships are often longer and may last for years.	Mentoring relationships are typically shorter in duration but may also last for a few months or years.
Therapy is more problem-focused and revolves around exploring emotional issues.	Mentoring is more solution-focused and action-oriented.

iv. Mentoring is not a substitute for managing or supervising the mentee.

Mentors don't set the agenda for the mentee or hold the mentee accountable to anyone but themselves.

v. Mentoring doesn't provide guarantees for success.

What a mentor can offer is suggestion and insights, but in the end, it rests with the mentee to put in the hard work and effort to achieve their goals. It is rather a way to provide support and guidance.

vi. Mentoring isn't a replacement for training and formal skills development.

Mentoring cannot take the place of formal training but rather should augment formal development activities. Both approaches involve a more experienced individual, assisting a less experienced one in improving through a task or job. But that's where the similarities end.

TRAINING	MENTORING
Trainers typically have formal education and training in the field they are teaching, such as a degree or certification.	No formal qualifications are required for mentoring (but mentoring training is recommended).
A trainer-trainee relationship is often impersonal, social and hierarchical.	A mentor-mentee relationship is personalized, confidential and friendly.

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Short-term relationship	Long-term relationship
The trainer takes a leading role in the learning process.	The process is directed by the mentee, who sets their own goals and seeks guidance and support from the mentor, and takes responsibility for their own learning and development.
Training focuses on achieving specific learning outcomes.	Mentoring focuses on developing the overall abilities and potential of the mentee.
Trainers provide feedback to learners about their progress.	Mentors provide feedback to mentees to help them grow and develop.
Motivation is not the objective.	Motivation is the major objective.
Training is usually structured and formal, with a focus on imparting specific knowledge and skills.	Mentoring is less structured and usually based on building a relationship of trust and mutual respect between the mentor and the mentee.

B. The purpose of mentoring

The specific goals of each mentoring relationship may vary depending on the needs of the mentee and the context of the mentoring relationship, but some common goals include:

- Career development: mentoring can help mentees advance in their careers by providing guidance on career paths, job opportunities, and skill development.

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- Skills development: mentors can help mentees develop specific skills and competencies that are relevant to their personal or professional goals
- Leadership development: mentoring can help develop the leadership skills of mentees, such as communication, decision-making, and problem-solving.
- Onboarding: mentoring can help new employees adjust to the organisation and culture, as well as provide them with information and resources to help them succeed in their roles.
- Succession planning: mentoring can be used to develop the skills and knowledge of employees who are being groomed for leadership positions in the organisation.

C. Different types of mentoring

There are various types of mentoring organisations can offer. Some types of mentoring may be more effective than others for achieving certain objectives.

For example, where high-potential graduates might benefit most from traditional 1:1 mentoring, those returning to work after maternity leave may gain more from the shared experience of group mentoring.

i. Traditional 1-on-1 mentoring

Traditional 1-on-1 mentoring is the most common mentoring model and what most people think of when they hear the word "mentoring". It's the classic mentoring approach, in which a mentor and mentee agree to form a mentoring relationship to help the mentee grow, progress, and succeed.

In this model, each mentee is paired with a mentor -usually a more experienced one- who they will meet with regularly to discuss their career goals and build a relationship.

This kind of connection can result in:

- More personalised attention and learning experience.
- The ability to develop a strong, trusting relationship.
- Tailored support and mentorship that is specific to the mentee's goals and experiences.
- Real accountability.

1-on-1 mentorship is often used for more personal or professional development, providing a safe space for the mentor and mentee to explore their relationship and exchange feedback.

ii. Group mentoring

In a group mentoring program, mentees are placed in small groups with a mentor who leads discussions and activities around a specific topic. It involves more than two people. In this relationship, one or more mentors provide guidance and advice to several mentees. Mentees usually have something in common.

This type of program is beneficial because:

- It gives each mentee the chance to share their experiences with others facing similar challenges.
- Supports a diversity of perspectives, allowing mentees to get ideas from more than just one mentor.
- It provides an opportunity for multiple mentors to get involved in the program.
- It can be less time-consuming for mentors since they are working with a group of mentees at once.
- It can be less daunting for mentees since they are in a group setting.
- It can also be easier to maintain and monitor from a business perspective, making it a great option for organisations who want to start a mentoring program but don't have the bandwidth to support a large number of 1-on-1 relationships.

Group mentorship is often used for team development or training. The focus here is on teamwork, collaboration, and transferring skills to a group of mentees with shared learning needs. It is particularly useful for organizations that have a lack of good mentors available.

iii. Peer-to-peer mentoring

Peer mentoring is a process where two people of similar ages, experience levels, or both work together to help each other grow. The relationship is less formal than a traditional mentoring relationship, yet structured so that it's mutually beneficial. Both parties should feel like they are getting something out of it. Peer-to-peer learning is an effective way to share knowledge and best practices. It is a mentoring relationship where two people of similar experience levels provide guidance and support to each other.

In this type of mentoring program, mentees are paired with someone in a similar role. Together, they can work on projects, shadow each other, and provide feedback to help the mentee learn more about their role.

Peer-to-peer learning can be beneficial because it:

- Is less formal than other types of mentoring programs, making it more accessible.
- Encourages collaboration and knowledge.
- Can be adapted to different learning styles.
- When it comes to companies and organisations, it may be a great way to onboard new employees.

iv. Reverse mentoring

Reverse mentoring occurs when a younger, less experienced person mentors a more senior person (in terms of age, experience or position) in a specific skill – usually technology based in computing and internet communications. It can also be gender or diversity based. Reverse mentoring provides an opportunity to build relationships across generations and/or diversity and to support the growth of experienced professionals in certain issues they may lack knowledge in.

Reverse mentoring can prove effective in a few different ways:

- It helps close the generation gap by fostering collaboration and understanding between individuals of different ages.
- It allows less-experienced professionals to share their knowledge and expertise with others.
- It provides an opportunity for both parties to develop new skills.

v. E-mentoring

Mentors and mentees use tools such as email, messaging, video communication, and social media to communicate. It is used when a face to face relationship is not possible.

There is no need to be geographically close to each other to benefit from mentoring. This is beneficial for those who are unable to leave their workplace and for those who live in rural or remote communities.

This type of mentoring can be beneficial because of:

- Reaching a larger number of potential mentors and mentees,
- The flexibility to communicate at times that suit both parties,
- The lack of geographical barriers.

All types of mentoring are impactful and can be used to serve different purposes. The key is to understand who your mentoring program is aimed at and gain insight from that group into what they want to gain from the experience.

D. The benefits of mentoring

The benefits of mentoring concern both the mentor and the mentee, as well as companies and organisations taking it upon them to implement internal mentoring programs.

1. Potential benefits for the mentees:

- Increasing professional self-confidence and self-awareness
- New insights into own behaviour and practices
- A sounding board for new ideas and/or working through challenges
- Increasing work and personal satisfaction
- Acquiring skills and knowledge
- Enhancing career development opportunities
- Expanding networks and increased visibility
- Encouragement, support, different perspectives and constructive feedback
- Reducing feelings of isolation.

2. Potential benefits for mentors:

- Satisfaction in serving altruistically and supporting the development of others
- Satisfaction of being able to transfer skills and knowledge accumulated through extensive professional practice
- Increased enthusiasm and self esteem
- Opportunity to re-examine own practices, attitudes and values
- Understanding of the leadership strength with the organisation
- Providing opportunities to inspire and encourage
- Fostering collaboration and collegiality.

3. Potential benefits for organisations:

- Improvement of employees' performance
- Increased overall satisfaction
- Spreading the organisational culture
- Better working environment
- Increases professionalisation within the organisation
- Creates a culture of learning and knowledge transfer/sharing
- Improves communication, social relations and collegial culture
- Fosters a culture of shared values and teamwork
- Improves leadership and people management skills.

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2. How to design, build and coordinate a mentoring program

So, you have decided that you want to implement a mentoring program within or on behalf of your organisation. How should you go about it, in order to ensure a smooth and effective initiative?

A. Designing the mentoring program

i. Deciding on program goals and objectives

Defining the goals and objectives of your mentoring program should be one of the first things to do. Below you will find a list of steps you could follow:

Determine the program focus: what specific areas will the mentoring program focus on? Consider the specific goals or challenges that the program will address. Below you can find some indicative questions that can help you.

1. What are the primary goals of the mentoring program?
2. What specific outcomes or changes do we want to achieve through this program?
3. Who are the intended mentees for the program? Are there any specific demographics, roles, or professional challenges that we should prioritize?

