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ScreenSkills

## Why become a mentor?

There are lots of great reasons to be a mentor. Here are some things to consider and a few guidelines to help you decide if it is for you.

Mentoring is where a mentor helps a mentee in their personal and professional development by encouraging them, sharing ideas and experience. The mentor has experience and knowledge that the mentee wants to learn from. A mentor does not tell people what to do or delegate work to their mentee. Mentors do not have to have all the answers.

Mentoring is a professional, confidential partnership supporting mentees as they focus on their personal and professional development within the workplace or as they make decisions about their future and career. As a mentor, you will be a role model of success, inspiring your mentee.



Mentoring is for you if you have current industry knowledge and experience, are willing to share that knowledge and experience, and can actively listen, ask open questions, are interested in developing others. As a mentor, you share your skills, knowledge and insights with the mentee to help them develop personally and professionally in their career. You can challenge, encourage and support the mentee to achieve their goals and help them to think for themselves.

### What a great mentor does

Great mentors help the mentee to focus on their own career goals and challenges by:

- Providing a non-judgemental perspective
- Acting as a confidential sounding board
- Helping the mentee to talk through goals, aspirations and challenges
- Facilitating the mentee's thinking and creativity to come up with ideas and solutions
- Sharing experiences, ideas, advice, support, encouragement, feedback and challenge
- Introducing them, where appropriate, to their network.

Great mentors also understand how mentoring can benefit them.

### Benefits for the mentor

While the focus is on the mentee and what they want to achieve, there are many benefits for mentors too. They include:

- Developing communication and leadership skills
- Developing coaching/mentoring skills
- Extending your network

- Seeing things from another perspective
- Helping someone develop and grow
- A feeling of 'giving back' to the industry
- It is good for the CV
- Reflecting on how much you have developed and what you have achieved
- Reflecting on and consider your own ongoing development
- Learning from the ideas and experiences of someone who could be from a different generation, background or have different interests, life experiences or expectations, stage of career, sector etc
- Time out from the day job can recharge batteries.

## **Mentoring programmes**

Mentoring programmes can vary in a number of ways. It is important to be clear about the following so you can decide whether or not to be a mentor now:

- The overall purpose of the mentoring programme
- How much guidance and support are given to the mentor and mentee – a briefing session or document or some formal training
- Who the mentees are and how the matching is done
- The duration, which can range from a few weeks to a few years
- The number of hours required over what specified period of time or if this is a decision made by the mentor and mentee
- What paperwork is required e.g. to record activity, outcomes and evaluation.

Mentors are often concerned about the amount of time mentoring will need. While many programmes require a commitment of a number of hours over a certain period e.g. four hours a year, how this time is scheduled is often up to the mentor and mentee to decide depending on their commitments and availability. Try, where possible, to be creative and flexible with the time.

## **Mentoring meetings**

Face-to-face mentoring meetings should take place in a suitable environment – an office or coffee shop, somewhere where both parties feel comfortable. Meetings can take also place on the phone or by video call which cuts down on travel time and expenses.

It is usually the mentee who is expected to drive the partnership by organising and preparing for the meetings and doing the homework.

You help to keep the conversation focused, encourage the mentee to generate and share some of their own ideas as well as sharing your ideas and experiences. You then help the mentee to identify one or two actions they commit to do which will help them move towards their goal and be the best they can be.



**Step forward - you will make a great mentor!**