

The Corporate IT Forum.

Mentoring in a nutshell

The CITF's cross-organisational mentoring targets the personal development of CITF members who are well versed in their fundamental technical skills but need extra assistance in other skills areas, expertise or knowledge.

IT professionals face numerous challenges: the need of doing more with less, reduced headcounts and budgets, demanding projects, work related stress and pressure. The increasing intensity of work may leave little time to reflect on and discuss concerns as they arise.

Our mentoring scheme will help you improve reflection skills, give you support for dealing with specific problems, strategies for coping with change or crisis in your professional life, improve self-confidence and ultimately bring more job satisfaction. You need to realise though that mentoring is not typically part of one's daily routine. Without direction and a plan, the mentoring relationship is vulnerable to losing focus and momentum. We hope that this brochure will provide mentors and mentees with some structure and guidance throughout the mentorship.

"If I hadn't had mentors, I wouldn't be here today..." Indra Nooyi, the CEO of PepsiCo

Chapter One : "You are a mentor".

You have volunteered to become a mentor because you know that it will be hugely rewarding experience, truly beneficial not only for your mentee but for you as well.

What makes a good mentor?

Answer the following to assess your suitability:

- Are you interested in helping others to succeed?
- Are you reliable, honest and trustworthy to keep things confidential?
- Can you follow through your commitments?
- Are you capable of active listening - not interrupting, picking up important cues from what someone says, able to reflect back the relevant issues and check understanding, minimising assumptions and prejudices?
- Are you empathetic - can you convey understanding of their experience without saying 'yes, me too!' and launching into anecdotes of your own?
- Are you able to question someone sensitively but effectively to help them explore their own issues?
- Can you pass on your knowledge and expertise clearly, encouragingly and helpfully?

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So what will you do?

What will you do?	How? (examples)
Build and sustain the personal relationship with your mentee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know each other, talk about mentoring and personal experiences • social time together
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be active in external peer networks • Encourage involvement in external organisations
Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill knowledge gaps in a variety of “how to” situations • identify learning needs • identify ways to work smarter
Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring meetings • Phone conversations, e-mails • Observe your mentee at speaking opportunities, workshops etc
Encourage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write notes, compliments, calls, praise
Facilitate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share articles, read books, share work samples if possible, co-present at workshops
Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss, review options but do not tell mentee a specific way to do something • Listen, ask questions for clarity
Help with goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review mentee’s goals and aspirations • Develop and critique professional goals and progress • Encourage professional development • Encourage advanced academic work
Help with conflict management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss conflict reaction characteristics and comfort levels • Listen, share, and guide as situations develop
Assist in problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm, evaluate, model, reflect
Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal talk time; debrief; share stories; document events, activities, and incidents
Provide and receive feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate oral and written communication • Review planning and implementation of programs

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Questioning and Listening

Questioning and Listening form a basis for any mentoring relationship.

A few examples below may help you hone your skills.

Questions to ask:

- *"You said..... can you explain in more detail how you mean this?"*
- *"What else...?"*
- *"What happens when...?"*
- *"What about...?" "What if...?"*
- *"Can you elaborate on what makes you think that?"*
- *"What would you perceive as the cause of this?"*
- *"When did you first experience that?"*
- *"Are you sure about that?"*
- *"Why do you feel this way?"*
- *"Can you identify...?"*

Comments to make:

- *"So it seems that you're overwhelmed with"*
- *"It seems that you are concerned about starting....."*
- *"Let me tell you what I heard, so I can be sure that I understand you. You said that the main thing bothering you is Is that right?"*
- *"I can relate to your difficult situation, I have experienced something similar and recall being very frustrated. Hopefully I can assist you to figure out how to move forward."*

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Your first meeting- a template Source: (Zachary, L. 2002)