Identify the target group (mentees): Who is your mentoring program intended for? Identify the specific group of individuals that your mentoring program aims to support. Below are some indicative questions that can help you.

1. What are the specific criteria or characteristics of the individuals who would benefit most from this mentoring program? Consider factors such as experience levels, career stages, or specific needs and challenges.
2. What are the common challenges or goals that this group faces?
3. How can the mentoring program address them effectively?

Identify mentors' criteria: Once you understand who you are targeting to be mentees for the program, then you need to consider the people you need as mentors. Below are some indicative questions that can help you.

1. What specific skills, knowledge, or expertise are desired in potential mentors?

2. What personal qualities or characteristics should mentors possess to foster a positive and impactful mentoring relationship?
3. Where can we find individuals who possess the desired skills, knowledge, and qualities to serve as mentors?

Develop SMART goals: Make sure you set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals for the mentoring program. This means identifying the specific outcomes that the program aims to achieve (such as: increased retention, improved job performance, career development, enhanced leadership skills etc.) and setting clear metrics to track progress. These could include, but are not limited to:

1. Number of mentees who complete the program
2. Mentees and mentors satisfaction score
3. Number of mentees who achieve specific career goals
4. Time spent by mentors with their mentees

Align with organisational goals: ensure that the mentoring program goals align with the overall goals and objectives of the organization. This includes considering how the program fits within the broader context of the organization and identifying how the program will support the organization's mission and strategic objectives. Below are some indicative questions that can help you.

1. How does the mentoring program align with the mission, vision, and values of the organization?
2. How can it contribute to the organization's overarching goals and strategic priorities?
3. What specific organizational goals or objectives can the mentoring program support or enhance?

Start developing: This is when the program's framework and timeline will be set. This is when all tools necessary have to be developed, such as the mentoring contract, action plan template, application and evaluation forms. Below are some indicative questions that can help you.

What is the desired timeline for the mentoring program? How long will the program run, and are there specific milestones or checkpoints to be set along the way?

What tools and resources are necessary to support the mentoring program? Consider the development of mentoring action plan templates, mentoring contracts, application forms, evaluation forms, and any other documentation needed for program implementation.

What roles and responsibilities are required for the successful implementation of the mentoring program? This is the time to decide who is running the program.

Time to evaluate: Last but not least, at the end of the program, evaluation is necessary. This is hen the team managing the program will determine whether set goals were met. Evaluation must be taken seriously, as it will help the team understand what worked and what didn't, what needs to be changed and how. Below are some indicative questions that can help you.

- Who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation, analyzing the data, and reporting the findings? (Remember, you have already allocated the team members responsible for the program!)
- What specific outcomes will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the mentoring program? (Make sure you check the evaluation forms chapter below!)
- What methods will be used to collect data, such as interviews, or performance assessments? (Besides evaluation forms, how else can you measure impact?)

Female-only mentoring program vs a mixed gender one?

In the process of designing a mentoring program, the team responsible for the program has to decide whether they will design and implement a female-only mentoring program or a mixed gender one. Here are some factors to consider when making your decision:

Your own organization's mission
If you work or run a female-empowerment NGO, you may find it a better fit to organize a female-only mentoring program. Think about your own comfort level as a team and what type of environment would better serve your beneficiaries.

The program's goals
What is the purpose of the program you are building? A mixed-gender program may provide a wide range of perspectives and experiences, however if you are designing a female empowerment program that aims to connect women who have faced similar challenges in their careers, a female-only mentoring program may be a better fit.

The importance of network
When making this kind of decision, you need to consider your network. Who do you have easier access to in terms of the mentors' profiles you are looking for? Female or male professionals? On the other hand, you may also want to think about the type of

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network you want to build through your mentoring program, depending on your starting point. If you are an organization who works mostly with women, building a mixed-gender program may serve the purpose of reaching out to a more diverse group of individuals.

ii. Deciding on the process and timeline of mentors' recruitment

Will you recruit your mentors and mentees once or on an ongoing basis?The decision to recruit mentors once or on an ongoing basis depends on the specific needs and goals of your mentoring program. There are some factors to consider:

Program size and scope: if your mentoring program is large and involves many mentees, it may be more practical to recruit mentors on an ongoing basis to ensure that you have enough mentors to support the needs of your mentees.

Duration of the mentoring relationship: if your mentoring program involves long-term mentoring relationships, it may be more practical to recruit mentors on an ongoing basis to have enough mentors to match with mentees as needed.

Mentors' availability: if potential mentors are only available at certain times of the year, it may be more practical to recruit mentors once annually to align with their availability.

Program budget: recruiting mentors on an ongoing basis may require a larger budget for recruitment and outreach efforts, whereas recruiting mentors once annually may be more cost-effective.

B. Recruiting & selecting mentors and mentees

One of the first steps of any mentoring program is the recruitment of its participants (mentees and mentors), i.e. the selection of the most suitable mentors and mentees who can benefit from and contribute to the program. Recruiting individuals who are most appropriate in a mentoring program can provide a head start to creating effective mentor-mentee matches.

i. Mentors' recruitment plan

Recruiting mentors is an ongoing challenge for many mentoring programs. There is no one right method that works for all programs. However, a recruitment plan, carefully

developed and implemented, will increase the chances of success, as well as minimise the chances of mentors' dropping out.

Below, we have outlined a few there are the key components that should be included in a menors' recruitment plan:

Define eligibility criteria for mentors keeping in mind the needs of the target group to be involved in the program. Defining eligibility criteria for mentors is an important step in ensuring that you attract the right mentors, who can effectively support and guide your mentees.

Here are some examples of eligibility criteria:

- Work experience: identify the specific skills, knowledge, and experience that are required for mentors to be effective in your program. Consider factors such as years of experience in a particular industry or job function, as well as the type of experience and accomplishments showing competence in the field in which mentoring is offered.

- Professional qualifications: consider whether specific professional qualifications or certifications are necessary for mentors to be eligible. For example, if you're running a mentoring program for entrepreneurs, you might require mentors to have an experience starting their own successful business.

- Availability: It is essential that the mentors understand the time commitment expected from them and agree to it. This includes time dedicated to their meetings with the mentee, as well the time needed to complete feedback and answering questions from project managers.

- Traits of character: consider the personal qualities and traitss that make for an effective mentor. This can include factors such as constructive communication and listening skills, empathy, patience, and interest in supporting others.

- Alignment with program goals: ensure that mentors are aligned with the goals and objectives of the mentoring program. For example, this can relate to a common understanding of what the mentee could gain from the mentoring relationship and of the goals of the program in general.

Create a mentor's role description that defines the qualifications, skills and attributes mentors will need to create successful relationships.This description is a very useful recruitment tool. It will help to clarify mentors' responsibilities in your program and the

essential qualifications necessary for someone to become a mentor. The role description can become the basis of the recruitment message you develop to "sell" your program to potential mentors. While there are many ways to do it, it will likely include these key sections:

Make sure you have **a general, yet clear, description of the mentoring program** at hand. Potential mentors need to understand the purpose, structure and expectations of the program before committing to it. :

It is also essential to be able to specifically describe what **the mentor's responsibilities** are. Be clear about the scope of the program, as well as duration, timeline, and what exactly you are asking them to sign up for. When a prospective mentor has all the necessary details to make an informative decision, the chances of him/her dropping out of the program at a later stage diminish. Make sure you add this to the mentor's role description!

Why should I become a mentor? Write down very clearly **what the benefits for the mentors are**, what they will gain from dedicating their time in supporting others and make sure you put that first on their role description!

Where and how can you find mentors for a mentoring program?

Scouting, locating and onboarding the mentors that best fit the mentoring program you are designing is one of the most important aspects of the program itself. The mentors' profiles need to fit the scope of the program, as well as the needs of the program's mentees.

Be prepared to tackle the most common resistance by prospective mentors:

"I am definitely not ready to become a mentor. I don't have anything to offer, plus I am also facing professional challenges, so how could I ever mentor someone? I need a mentor myself."

Answer A

Who says a mentor can't be a mentee and vice-versa?

Mentoring is not about having all the answers, but about sharing experiences and providing guidance and support to someone who is seeking it. You can be this person for someone and another person can be this person for you! Your mentee will not expect you to be perfect, but they are looking for someone who can help them navigate challenges and grow in their personal and professional lives.

Answer B

Think about all the times in your professional life that you wish you had someone to

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ask about your next step or how to face a challenge. Then think about, and recognize, your knowledge, skills and insight acquired from your work experience. Would you not benefit from someone like you sharing their insights when you were starting out? The answer is most likely "Yes, I would".

