

# Being a mentor

## Developing your mentee

### **This is an opportunity to...**

- make a difference in someone's development.
- expand your network.
- sharpen your coaching and listening skills.
- learn from (and influence) different perspectives.

### **And your mentee can benefit from...**

- your experience.
- learning more about himself/herself.
- an expanded network and improved working relationships.
- better strategic understanding.
- improved performance.

Both you and your mentee can gain a lot from this partnership. But it's important to only commit if you have the time to meet with and help develop your mentee.

### **Every mentee's needs are different, but they can generally benefit from your...**

- Advice: It's not about telling your mentee what to do – it's about asking questions, and offering him / her a second opinion or perspective.
- Access: You can help your mentee find people, opportunities and information that he / she may not have found on their own.
- Advocacy: Once you get to know your mentee well, you can speak to his / her strengths – and act as an advocate when the right opportunity comes up.

### **Your own mentoring relationships**

Take a moment to reflect on colleagues who've helped you in your career:

- What made those relationships work well?
- What aspects were invaluable?
- How can you help your mentee?

### **Connecting and building trust**

For the relationship to be successful, it's critical that you and your mentee connect and that you trust each other. Some advice to help create a positive relationship:

- Be yourself (be authentic).
- Share personal challenges.
- Be straightforward and honest.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Be respectful of differences.

Not everyone will form a natural connection. If the relationship isn't working, don't hesitate to communicate that clearly and respectfully. You might even suggest an alternative mentor who may be a better fit.

**Your role as mentor implies:**

- Development Advisor: Advise on career development.
- Sounding Board: Listen, clarify and consolidate without judging; help the mentee to focus on the real problems and to search for alternatives.
- Constructive Challenger: Give feedback on important issues.
- Network Advisor: Help to develop an enhanced network and support in making better use of it.

**Some advice:**

- Listen closely and ask open-ended questions.
- Understand that your mentee won't develop new perspectives and skills overnight.
- Show that you recognize your mentee's values.
- Share candidly about times you were not successful and lessons learned.
- Don't try to impose your viewpoint or values on your mentee; rather, demonstrate them

**Do's and Dont's for Mentors**Do...

- respect your mentee's time as much as your own
- be a critical friend
- help the mentee clarify the situation, explore options and find solutions
- don't give the mentee your solutions
- be a sounding board
- don't judge: listen, clarify and recap
- act as a network advisor
- help the mentee get to know relevant parts of your network
- help the mentee make a better use of his/her existing network
- be a career advisor
- be a positive role model

Do not...

- assume that your schedule always has priority
- take over line manager roles or set objectives for your mentee: they need to do this for themselves
- resolve the mentee's issues by intervening with those involved, e.g. their line manager
- push their careers as a sponsor
- give them "your" answers "on a plate"
- assume your advice will be followed
- move too quickly into a personal friendship, if at all
- avoid discussion of inappropriate subjects and forcing your solutions in conflicts