



How to get most value from mentoring?

Finding a mentor is one of the best ways to take your career to the next level. The most effective mentor search begins by examining yourself. To find the perfect mentor, you need to be clear about your career goals and aspirations, your strengths and challenges, and the skill sets, behaviours, or even work styles you'd like to develop.

Identify Your Long-Term Career Goals

It's important to know what types of career paths interest you and how you want your career to progress over time. When you have clear goals in mind it helps your prospective mentor to identify which areas to focus on when guiding you. Without clear goals your relationship is likely to stall.

Mentors are usually interested in giving back to their profession and/or they want to mentor in order to develop their own skills. But be considerate about your mentor's time and value the contribution they make to your development.



Here are some top tips for working with a mentor:

- Be clear and honest about your goals and how you want a mentor to help you
- Take the initiative in leading your mentoring relationship
- Agree with your mentor on how you want to communicate with each other
- Prepare for meetings. Review previous meeting notes and ensure you have completed agreed actions
- Be open, realistic and honest with your mentor. This will allow a positive and productive relationship to form
- Work with your mentor to make your own decisions and turn them into action. Mentors should serve the role of guide, but ultimately you must accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
- Don't get defensive! Constructive feedback will help you to get to the next level.

If a mentoring relationship is to be successful, it should be based on encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share. Equally, remember to share your successes with your mentor and give them examples of how their guidance has helped you.