Answer C

Can you recall the times that a colleague/friend/relative has come to you for professional advice based on your experience and career/life stage? Well, that was you mentoring someone but not within the context of an official mentoring program! Why not make it official this time?

Answer D

Remember that mentoring is a two-way street. Mentoring is not just about giving, but also about receiving. You can learn a lot from your mentee, such as new perspectives, ideas, and skills. Why don't you give it a try?

One more tip: Connect a hesitative prospective mentor with someone who has already been a mentor for one of your programs. Hearing from an active mentor about the benefits of being in a mentoring relationship, about the positive impact it (most certainly) brings into their lives, as well as about the logistics of how it works and answering questions like time commitment issues can work wonders!

Below we have outlined 8 effective strategies to locate the most suitable mentors:

1. **Use your organization's network**
   Your network is the best place to start looking for mentors.
   Make a list of the people you know, including family, friends, as well as people you have worked with or know from other professional settings, that fit the profile you are looking for and reach out to them. Also, contact the people in your organisation's network who may be able to help you find or suggest the right mentor and help you get in contact with them.

2. **Research online**
   Use social media platforms like LinkedIn to search for professionals that have the skills or experience you're looking for, using specific keywords related to the field/industry you are interested in. Also, use search engines to look for events/fora/initiatives that the people you are looking for may have participated as keynote speakers or in panel discussions.

3. **Make a list**
   When you leaf through your Sunday newspaper, when you listen to someone interesting talking on the radio, when your kids tell you about an amazing lady who turned up to give a speech at their school, put them on your list as a

prospective mentors. Try to find (and keep!) their contact details and organise them by keywords, so that when you are looking for a mentor in shipping, say, all you have to do is type in the search box of your document or spreadsheet.

A necessary step, whichever the strategy!

Determine what you are looking for in a mentor. Be clear on the expertise, skills and/or experience you are looking for in the prospective mentors and make sure it is included in all your efforts to find the most suitable mentors. (Read again the section above about creating a mentor role description!)

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4. **Open call**

   Utilize your organization's network by announcing an open call for mentors, through your communication channels, such as social media and newsletter. Ask people who fit the mentor's profile you are looking for to fill in a form and select the most suitable ones. Make sure the open call reaches online groups or fora related to the field or area you want your pool of mentors to come from.

5. **Nominate a mentor**

   The mentees participating in your mentoring program may already know someone they have identified as their ideal mentor, who may not be in your radar. If the program has already started and you haven't managed to cover all mentors' spots, make sure you ask the mentees if they know someone that they would like to nominate for the program. Also, you can ask the other participating mentors to nominate someone from their network that fits the profile you are looking for.

6. **Networking events**

   Participate in industry events to meet potential mentors in person. Use these opportunities to promote your mentoring program and collect contact details from all interested individuals! Don't forget to follow up the very next day, when they are more likely to have your conversation fresh in their minds, increasing the possibility of them registering!

7. **Create communication materials**

   This may sound old school, but you can also create engaging materials, such as brochures, flyers, and posters, in order to promote your mentoring program and place them where they will be visible to mentors you are trying to reach. You can also hand them out in networking events,or have them in your bag. You never know when you meet a future mentor! Also, remember that the materials you produce and distribute are a reflection of the quality of your organisation and your mentoring program.

Frequently asked questions from mentors

What are the benefits of becoming a mentor?

- The benefits of becoming a mentor are many. It can help a mentor:
- Expand their network and create long-term relationships or synergies.
- Add mentoring in the experience and skills section of their CV.
- Further develop their communication, leadership and empowering skills.
- Boost their professional image
- Provide personal satisfaction by supporting the careers and professional development of their mentees.

What are the prerequisites for becoming a mentor?

This mainly depends on the program the mentor is applying for. However in many cases, a work experience of minimum three years is expected, as well as a certain level of time commitment.

What if I don't have all the answers my mentee is looking for?

The mentor's role is not to know everything, so it is completely okay for a mentor not to have all the answers the mentee is looking for. If a mentor doesn't know something, they can always work with their mentee to find the information the mentee needs or locate other individuals who may know more on the subject at hand.

What if I disagree with my mentee's goals or approach?

It's important for the mentor to respect the mentee's goals and approach, even if they disagree with them. The mentor is there to offer their perspective and possible options, based on their own experiences and insights. However, it is completely up to the mentee how they decide to act upon the advice as they are the ones who have the final say in their decisions.

What do I do if my mentee asks me to hire them or get them a job?

It is important for a mentor to set and maintain boundaries. As mentoring is not about the mentor hiring or finding a job for the mentee, the program's facilitators should clarify this since the program's open call for mentees. During the mentoring relationship, it is important that the mentor doesn't offer to hire or get the mentee a job. However, a mentor can offer guidance and support to help the mentee with their job search.Of course, no one prevents the mentor from actually hiring the

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mentee after the end of the mentoring program, if she thinks that her mentee is a great addition to her team. However, hiring should never be the scope of a mentoring program.

<u>What do I do if my mentee asks me to connect them with someone I am not sure I want to?</u>

If a mentee asks their mentor to connect them with someone they're not sure they want to, it is important to be honest and transparent about your decision and explain the reasons you are uncomfortable making the connection. Offering alternative connections to the mentee by introducing them to people with a similar background, who may equally support them, may also work. In general, it is important for the mentor to ensure that their mentee starts building, or expanding, their own network.

<u>What if my workload changes and I can't fulfill my obligations as a mentor anymore?</u>

It is important for the mentors to know what is the process they need to follow in case they can't fulfill their obligations as mentors while the program is still running. First of all, they need to notify their point of contact in the organization running the program, as well as their mentee.

An honest and transparent explanation of the situation is important, as it will make everyone better understand how recent changes may impact your role as a mentor. Nominating a person with similar background as a replacement, thus minimizing time and resources spent for their replacement, as well as allowing time for a smooth transition is always a good practice.

8. **The mentors' information pack**

Apart from your promotional materials, you can invest in <u>creating an information pack to give to prospective mentors, as well as registered ones.</u> Information packs should be tailored to particular groups of mentors and can include:

● A brief overview of the program, its goals and expected outcomes.
● Mentor/mentee eligibility criteria
● Mentor/mentee role descriptions
● Mentor/mentee responsibilities
● Mentor's benefits
● Links to the application form
● Anything else that you think would be useful

ii. Mentees' recruitment plan

Mentee recruitment usually presents fewer challenges compared to mentors' recruitment. It can be done in a variety of different ways, tailored to the specific needs of the program and its target group (mentees). Mentees often express uncertainty about what to expect from the mentoring program, as well as from a mentoring relationship. Therefore, when the mentees' recruitment begins, it is important to provide them with information about what mentoring is, what it isn't and how it can be helpful to them. Having a clear mentees' recruitment plan is a great asset in attracting and selecting mentees whose needs align with the program's objectives, while, at the same time, minimising the possibility of them dropping out.

Below, we have outlined a few key components that should be included in a mentees' recruitment plan:

Outline the eligibility criteria for the mentees your program is aiming to support**. They** should align with the program's scope and goals**,** but they will vary depending on the program's focus. You can consider factors such as professional experience, career stage, life stage, professional field, any specific challenges they are facing and their willingness to commit to program requirements.

To tackle the uncertainty many prospective mentees are reporting, as described above, it is crucial that you **create a clear and comprehensive role description for the mentees.** This description should outline their responsibilities, expectations, and benefits of being a mentee. Additionally, the description could highlight the importance of actively participating, goal setting, and reflection during the program. This way, prospective mentees will have a better understanding of what is expected from them and this, as in the case of having a clear mentor's role description, can facilitate better matches and, thus, more successful mentoring relationships.

It will largely depend on the goals and objectives of the mentoring program, as well as its target group, but you need to identify the best strategy(ies) to attract the "perfect" mentees for your program early on in the design process.

Below we have outlined 3 effective strategies to attract the most suitable mentees:

1. **In word of mouth we trust**

   One of the most common recruitment channels for mentees is when someone informs them of the program. Encouraging satisfied mentees to share their experiences and recommend the program to others can help spread awareness. The same goes with sharing the news with everyone you know and encouraging team members to do the same with colleagues, friends and family.

2. Does someone know someone who could be interested?

Asking individuals who are already part of the program, or have knowledge of it, to recommend or refer other individuals who may be a good fit for the program is another great strategy. <u>Referrals can be powerful</u> because they tap into existing relationships, networks and trust.

3. Invest on partnerships

Establish partnerships with other organizations that share a common goal or have connections to the target mentee group. This can significantly expand the reach and visibility of the program to the people who will most benefit from it.