Agenda Items	Your Actions	Objective
Take time getting to know each other.	Obtain a copy of the mentee's bio in advance. If one is not available, create one through conversation.	Establish rapport. Exchange information. Identify points of connection.
Talk about mentoring	Ask: Have you ever been engaged in a mentoring relationship? If so, what did you learn from that experience?	Understand the mentoring concept and experiences
Determine the mentee's goals	Ask: What do you want to learn from this experience? Give the mentee an opportunity to articulate broad goals.	Determine mentee's goals and objectives.
Determine the mentee's relationship needs and expectations.	Ask: What do you want out of this relationship?	Find out your mentee's expectations
Define the deliverables and a time table.	Ask: What would success look like for you? What is your timetable for achieving it?	Check if you have an expertise that is relevant to the mentee's learning goals
Share your assumptions, needs, expectations and limitations with candor and confidentiality.	Ask for feedback. Discuss: Implications for the relationship.	Establish what you can contribute to the relationship
Discuss options and opportunities for learning.	Ask: How would you like to go about achieving your learning goals? Discuss: Learning and communication styles Ask: What is the most useful kind of assistance I can provide?	Understand how learning styles might affect the mentoring relationship.

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Chapter 2 “You are a mentee”

You have decided to prepare yourself for the future and you know that it is you who takes responsibility for your career. It is definitely to your advantage to seek support for your development so well done for taking this step.

Before entering a mentoring relationship it is helpful to take stock of your career to date so that you can build the structure of the relationship with your mentor.

The activities below allow you to:

- Gain an insight into your career choices & career decisions
- Reflect on where your current role fits in your career plan
- Begin to identify your future career aspirations
- Identify areas/issues which might be useful to work with a mentor

Step 1

Draw a line which represents your life journey to date. Mark on it the key events which represent your professional life to date. Note on it particularly significant roles, events, people which you think have shaped your career direction – both positive and negative.

Step 2

Step back and reflect on the key events which you have chosen to highlight on your lifeline. In particular - try to move beyond the events and think about their meaning for you. For example reflect on:

- Why did you choose this path rather than another?
- What are the themes and patterns which determine the paths you have taken or not taken?
- What does it reveal about your attitudes to making change, taking on new things; what excites you and engages? What bores or unsettles?
- What is most challenging for you in the process of making significant career step changes?

Step 3

Now summarise:

- Overall, what support with developing your career are you now looking for?
- Which aspects of your career development do you wish to focus on with your mentor?

Now take time to reflect on your needs and write them down.

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Mentee Expectations Form

By clarifying your own expectations, you will be able to communicate them more effectively to your mentors. You can use this worksheet to develop an understanding of what you expect to gain from your mentoring relationships.

The reasons I want to be mentored are to:

- Receive encouragement and support
- Increase my confidence when dealing with professionals
- Challenge myself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
- Gain a realistic perspective of the field
- Get advice on how to balance work and other responsibilities, and set priorities
- Gain knowledge of “dos and don’ts”
- Learn how to benefit from a network of talented peers
- Other

I hope that my mentor and I will:

- Tour my mentor’s workplace
- Meet over coffee
- Go to events such as workshops together
- Other

I hope that my mentor and I will discuss:

Professional development subjects that will benefit my future career

- Career options and job search preparation
- The realities of the workplace
- My mentor’s work
- Technical and related field issues
- How to network
- How to balance work and family life
- Personal goals and life circumstances
- Other

The things I feel are off limits in my mentoring relationship include:

- Disclosing our conversations to others
- Using non-public places for meetings
- Sharing aspects of our private lives
- Other

The amount of time I can spend with my mentor is likely to be, on average:

- 1/2/3/4 hours
- each week/every other week/per month (circle one)

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The Brainstorming Exercise

Fill in your own “magic quadrant”

<p>What knowledge, skills and abilities are important to you right now?</p>	<p>What knowledge, skills and abilities will be important to you in the future?</p>
<p>What are your limiting factors?</p>	<p>What are your “must-haves” in the job?</p>

