

Introduction to the mentoring process

A mentor is someone who will encourage and support a mentee to make the most of themselves and their career. Although the final decisions are always in the mentee's hands, a mentor can be invaluable in guiding them to identify the support they need, consider their options and help them get new information. As mentor, the role is to be a trusted confidante, helping the mentee to make informed choices.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is:

- A one-to-one relationship, usually over a set period of time, in which an established business person (mentor) provides consistent support, guidance and practical help for a less experienced person (mentee).
- A voluntary relationship, which the mentee or mentor can end at any time.
- A two-way process in which the mentor shares their personal skills, knowledge and experience with the mentee to enable him or her to explore their personal and professional situation, and in which the mentor and mentee work together to achieve predetermined goals and objectives.
- A way of enabling the mentee to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform at a higher level, and of giving them access to impartial, non-judgmental guidance and support.

Mentoring is NOT about:

- Giving business advice – this should be provided by a qualified business adviser
- Providing a counselling service
- Providing a training service
- Providing a coaching service
- Providing therapeutic interventions
- Sorting out a mentee's problems

An alternative perspective

Watch this video for an alternative viewpoint. Give it a minute, it takes a bit of time to get going.....

<https://youtu.be/SSZRtx8m3Z8>

Think about the following questions:

1. Has this presentation added to, or conflicted with your own understanding of mentoring?
2. Do you feel more or less motivated to get involved with mentoring after this presentation? Why?

Conducting the Mentoring Relationship

There are no rules as to how the mentoring relationship should be conducted. However from our experience you will get more from the time with your mentee if the relationship is structured around achieving a specific objective. To help structure the relationship you can use some of the planning templates in the journey area of this site.

It's likely that you will stay in regular contact with your mentee through meetings, telephone calls and emails. The nature of the relationship may vary from being fairly casual - e.g. a monthly telephone call or informal visit - to being more formal and structured - e.g. setting meeting agendas and business objectives, this would be our recommended approach.