Frequently asked questions from mentees

<u>What can I ask from my mentor?</u>

A mentee can ask from their mentor:
- To provide support, advice & guidance on professional matters.
- To listen to the mentee's professional issues and concerns.
- To offer their opinion on how a mentee can manage their career.
- To provide feedback and help the mentee learn things they probably haven't thought about or given the attention they deserve.
- To provide further clarifications on something the mentee may not have understood.
- To be open to listen to the mentee's hesitations or concerns about aspects of their collaboration and find ways to improve them.

<u>What can't I ask from my mentor?</u>

A mentee can't ask from their mentor:
- To be available whenever the mentee needs it, beyond the agreed communication plan.
- To make decisions on their behalf or to take responsibility if the advice they gave did not work out.
- To do the mentee's job.
- To find the mentee a job. A mentor is there to support the mentee in the job-search process and help them network, but the goal of the mentoring relationship is not to ensure the mentee is hired.
- To have an answer for everything. There are issues that a mentor may not be able to answer in the context of a mentoring relationship.

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How can I make the most of my mentoring relationship?

In order for a mentee to make the most out of a mentoring relationship, preparation is key. Before each meeting/contact (especially the first one), the mentee needs to have their key discussion points at hand, as well as to make sure they have followed the commonly agreed action plan set in the previous meeting.
Personal commitment to the program as well as respect for the mentor's time are also key for a successful mentoring relationship.

What are some questions I can ask my mentor?

The questions a mentee will find useful to ask their mentor vary according to their life and career stage, as well as the professional challenge(s) they are facing. However, some common questions that may help kick-start a great mentoring conversation are:

- Can you describe a day in your profession?
- How can I improve my skills and knowledge in my field?
- What steps can I take to advance my career?
- Have you faced a similar situation? What did you do?
- What helps you in your decision-making process?
- What's the best advice you've been given (on a particular subject)?
- What's the worst advice you've been given (on a particular subject)?
- What are some effective ways to navigate workplace conflicts or difficult situations?
- How can I build a professional network and expand my opportunities?
- What skills or experiences do you think I need to develop to reach my career goals?
- How can I maintain my motivation and focus on my long-term goals?

What if my situation has changed since I enrolled in the mentoring program and I don't want to participate anymore?

As in the case of mentors, it is important for the mentees to know what is the process they need to follow in case they want to step out of the program. The first and most important step is for them to reach out to the program coordinator, as well as their mentor, and let them know that the situation has changed and that they are

no longer able to continue as a mentee, by being honest and transparent about the situation.

4. **Communications materials is key**

To attract suitable mentees, it is important to create recruitment materials that are clear, concise and appealing. It can be a wide range of materials, including flyers, posters, brochures, videos or any other format that will engage your audience. These materials for mentees should clearly communicate the program's goals, the mentee's desired profile, the eligibility criteria, the benefits and requirements, and, last but not least, information on how to apply. Make sure you use language and visuals that are engaging and speak directly to the target group you are trying to reach.

5. **Create an information pack for prospective mentees** (containing the same information as for mentors).

Some common questions from both mentors and mentees

<u>What is mentoring?</u>

The mentor helps the mentee clarify their professional development goals and devise a plan to achieve them by sharing their experiences & knowledge, acquired during their own career. The main goal of the relationship is the mentee's professional development.

<u>What isn't mentoring?</u>

Mentoring is not training, consulting, or counseling that aims at supporting the mentee with personal issues. The mentor is not a guru and does not know everything but rather acts as a more experienced co-traveler who facilitates the mentee's professional development journey.

<u>What is the difference between mentoring, coaching and other forms of support, like therapy?</u>

The main differences between mentoring and coaching is a) the mentor is there to offer their own perspective and opinion, whereas a coach is a trained professional who is not there to offer personal opinions, but rather support their clients to achieve their objectives b) a mentoring relationship is almost always a voluntary one, whereas a coaching relationship is, more often than not, a paid relationship. Even when coaching is offered in a volunteering context, it still is a client-based approach. However, it must be noted that mentoring and coaching use a variety of common techniques and tools, such as active listening and effective questions.

Therapy, on the other hand, is a form of mental health treatment that focuses on a person's emotional, psychological, or behavioral challenges that are interfering with their quality of life.

How is mentoring conducted?

The facilitation of mentoring relationships depends on the scope and goals of each mentoring program. Usually, mentoring sessions can be performed in the following ways:

• Via face to face meetings
• Via skype/zoom or other platforms
• Via the mentees shadowing the mentor in their workplace

The method and timeframe of the mentor-mentee meetings will, most likely, be agreed between the two parties, based on needs and availability, unless otherwise stated by the program.

How often should I meet with my mentor/mentee?

The frequency of the meetings with the mentee will mainly depend on the program itself and the guidelines provided. In most cases, mentors and mentees meet monthly or weekly. It's important to establish a regular meeting schedule that works for both parties.

What if I don't get along with my mentor/mentee?

Not all mentoring relationships evolve constructively. For relationships that do not progress positively, it is not necessarily the mentor's or the mentee's fault. If one party finds that they are not a good fit with their mentor/mentee, they need to let

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the program facilitator know as soon as possible so that they can re-evaluate the match and make all the necessary changes.

iii. Selecting candidates

When it comes to selecting the most suitable mentors as well as mentees for the program, certain key considerations must be taken into account to ensure a successful and impactful mentoring program.

First and foremost, transparency is crucial. It is essential to ensure that the process is open, clear, and well-defined. This means that the criteria and requirements for mentors and mentees should be - as we have mentioned above- publicly established, allowing interested individuals to have a very clear understanding of what is expected of them and how they will be selected. By providing this transparency, organizations create an environment of fairness and equal opportunity, where all potential mentors and mentees have access to the same information and are aware of the selection process. This process of transparency should extend to the team members involved in the mentoring program. It is crucial to keep all relevant stakeholders informed about the selection process, its progress, and outcomes. It ensures that the decision-making does not occur "behind closed doors," but rather in an inclusive and accountable manner.

Having a transparent selection process goes hand in hand with a fair selection process - a process that ensures equal opportunities and promotes diversity and inclusion. It helps to eliminate biases and favouritism, ensuring that candidates are evaluated solely on pre-defined criteria and their qualifications. This could take the form of a diverse selection team, where individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise take part in the process. This helps minimise biases and brings a variety of viewpoints to the decision-making process. If your team is small or only one person is managing the program, make sure a second set of eyes evaluates the applications as well. Another way to ensure a fairer selection process is for the list of candidates to reach the selection team, with any identifying information (such as names, gender, age, or educational background) concealed or removed. This approach allows evaluators to focus solely on criteria set by the program and, especially in smaller communities, avoid favouritism.

At this point, we strongly advise you to visit the handbook's section on "Application forms" for more information on how to evaluate applications and select the best mentors and mentees, according to the program's overall goals and objectives

iv. What skills does a mentor need?

The mentor is there to support the mentee on the issues she/he is concerned about. Thus, the most important quality a mentor can have is a willingness to help and support their mentee in their personal and professional development. However, there are certain skills that a mentor needs to have or be eager to develop -regardless of their professional field, in order to become an impactful mentor and help build a successful and constructive mentoring relationship.

Mentors' and mentees' training!

When you are designing a mentoring program, make sure to include and devote time and resources for the training of your mentors and mentees. This must definitely include an introduction to the basics of mentoring (i.e What mentoring is and isn't, What is expected from the mentors and what the mentees cannot ask their mentors for), as well as the program's approach to mentoring, values and all practical information and logistics around the program. The basic training should also allow time for an extended Q&A and should not last less than 60 minutes.

If more resources and time are available, you can organize further skills training for mentors only, in order to further develop necessary skills, as well as freshen up their tools and ideas on how certain skills can become great companions for effective mentoring relationships.

Each mentors' training workshop can focus on one particular skill and it should last not less than 90 minutes.

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1. Cultivating trust

A mentor must be trustworthy and able to maintain confidentiality. They must be able to create a safe and supportive environment for their mentee to share their concerns and challenges. Signing a confidentiality agreement as part of the mentoring program is a good start, however the mentor needs to state very clearly from the beginning of the relationship their commitment to creating a safe space for their mentee.

2. Active listening

A good mentor is an active listener. This involves listening not only to the mentee's words, but also to their delivery, in order to gain deeper insight. A mentor needs to be able to pay attention to tone of voice, as well as non-verbal signals, such as body language. Not being distracted by other things (emailing, texting, talking to other

people) during the mentoring sessions, reflecting back what they have heard from their mentees and asking questions are a sure sign that a mentor is actually present.

