

Key Skills of a Mentor and Mentor Expectations

The traditional view of a mentor is someone who shares experience and imparts knowledge. In contemporary mentoring a mentor does a lot more listening than talking. A mentor's role isn't to tell a mentee what to do, it is to act as a guide. A mentor asks questions and draws out the mentee's own thoughts before offering guidance and providing additional options.

A mentor challenges, offers a different perspective, another point of view and provides support. While no two mentoring relationships are the same, all mentoring relationships should start with the same solid foundations.

ELICIT

Ask questions then listen

CHALLENGE

Provide a different perspective

SUPPORT

Encourage and validate

IMPART

Share knowledge and experience

MENTORS PULL – THEY DON'T PUSH

A mentor never “pushes”, whether by telling, instructing or giving advice.

MENTORS PULL

- They listen to understand
- They ask questions
- They will paraphrase and summarise discussions
- They can suggest options
- They will give feedback
- They can offer guidance
- They help mentees to solve their problems

Key Skills of a Mentor and What a Mentor Can Expect

A mentor should expect to:

- Encourage mentees to develop their own resourcefulness: mentoring does not mean giving instructions – it is up to the mentee to decide whether to use the information they receive from their mentor.
- Guide the mentee to look at a wide variety of options and consider alternative courses of action in order to solve problems for themselves, rather than to give answers or provide solutions.
- Be a sounding-board and provide a link into other information and people who can help. The mentor doesn't need to have all the answers.
- Help the mentee gain new personal skills, experiences and knowledge.
- Provide an outside perspective on the mentee and their career.
- Help the mentee to develop new attitudes and behaviour, thereby improving both their personal and business performance.
- Listen, in confidence, to the things that are worrying the mentee about their career.
- Help the mentee by sharing your own experience of failures and successes.
- Give friendly, unbiased support and guidance.
- Facilitate decision-making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience.
- Provide honest and constructive feedback.
- Provide ongoing support and encouragement.

Remember, sometimes all a mentee needs is to talk to someone and this process in itself will make actions and solutions obvious. The mentoring process then becomes a catalyst for change.