



Becoming a Mentor

Career Planning for Managers

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is the process of building relationships that provide knowledge and guidance. It involves asking questions of and learning from others, including superiors and experts. Traditional mentoring involves close relationships that serve two different functions: 1) career-related functions such as providing visibility and coaching, and 2) personal and interpersonal functions, like counseling and encouragement.

Why should you invest in mentoring?

It helps employees align with the university.

Mentoring others aligns employees with the mission and goals of the organization. It also helps teach others the “in’s and out’s” of the organization, quickly and easily.

It’s beneficial to internal hiring and succession planning.

Managers can speak specifically on our institution’s company culture and tailor guidance to the expectations of the organization. That puts you in a unique position to monitor how employee values align with organizational values, as well as making sure the best practices are reinforced.

It creates more effective workers.

This interaction is a powerful form of communication and can be used to reinforce goals and expectations. Managers can also pass on helpful tips and lessons learned.

Mentoring can also help managers personally by:

- Giving you the chance to reflect on their own expertise
- Engaging you in a career management process you may want to keep up with as well
- Giving you a unique perspective on the career management process and applying that to your own process if applicable
- Expanding your personal network

How can you mentor?

As a mentor and a manager, the feedback you give needs to be constructive and inspire your direct reports to do more, learn and try new things. Not all of it will revolve around what they don’t know; be sure to acknowledge their strengths.

In some cases, you should be a source of information.

When you and your direct report(s) come to a consensus about what they don't know, provide them with the knowledge you've gained on the subject by pointing out helpful tips you've learned and referring resources you've used.

In other cases, you should be guiding them to an answer instead of providing them with one.

You shouldn't be giving your direct report the answer to every problem. There are times when you should only be help them enhance their ability to work through and solve problems.

Use your own reference pool to your advantage.

If you have/had mentors that made a significant difference in your life, think about the traits they had and actions they took that stuck out to you. Aspire to embody that with your direct reports. Use your own network to learn more on subjects you don't know about and to keep your direct reports up to date.

References and Links

- [Ways to Be an Effective Mentor](#)

myLearn Books:

- *Managers as Mentors: Building Partnerships for Learning*, Third Edition, Revised and Expanded
- *Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Protégés Get the Most Out of Their Relationship*
- *The Hands-Off Manager: How to Mentor People and Allow Them to Be Successful*

myLearn Courses:

- Business Coaching: Getting Ready to Coach
- Essential Mentoring Techniques: Building and Maintaining Mentoring Relationships