3. Asking effective questions

Asking the right questions at the right time is a great skill for a mentor to cultivate. It helps move the mentoring relationship forward, support the mentee to navigate through dilemmas, challenge limiting assumptions and bring about new insights.

The mentor needs to ask open-ended questions, out of a place of curiosity, and prioritize simple ones, not solely focused on very practical details that may make the mentee lose sight of the big picture.

Give those mentoring questions a try! Make sure you match each question to the relevant stage of the mentoring relationship.

Tell me how you got here.

What can I support you with?

What would you like to have gained at the end of the mentoring program?

What is the biggest challenge you are facing now?

What ideas have you developed to help you overcome challenges and meet your goals?

What skills do you want to develop?

What do you consider to be your strengths?

In what areas do you think you need to improve?

Does your current role help you optimize your strengths?

What was a period in your life or career where you felt like you had the most growth?

Who is someone that supports you? What have they given you?

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4. Managing unconscious biases

Unconscious bias and stereotypes can undermine trust, communication and the true impact of a mentoring relationship. A mentor may have unconscious biases around gender, race, socio-economic status or age, which can lead them to make assumptions about their mentee's abilities or potential based on those factors. Feedback and guidance can also be affected as well as the opportunities that a mentor may provide their mentee. For example, if a mentor is in a mentoring relationship with a working mother, their unconscious bias might prevent them from offering advice for career growth, as they may be certain that their mentee would be as satisfied with a low-key, low-expectations job, because of her caretaking responsibilities. To minimise the

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impact of unconscious bias, it is essential for mentors to recognize their biases, challenge them, and actively work to limit their effect.

5. Providing constructive feedback

Providing constructive feedback is the backbone of every mentoring relationship and at the core of the mentor's role. Its aim is to help the mentee reflect upon their decision-making and goal-setting process and/or provide the mentor's point of view on the steps taken by the mentee to achieve a certain outcome or face a challenge. Constructive feedback means helpful feedback and is definitely different from criticism.

The S,A,T and R of constructive feedback

Specific: It should clearly state what they think the mentee did well, what they think can improve and provide examples to support what they are talking about.

Actionable: It should provide suggestions or recommendations for improvement that are within the mentee's control.

Timely: It should be given in a timely manner, ideally within the mentor-mentee meeting that the specific act/behavior is being discussed.

Respectful: It should be given in a respectful and professional manner, focusing on insights gained and improvement, rather than negative comments.

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6. Setting goals

Goal setting is important in mentoring and it is usually perceived at two layers.

The first layer is setting goals for the mentoring relationship itself, as it allows both parties to have a clear focus and make better decisions on what to take upon next. The second layer is about the mentee's own goals. Helping the mentee get clear about their goals motivates them to make the next steps, allows them to build their vision and holds them accountable for their own decisions, successes as well as failures.

During the first meeting, the mentor can ask the mentee to freely brainstorm on their goals for five to ten minutes. Once this is over, the mentor can ask the mentee to divide these goals in short, medium and long term goals. Finally, mentor and mentee can discuss which of these goals are more aligned with the scope of the mentoring program they are participating, which one(s) can the mentor support more effectively and finally have the mentee decide which goals they'd like to include in their formal action plan.

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C. Successfully matching mentors and mentees

Matching in mentoring refers to the process of pairing a mentor with a mentee based on the criteria set from the purpose of the mentoring program. These include, but are not limited to, professional fields, challenges faced, experiences and interests, expertise and knowledge. The goal of a successful match is to create an effective mentoring relationship, which can prove a beneficial experience for both the mentee and the mentor.

How does matching work?

Creating the "perfect" mentoring match is not an easy task. And is definitely not a very realistic expectation. But there are certain steps that can be followed to navigate through this process within a certain framework and not limit yourself to "gut", "intuition" or other subjective concepts, upon which lies the success, as well as impact, of the program the team has designed and is getting ready to put into action.

Step 1 | The purpose

Before the matching process, revisit the purpose of the mentoring program and its objectives.

The person or team responsible for this process should have the purpose and the objectives at the top of their minds when deciding which mentor is the best fit for which mentee.

If the matching process is not manual and is facilitated through a dedicated mentoring platform, the person or team responsible for selecting the best software/tool for their program should make sure that the solution picked to serve their program has the necessary filters and features to facilitate the (as seamless and effective as possible) matching process. And, finally, make sure that a real person always oversees the process and can override the software's decision.

Step 2 | The criteria

Apart from the program's purpose and objectives, make sure that the criteria upon which the matching will be done are clear and make sure any "gray" areas are dealt with, before the process begins. One very popular matching criterion is based on common professional fields, whereby a mentee from an educational background is matched with a mentor with a relevant background. Another very common matching criterion is challenges faced. In these cases, a team manager facing issues with

managing their team can be matched with another team manager, regardless of their professional backgrounds.

Common challenges that mentees are seeking mentoring for

- Work in a male/female dominated sector
- Team management
- Career change
- Work/life balance
- Disabilities & work
- Creating/Growing my business
- Unemployment
- Leadership
- Parenthood
- Returning to work
- Professional development
- Working abroad (or wanting to)
- Harassment & bullying
- Taking up a new role

Step 3 | The matching

The practical part of matching comes when a mentor and mentee are actually connected. This is usually done in the form of an email, where essential information must be included, such as:

- Full name of both parties
- Email addresses
- Phone numbers
- Duration & timeline of the program
- Program's milestones
- The mentoring contract
- The action plan's template
- Communication protocols
- A basic guide to the mentoring program for both mentors and mentees

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● A contact person/email/number available for further questions, as well as troubleshooting

Step 4 | The launch

Once mentors and mentees have been matched, one final step can be an official launch event, whether in person or online (depending on the nature of the mentoring program), where the guests will be all the mentors and the mentees. Such an event can help break the ice between mentors and mentees, set some ground rules, go over next steps and milestones as well as expectations from all parties, answer any remaining questions and, most importantly, facilitate further networking between everyone who is participating.

What if the matching doesn't work?

Matching can indeed go wrong. Mentoring relationships are human relationships. This means that despite our great planning and solid frameworks, other factors come in and may influence a relationship between a mentor and a mentee. Different communication styles, personality types, expectations, as well as different opinions and world views can either make or break a mentoring relationship. In order to be proactive, you need to:

Make sure that both mentors and mentees know who to reach out to when something is not working for them and have a process already set for cases like these.

Have regular check-ins and a solid feedback process where you can monitor progress and make adjustments if necessary.

Whilst planning the resources necessary for the program, make sure you allocate enough resources for troubleshooting and problem solving for the duration of the program.

Once a complaint or bad review for a mentor/mentee comes in, make sure you take time to investigate further and talk with both parties.

Have a list of potential mentors ready to step in the program, in case one of the selected ones is deemed not fit to continue in it.

Have a list of potential mentees ready to step in the program, in case one of the selected ones is deemed not fit to continue in it.

3. How to estimate the costs and fundraise for your mentoring program

A. Creating a budget

Now that we have a clearer picture of how to design, build and coordinate a mentoring program, we can proceed to the next crucial step: estimating and organizing the associated costs to ensure the success of our project. While it may look a bit scary or daunting at first, it can become a more manageable task when we break it down into steps in the form of questions!

i. Who will deliver, design and implement the program?

The main purpose of this question is to clarify whether you are interested in running the program yourself or if you would like to hire an external consultant to run the program for you.

Below you can find a comparison between two different ways of conducting your mentoring program, that will help you choose your preferred method:

Things to consider	Do it yourself	Invest in software
Design	You create a team within your organization to manage the project.	You invest in purchasing some kind of online mentoring software, so you can run all associated tasks through a platform. You will still need someone to oversee the project.
Time	You will have to account for the hours of work your team puts into project management.	The team will need to allocate resources on identifying the right platform, feeding it all the essential information and oversee the smooth running of the program.

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Cost	The associated cost may vary depending on the seniority of resources selected to manage the mentoring program, the number of hours needed, and the duration of the program.	Investing in existing mentoring software can be cost-effective as you will not need to spend time on creating tools and procedures, however it can be limiting in terms of what the mentoring program can offer.
Evaluation	This involves manual reporting with a keen focus on predetermined metrics. Reporting would typically be associated with feedback forms, self-assessment, etc.	The metrics and evaluation feedback a mentoring software program can provide is not a linear thing and it varies, so make sure you take it into account when selecting the software that best fits your needs!

ii. What is the goal of your program?