Your first meeting- checklist

- Use this checklist to plan initial meetings with your mentors in light of what you hope to achieve over the long term.
- Explain your goals and expectations for mentoring relationship
- Discuss with your mentor what you both perceive as the boundaries of the mentoring relationship.
- Review the current experience and qualifications. Record these on a mentoring action plan worksheet.
- Discuss and record any issues that may affect the mentoring relationship such as time, financial constraints, lack of confidence, or newness to the role etc.
- Arrange a mentoring schedule with your mentor (try to meet at least once a quarter). Agree options and target dates. Record topics discussed and feedback given at each meeting. Request that meeting records be kept confidential.
- Discuss with your mentor activities that can form part of your mentoring relationship. e.g. : advice on strategies for skill development, organising a session of work shadowing of a fellow professional, getting advice on issues or concerns, feedback from other sources
- Encourage your mentor to reflect regularly with you on your goals, achievements, and areas for improvement. Consider compose a brief reflection essay (e.g., 1/2 page) prior to each meeting.
- Amend your mentoring action plan as needed by focusing on your developing needs.

Adapted from: Mentoring towards excellence: Section 4: Handbook and guidelines for mentors and mentees. Association of Colleges and the Further Education National Training Organization, Learning and Skills Council: Coventry, England.

Tips for mentoring success

- Contact your mentor initially via e-mail or telephone.
- Share your CV before your first meeting
- Plan a face-to-face meeting with your mentor if possible, contact via email or phone is perfectly acceptable, although it would be good to have some face-to-face meetings as time permits. We recommend to schedule some form of meeting once a month but shorter conversations once a fortnight or longer every 6 weeks might work better for some.
- Suggest dates and making sure they get in both your diaries. Block-booking a number of sessions or setting up a recurring Outlook event can work well. Decide between you what you will do if a session gets cancelled.
- Send a reminder/agenda/update to your mentor a couple of days beforehand.
- Invest time in learning about the mentor's organisation and his/her role
- Honour any commitments made to the mentor and respect the basic privacy and confidentiality
- Inform the mentor how you used his/her advice
- Express your appreciation for the mentor's time, information, counsel, and sharing of opportunities with you.
- Be punctual and prepared.
- Take time to reflect on previous discussions before you go into a session

Mentoring is a personal relationship. If you do not feel that it is working out, talk it over and see if anything can be done. Feel free to contact The Corporate IT Forum if needed to look for another mentor or mentee.

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Don't expect immediate results: it takes time to develop a mentoring relationship. Also, schedules can get tight at times and make it difficult to keep in regular contact. Keep a positive attitude and keep communication open.

We wish all of the mentors and mentees a rich and rewarding experience!

Template for introductory email

Dear

My name is ... and I received your name from The Corporate IT Forum Mentoring Program. Thank you for

accepting me as your mentee.

I am ...

I work in ...

I am involved with ...

I would like to learn how to ...

The Corporate IT Forum services team suggested that the first step is for us to talk over the phone, via Skype

or in-person and go over the questions on the Mentoring Agreement form.

I look forward to hearing from you to arrange a time to talk.

Thank you again for agreeing to be my mentor.

Sincerely,

...

Mentoring Agreement

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We are voluntarily entering into a mentoring relationship that we expect will benefit both parties. This agreement sets the parameters of the relationship, including the expectation that we will continually evaluate the relationship to ensure it meets both our needs. Other elements of the relationship are:

Start Date:

Anticipated End Date:

Mentoring tends to be a short or long term commitment, both parties can review this; however it is a good idea to be clear of the expected duration at the start.

Our goals for this mentoring relationship are:

Our expectations of how we will achieve these goals are:

Meeting times (frequency and duration) and other methods of communication:

How we will record and monitor our progress:

Confidentiality

We agree to keep everything that is said within the mentoring relationship confidential.

Both parties agree to a no-fault conclusion of this mentoring relationship.

Mentee Signature

Date:

Mentor Signature

Date:

Mentee to keep the original, copy to mentor.