The purpose and goals of your program are important aspects to be taken into account when organizing your budget. Don't forget to take into account the SMART goals you have already set. Ambitious program expectations often lead to higher costs, while more modest goals tend to result in lower costs.. Therefore, it is paramount that you align your budget with your SMART goals, so you can effectively allocate resources and ensure financial sustainability.

iii. Are you running more than one program at the same time?

When organizing the budget for your mentoring program, it is essential that you consider the number of programs you plan to conduct within the available budget. The more programs you implement, the higher the costs.

v. What are some actual costs you should consider?

Leaving aside staff-related costs, as these will be decided on who you will decide to design and implement the program, there are some other operational costs that you should account for when finalising your budget.

Below there are some questions you may want to consider. Please be aware that this is an indicative, yet not exhaustive list:

- Will you need to design and produce mentoring-related material?
- Will you need to design, produce and/or buy stationery and office supplies?
- Will you hold in-person mentors/mentees training in the basic principles of mentoring, before the program starts?
- Will you hold, at any stage of the program, in-person mentors/mentees meetings?
- Will you hold an opening or a closing event for the program?

Depending on your answers to these questions, you may need to add to your budget costs related to venue rental, catering, design and production of materials, purchase of stationery and office supplies, travel and accommodation, as well as trainers and speakers fees.

Troubleshooting

Even if you thoroughly prepare for every little detail of your program, it is highly likely that you still encounter some problems at any moment of the program. Therefore, it is paramount that you make a list of the possible issues that you might encounter, so that everyone is prepared to face the situation and provide solutions so that the program can still run smoothly. Here is a list of the typical problems that might come up:

- **Time**: It may happen that mentors have an extremely busy schedule, which will negatively affect the normal course of the program. Make sure that you spend some time checking whether the chosen mentor is completely free and available during the course.
- **Insufficient number of mentors**: It is extremely important that you actively encourage people to volunteer
- **Discontent by those who were not included in the program**: Since course places are limited, it is logical that a number of applicants will not make it to the program. Therefore, it is very important that you carefully explain to them the reasons why they have not been chosen for your course, and inform them that they could be considered for future programs

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Once the program's budget is set, the next important step to take is to secure funding. This stage is paramount for the program's implementation. There are many different ways to approach fundraising, below we have outlined some basic ideas:

Grant Opportunities

One of the most common ways to secure funding for a mentoring program is through grants. Research and identify grant opportunities that align with your program's objectives and target population. Look for grants from government agencies and/or private foundations and make sure you apply with a strong proposal that clearly states the goals, objectives and impact of your mentoring program to increase your chances of success. Proving the sustainability of your program will most likely score you extra points as well!

CSR programs

Partnering with corporations can provide significant financial support for your mentoring program. Approach businesses (think locally too!) or larger companies with a CSR focus that aligns with your program's overall scope. Make sure to stress the benefits your cooperation will bring to the company's employer branding.

Individual Donations

Engaging individuals who are passionate about mentoring and empowerment can be another source of funding. Why not run a crowdfunding campaign? Highlight the transformative impact of mentoring and share success stories to inspire potential donors. Offer various giving levels (but not too many, people get confused!) and recognition options to make it accessible and appealing.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Building partnerships with like-minded organizations can create opportunities for shared funding and resources, especially for short-term programs (in order to test the waters first!). Identify organizations with similar goals and/or target groups and explore potential collaborations. This could take the form of joint funding proposals or crowdfunding campaigns.

Mentee's contribution

You can always, depending on the type of program you are running as well as your target group, decide to fund part of the program by having a participation fee for the

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prospective mentees. This will support the sustainability of your project and will definitely lower mentee's drop out rate.

Whichever way you decide to raise funds for your mentoring programs, make sure you don't forget to create a list, which includes the application processes and deadlines of the entities that you are interested in applying to, as well as all the requirements the different institutions ask from the interested parties. Being thoroughly prepared will lead to greater success.

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4. Useful tools & materials

Throughout the mentoring process, project managers, mentors and mentees should have access to various tools and materials that can enhance planning, selection and collaboration. By utilising these tools, the mentoring experience can become more stimulating, encouraging, and ultimately help mentees achieve their goals more efficiently.

A. Application forms

The application process is used to screen potential mentees and mentors and ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria for the program. To enable the proper selection and in perspective matching of mentors/mentees it is necessary to ask them to provide some information about their mentoring expectations, requirements, needs and skills when they register their interest in the mentoring program. Once potential mentors and mentees express interest in the program, they are then asked to complete an application form. Application forms (usually online) help to collect data in one place, are accessible to all team members and allow to standardise requests. The application forms should be designed to contain different questions for mentors and different questions for mentees. The purpose of the application form is to help make the selection of mentors as well as mentees not only easier but also more efficient and create a productive mentoring relationship that is tailored to the needs and goals of the program.

i. Mentees' application form

An application form for a mentee usually contains several sections that gather information about the applicant's qualifications, interests, needs and expectations for the mentoring program. Below we have outlined several common sections that may be included in an application form for a mentee, divided into two categories:

Must-have:

- Personal Information: this section typically asks for the applicant's name, contact information, and basic demographic information.

- Educational and professional background: this section asks for information about the applicant's educational and professional qualifications, including their degree(s), certifications, work experience, and any other relevant qualifications.

- Mentoring preferences: this section asks the applicant to specify any preferences they have for the mentor they are matched with, such as specific industry experience or knowledge, communication style, or other criteria.

- Mentoring goals: this section asks the applicant to describe their goals and expectations for the mentoring program, including the professional challenge they seek mentoring about.

Optional:

- Previous mentoring experience: this section asks whether the applicant has previous experience with mentoring, and if so, to describe that experience.

- Availability: this section asks the applicant to specify their availability for mentoring meetings, including the times and days of the week when they are available.

- Other information: this section may include additional questions or prompts that allow the applicant to provide any other relevant information that they think would be useful for mentors or program administrators to know.

Based on the above, below you can find indicative questions for the application form:
- What motivated you to apply for this mentoring program?
- What is the professional challenge you are seeking mentoring for?
- What are your career goals and how do you think this mentoring program can help you achieve them?
- Where do you see yourself professionally in two years?
- What do you expect from a mentor?
- What specific qualities or expertise are you looking for in a mentor
- What specific skills or knowledge do you hope to gain from this mentoring experience?
- What would be an expected outcome for you at the end of your participation in the mentoring program?
- How do you prefer to communicate with your mentor (e.g. in-person meetings, video calls, phone)?
- What is your availability for meetings with your mentor?
- What previous experience do you have with mentoring?

ii. Mentors' application form

The application form for a mentor is designed to collect information that will assist program administrators in assessing the suitability of potential mentors for the

program, and then to match them with a mentee who can benefit from their expertise and experience.

Below we have outlined several common sections that may be included in an application form for a mentee and divided them into two categories:

Must-have:

Personal information: this section typically asks for the mentor's name, contact information, and basic demographic information.

Professional background: this section asks for information about the mentor's professional qualifications, including their work experience, industry expertise, and any other relevant qualifications.

Motivation: this section asks the mentor to explain why they are interested in becoming a mentor in the program, and what they hope to achieve through the

Mentee preferences: this section asks the mentor to specify any preferences they have for the mentee they are matched with, such as specific industry experience or knowledge, communication style, or other criteria.

Mentoring experience: this section asks the mentor to describe their previous experience with mentoring, including the types of clients they have worked with, the skills and knowledge they have developed through that experience, and any specific approaches or methodologies they use.

Optional:

Availability: this section asks the mentor to specify their availability for mentoring meetings, including the times and days of the week when they are available.

References: this section asks the mentor to provide contact information for one or more professional references who can vouch for their qualifications and experience.

Other information: this section may include additional questions or prompts that allow the mentor to provide any other relevant information that they think would be useful for program administrators to know.

Based on the above, below you can find indicative questions for the application form:

- What is your industry expertise or background?
- What (if any) previous mentoring experience do you have?
- What are your motivations for being a mentor on this program?

- What are some of your strengths as a mentor?
- What will you bring to the mentoring role?
- How would you describe your mentoring style?
- What do you hope to achieve through your mentoring experience?
- What is your availability for mentoring meetings?

The application process of mentors where mentors are chosen from an existing group of mentors may differ from the process in which their recruitment starts from the beginning.

Below, there are main differences between these two processes.

In a program where mentors are chosen from an existing group, recruitment organisers usually have suitable mentors in mind. The recruitment process in this case depends on confirming that these mentors a) fulfil the specific program requirements, b) are still available, and c) are eager to participate. Nevertheless, the selected mentors will have to fill in the program's application form, so that their data is in one place and the matching process is easier. In case project managers need to recruit new mentors for the program, an open call for mentors must be incorporated in the process. In addition to completing the application form, prospective mentors may be requested to take part in an interview or/and mentors' training. In both cases, the application process aims at selecting the best mentors and ensuring they are suitable to work with the mentees.

iii. Review & evaluation of the application forms

Selecting the best mentors as well as the most suitable mentees for your mentoring program involves reviewing and evaluating the information provided by potential mentors and mentees to determine if they meet the eligibility criteria and other set requirements. Below are some steps you can follow in order to review and evaluate the application forms in an effective manner:

1. Review the final draft of the application form before sending it out to make sure that all the necessary information is included and that the questions are clear and relevant to the mentoring program.
2. Establish criteria for selecting mentors/mentees based on the requirements of the mentoring program. In the case of mentors, these may include - but are not limited to- factors such as education, professional field, years of experience, motivation and other skills that are relevant to the program. In the case of mentees, additional deciding factors could be -but are not limited to- socio-economic status, employment status, career phase, family status.
3. Evaluate the applications: review each application carefully, paying attention to the applicant's qualifications and eligibility criteria, as set by the program's

requirements. This may involve assigning scores or ratings to each application to help compare them. If more than one team member is assigned to the task, make sure everyone involved has a clear and aligned understanding of how scores or ratings work.

4. Interview the candidates: once you have identified potential mentors/mentees based on their application, you may want to conduct interviews to further evaluate their qualifications and assess their suitability for the mentoring program.

5. Make a decision: based on the information gathered from the application form and the interviews, make a decision about which candidates to select as mentors. Notify the selected mentors and provide them with information about the next steps in the mentoring process.

6. Provide feedback: provide feedback to all applicants, including those who were not selected, about the strengths and weaknesses of their application. This can help them improve their applications for future mentoring opportunities.

B. Evaluation forms

The evaluation of a mentoring program by both mentors and mentees is a valuable process that provides important insights into the effectiveness and impact of the program. By actively engaging the participants in the evaluation process, making it known to them from their onboarding that this will be part of the process, you make clear that it is their perspectives that can contribute to improving future programs' quality, identify areas of improvement and ensure a meaningful and rewarding mentoring experience for everyone involved.

Through their feedback, mentees and mentors alike play a vital role in shaping the development and success of the program. Below you will find suggested outlines for evaluation forms for both mentors and mentees, designed to receive their feedback at two key stages of a mentoring program.

The mid-program feedback form is intended to be used, if applicable, during the midpoint of the mentoring program. This allows them to provide timely feedback on their experiences during the program and it can help identify any issues or concerns and address them promptly.

The final evaluation form is to be completed at the end of the program, in order to gather valuable insights and reflections and enable continuous improvement, as well as adjustments.

i. Mentor evaluation form of the mentoring program(mid-point)

- Name and surname
- Name of the mentoring program they participate in
- Mentees' name
- How many meetings have you had so far with your mentee?
- How is mentoring conducted?
- How satisfied are you with the support you have given your mentee so far?
- How satisfied are you with the mentee's commitment to the process?
- Are there any obstacles in your relationship or questions/concerns you'd like to bring up?
- Is there anything you would change/improve in your mentoring experience so far? If so, what would that be?
- How satisfied are you with the [insert organization's name] mentoring program?
- Is there anything you would like to mention about your experience so far with the [insert organization's name] network and mentoring program?

ii. Mentee evaluation form of the mentoring program (mid-point)

- Name and surname
- Name of the mentoring program they participate in
- Mentor's name
- How many meetings have you had so far with your mentee?
- How is mentoring conducted?
- How satisfied are you with the support you get from your mentor?
- How satisfied are you with the steps you have set for the professional challenges you are facing in your mentoring partnership so far?
- Are there any obstacles in the relationship with your mentor or questions/concerns you would like to raise?
- Is there anything you would change/improve in your mentoring experience so far? If so, what would that be?
- How satisfied are you with your experience of the [insert organization's name] mentoring platform so far?
- Is there anything you would like to mention about your experience so far with the [insert organization name] network and mentoring platform

iii. Mentee evaluation form of the mentoring program (final)

- Name and surname of mentor
- Name and surname of mentee
- Total duration of mentoring partnership

- How many meetings have you had with your mentor in total?
- How is mentoring conducted?
- Which was your initial challenge for which you sought mentoring**?**
- A few questions about your mentor

1. How satisfied are you with the support your mentor gave you?
2. How much do you feel that she/he put herself/himself in your place and understood you?
3. To what extent did she/he make you feel safe and confident to share your thoughts and concerns?
4. How much did you feel that she/he listened to you with attention and interest?
5. How much did she/he help you to set goals related to your professional challenges?
6. How satisfied were you with the feedback and the way it was given to you?
7. To what extent did she/he inspire you by example?
8. What do you consider to be your mentor's strongest points? What is the most satisfying thing about working with her/him?

- Were there any obstacles in your relationship or questions/concerns you would like to mention?
- Would you recommend your mentor to another person facing similar challenges to yours?
- Mentoring: Choose the ones that apply to your situation:

1. It helped me to set clear goals for the professional issues that concern me.
2. It helped me to better understand the subject/field I am interested in.
3. It prepared me adequately for my entry into the labour market.
4. It contributed to my networking in the professional field of my interest.
5. It helped me with work-life balance issues.
6. It helped me to deal with professional challenges.
7. It helped me to better manage my interpersonal relationships in the work environment.
8. It has contributed to better management of my team.
9. It helped me in my search for funding for my business.
10. It helped me to grow my business.
11. It helped me to evaluate the opportunities that were presented to me.
12. It strengthened my confidence in my work.
13. It enhanced my efficiency.
14. None of the above
15. Other:

- During the mentoring partnership I developed (even more): Select as many of the following as apply.
1. Leadership skills
2. Communication skills
3. Team management skills
4. Collaboration skills
5. Negotiation and negotiation skills
6. Skills for receiving and giving feedback
7. Crisis management skills
8. None of the above
9. Other:

- Do you wish something had happened differently so that you would have received more satisfaction and support from mentoring? If so, what would that be?
- Would you recommend mentoring to a friend or colleague who is facing challenges in her/his career?
- How would you describe to a friend or colleague your experience of your mentor and the mentoring partnership?

iv. Mentor's evaluation form of the mentoring program (final):

- Name and surname of mentor
- Name and surname of mentee
- Total duration of mentoring partnership
- First mentoring meeting date
- How many meetings have you had so far with your mentee?
- How is mentoring conducted?
- How successful was the mentor-mentee matching in your case?
- About your mentoring experience:
1. How comfortable did you feel sharing your own experiences with your mentee?
2. How much do you feel you put yourself in her shoes and understood your mentee?
3. How effectively do you feel you gave it the time and attention it needed?

- What is the most satisfying thing about your mentoring partnership?
- Were there any obstacles in your partnership or questions/concerns you would like to mention?

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- What were the benefits you gained from being a mentor? Select as many of the following as apply.
1. I improved my communication skills.
2. I developed more team management skills.
3. It helped me to develop my speaking skills.
4. I strengthened my boundary setting and negotiation skills.
5. I developed further collaboration skills.
6. I became a more active listener.
7. I developed skills in receiving and giving constructive feedback.
8. I gained a different perspective on issues in my own career path.
9. My self-confidence was strengthened.
10. I got personal satisfaction.
11. None of the above
12. Other:

- Is there anything you would like to do differently next time and what is it that you think would help you achieve it?
- After this mentoring partnership I identify that I would like to develop more skills related to:
1. The management of unconscious biases
2. Active listening
3. Receiving and providing constructive feedback
4. Setting boundaries
5. Targeting
6. None of the above
7. Other:

- Do you wish something had happened differently so that you would have received more satisfaction and support during the program? If so, what would that be?
- How would you describe to a friend or colleague your experience as a mentor and the mentoring partnership?
- Would you recommend a friend or colleague to become a mentor?

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C. Digital tools

Incorporating modern technologies into mentoring can provide numerous advantages to both mentors and mentees. Here is a list of benefits and matched tools.

a) Flexibility: Online communication allows mentoring sessions to be held anywhere in the world, regardless of location. Mentoring couples can try online meeting platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google meet, Skype or any other available platform.

b) Efficiency: With virtual visualisation and knowledge sharing, accessing information, sharing inspiration, and working together on mentoring goals is quick and easy. Mentoring couples can try tools like Miro, Mural, Jamboard for visualisation and platforms like Google Drive and Dropbox for sharing information or working on shared documents (such as the mentee's CV).

c) Engagement: Celebrating mentees' achievements and maintaining online communication leads to improved interactive communication, fast feedback loops, and increased motivation to achieve further goals. Utilising tools like Trello and Asana can assist with planning and monitoring progress.

Flexibility, efficiency and engagement can also be found in investing on the use of mentoring software and platforms already developed. As mentioned above, using available tools can enhance and streamline the mentoring process for both mentors and mentees. It can automate various administrative tasks involved in managing mentoring programs, simplify the process of matching mentors and mentees, as well as automate scheduling, reminders, and progress tracking. Tools like these often includes features such as chat or messaging systems, video conferencing capabilities, and document sharing functionalities. Last, but not least, mentoring software typically comes with built-in analytics tools that can track and analyse various metrics related to mentoring program performance.

Below are some of the top existing mentoring platforms:

1. Together Software is a mentorship platform that empowers your organization to drive performance through relationships.
2. MENTORCLIQ is one of the top rated employee mentoring software
3. Qooper connects mentors with potential mentees worldwide from different sectors, including universities, companies, large industries, and small firms.
4. Pushfar is a mentoring platform available to individuals, as well as organizations.

D. Feedback

Feedback is an essential element in the mentoring process. It not only helps the mentee's development but also enhances the mentor's own skills and interpersonal behaviour.

Motivational feedback recognises the mentee's accomplishments, acknowledges their successful tasks, and encourages them to continue. This builds good habits and creates an environment to celebrate small victories.

Constructive feedback identifies areas for improvement, highlights the areas that require attention, and suggests ways to achieve the mentoring goal faster and more efficiently.

Providing regular feedback has numerous benefits:

- **Increases motivation** as providing positive feedback shows the mentee that their efforts are appreciated, and their hard work is paying off;
- **Reinforces skills development** as demonstrating new approaches and techniques to find a better solution help the mentee understand the skills required to develop and achieve better results;
- **Builds self-confidence** as highlighting strengths and learning from past mistakes allows the mentee to draw conclusions from both successes and failures. They also show how to act best in the future;
- **Strengthens the relationship** as effective feedback is built upon trust, honesty, and mutual respect for each other's needs. It serves as a means for mentors and mentees to better understand one another's preferences and styles, ultimately strengthening their relationship.

You can provide the program's mentors with the following feedback techniques and strategies, around which they can base their feedback:

The SMART feedback technique

Synergy: When providing feedback, focus on achieving synergy through sharing observations, conclusions, and suggestions for improvement. Utilise your strengths and share your knowledge to fortify each other. Together, you are stronger!

Mindfulness: The primary goal of feedback is to improve both skills and interpersonal relationships. Display empathy and concentrate on the most critical issues while giving feedback. This will boost your vitality and motivate you to improve.

Andragogy [a sub-discipline of pedagogy that involves adult education]: Feedback should align with Kolb's cycle since adults learn in a specific way. Build on your mentoring experiences, review what worked well and what could have been done differently, and plan and test a new approach together.

Radical candour: The most impactful feedback is direct, but delivered with genuine concern for the other person. This strengthens the development process and avoids ruinous empathy (i.e. the desire to be supportive and kind to the other person at the price of honest communication) or unnecessary aggression.

Timing: Good feedback should be provided cyclically, particularly when it can relate to a specific situation. This allows us to connect the received information with facts and use it effectively for improvement. Do not wait until the end of the mentoring process to provide feedback; share it during every session!

TIP

At the end of each mentoring session, a quick and easy feedback technique can be used to guide the mentee. It is also important to encourage the mentee to similarly provide feedback to the mentor.

Thank you for today's session and, in particular, for…

Today you have inspired me to…

My expectations for progress in the upcoming session are…

E. The contract

The mentoring process is a cooperation of two parties: the mentor and the mentee. If you want it to be effective, start with a contract, i.e. an agreement between the mentor and the mentee. This can help to foster a comfortable relationship, a sense of security, and a willingness to experiment and learn, as well as build greater trust and deeper connections.

By establishing a contract at the outset of the mentoring process, you can agree on the terms of cooperation, reduce the risk of unfulfilled expectations, and define the main goals in a transparent manner.

It is worth considering the approaches of Eric Berne and Claude Steiner, the creators of transactional analysis, for inspiration.

Contract by Eric Berne

A contract is a clearly defined mutual commitment to take action in a specific direction. It is an agreement between two people that defines goals, rules and procedures necessary for the effective and efficient performance of both the mentor and the mentee.

The contract consists of three levels:
  ➔ **Administrative** level
    At the beginning of the mentoring process, the contractual basis is established which outlines the administrative guidelines for cooperation between the mentor and mentee. This phase centres on defining the scope of collaboration (mentoring and its main goals), the time frame (dates, number of sessions and their duration) and the format of meetings (e.g. online/offline).

    Leading questions:

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- Who is the party to the contract (are there any third parties)?
- What is the focus of the contract (mentoring only)?
- What is the primary goal of the mentoring process?
- What is the timeframe of the mentoring process?
- When will the mentoring sessions take place, and how long will they last?
- Which details will be held in confidence?

➔ **Professional** level

In the second level of mentoring, the focus is on establishing the foundation of cooperation. This involves defining the primary goal of the mentoring relationship and setting objectives for individual sessions if needed. This part of the contract also describes the mentor and mentee responsibilities (e.g. updating and achieving goals, decision-making, session planning), mutual expectations and rules of cooperation (e.g. communication, mentoring techniques, tasks between sessions, rescheduling/cancelling sessions).

Leading questions:
- What techniques and methods are to be used?
- What resources (knowledge, competencies, motivation, tools, supporters) are available to help achieve the goal?
- What is necessary to achieve mentoring goals?
- How will you know that the mentoring goal has been met?
- What are the responsibilities of each party involved in the contract?
- What responsibilities are not included in the contract?
- What is allowed and what is forbidden during the mentoring process?
- How will communication take place (via e-mail, messenger, phone)?

➔ **Psychological** level

In the third level, the focus is on the mentee's and mentor's hopes, fears, and expectations. This part of the process determines both parties' motivation, allowing you to discuss concerns and build a relationship based on trust and openness. Although this level is challenging to pinpoint due to implicit expectations, it offers significant benefits.

Leading questions:
- What motivates you to work with me on this issue at this time?
- What are your needs, expectations, and fears?
- What will happen if you reach your goal?
- What will not happen if you reach your goal?
- What will happen if you do not reach your goal?
- What will not happen if you do not reach your goal?
- What do you need to work effectively?

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If you establish the contract based on the three levels outlined, it will create a solid basis for effective collaboration between the mentor and the mentee, ensuring that mentoring objectives are accomplished.

Contract by Claude Steiner

The contract should set boundaries and create a clear structure that both parties can refer to during the cooperation. According to this approach, in order to ensure that the contract is effective, it needs to be governed by the following four principles.

It should be effective. This can be ensured through four principles:

➔ **Mutual consent**, meaning voluntary, purpose- and result-oriented cooperation. The consent should also cover the techniques and methods used and the commitment of both parties.

➔ A **fair exchange** that defines the benefits that both parties get from this cooperation and ensures equality between them.

➔ **Proper competencies**, e.g. qualifications and licences, as well as skills of both parties to the contract. It is assumed that both the mentor and the mentee have the appropriate skills to accomplish the objectives and tasks, and each agrees to fulfil the contract's provisions.

➔ **Ethical and transparent behaviour** confirming that the subject matter of the mentoring agreement is compliant with the law, social welfare, and ethical principles.

Furthermore, Steiner advises mentors to ask themselves five questions after agreeing on the contract:

1. Am I responsible for this?
2. Am I competent?
3. Am I eager and willing to cooperate?
4. Has the other party to the contract or a third party requested my assistance (or have I checked to see if they will accept support and help)?
5. Is each party to the contract aware of the effort they must take?

If a mentor answers "NO" to two or more questions, they risk becoming a rescue party rather than a partner. In such a case, the mentor should review the contract's provisions, especially the rules of cooperation, and modify them accordingly.

Regardless of the approach chosen, the contract should be transparent, mutually agreed upon, and accepted by both parties. Effective contracting means the process should "live" throughout the entire mentoring process, be tailored to the current needs of both parties and support mentoring cooperation to achieve the mentee's goals.

It is worth initiating the contract at the start of mentoring cooperation to establish expectations that are clear and understandable for everyone regarding behavior and reactions in different situations.

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