

24 Reasons Why Mentorship Is Important for Mentee and Mentor

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Mentorship can provide numerous benefits for mentors and their mentees. Developing this relationship can help both of you learn new things, build your networks and grow as professionals. Understanding these benefits can help you decide whether to find a mentor or become one. In this article, we discuss why a mentor is important, along with several reasons to become a mentor.

What is a mentor?

A mentor is someone who acts as an advisor to a less experienced individual, known as their mentee. Typically, individuals seek mentors who work in their same or desired field. The mentor helps this individual grow and develop as a professional, often offering advice based on their more advanced knowledge or experience. Mentorship relationships can be built through networking, personal connections or formal mentorship programs.

12 reasons a mentor is important

The following list represents demonstrates the importance of having a mentor:

1. Mentors support growth

Mentors encourage and enable another person's professional or personal development. A mentor can help focus their efforts by setting goals and giving feedback. As a result, companies that want to build employees' skills often create mentoring programs. The mentors' knowledge can help train and create a high-quality and productive workforce. Employees appreciate workplaces that encourage development, as it can demonstrate that their employer values them and wants to see them grow.

2. Mentors serve as a source of knowledge

Mentors can provide specific insights and information that enable the mentee's success. For example, they offer instructions on how to perform particular tasks or develop useful skills. Individuals starting their career can benefit from such guidance, as it helps them feel comfortable in the role more quickly. For example, a mentor can help a person starting a business learn how to develop their initial business plan and budgets.

3. Mentors can help set goals

A mentor can help their mentee set personal or professional development goals. For effective goal-setting, they can create SMART goals—specific, achievable, relevant and time-based. These goals can help focus the mentee's efforts and make it easier for the mentor to track and assess progress. They may identify smaller tasks in pursuit of a larger objective to develop specific skills or meet particular priorities.

4. Mentors maintain accountability

A mentor helps hold their mentee accountable for their goals. By tracking progress, the mentor helps the mentee stay focused and on track towards completing them. It can also ensure that the mentee does not forget about the goals they have set. Knowing that someone else is watching can serve as motivation, as the mentee likely does not want to let the mentor down by failing to meet goals.

5. Mentors offer encouragement

When the mentee finds themselves struggling to perform their job or reach a goal, they can turn to their mentor for support. This encouragement can motivate them to keep moving forward despite challenges. A mentor can also identify and express their mentee's strengths to instill confidence in them. Having a strong sense of confidence can make the mentee less likely to give up on their goals.

6. Mentors help make connections

A mentor can help build their mentee's professional network. When the mentee identifies professional or personal goals, the mentor can connect them to potential opportunities or individuals who can help them. As the mentor typically has more industry experience or a higher-level career, these connections can be valuable for career advancement.

7. Mentors are willing to listen

When an individual has ideas, they can use a mentor as a resource to discuss or try them. The mentor can provide unbiased advice or opinions using their relevant knowledge and experience. With these insights, the mentee can better understand what steps to take and whether to pursue the idea or walk away. Similarly, a mentor can also listen and advise them on daily concerns, such as workplace conflicts.

8. Mentors serve as a trusted ally

Trust represents a core element of mentoring relationships. The mentee must trust that the mentor has their best interests in mind and will provide accurate and honest guidance. The business world can also be competitive, so they need to rely on one another to keep confidential information private when necessary. Communicating regularly and following through on their promises demonstrate two methods of establishing trust in these relationships.

9. Mentors can offer constructive feedback

A trusting mentorship relationship enables honest feedback. By establishing trust, the mentee understands that constructive criticism aims to build their professional growth rather than make them feel bad. Mentors can identify weaknesses and advise them on ways to improve. Because this is a professional relationship, the mentor plays an objective role. Meanwhile, a friend may hesitate to identify the mentee's weaknesses because they do not want to appear critical.

10. Mentors provide guidelines

For individuals just starting their career, a mentor can help set guidelines on professional expectations. For example, they may clarify the priorities of the role and proper workplace behaviors. These guidelines can help the mentee establish appropriate work habits that enable them to focus and perform their job successfully. These effective work habits can help them be more productive and impress their supervisors.

11. Mentors have relevant experience

When possible, individuals should choose mentors who have the experience relevant to their profession or goals. When mentors convey their successes, the mentee can use them as an example to strive toward and copy the steps they took. Mentors can also share the mistakes they made along their journeys. The mentee benefits because they learn lessons about the mistakes' negative impacts but do not have to suffer the consequences themselves. Learning about these experiences can also help prepare the mentee for the challenges they can expect to face and provide demonstrable advice on how to overcome them.

12. Mentors are a free resource

Mentorship typically occurs due to networking or company programs, so mentors do not seek payment. They offer to serve this role because they genuinely want to help the other individual grow and establish a more authentic and personal connection. The lack of payment also opens up mentorship for all types of people, rather than restricting this resource to only those who can afford it.

12 reasons to be a mentor

The following list represents some of the beneficial reasons to become a mentor:

1. Being a mentor boosts interpersonal skills

Your interactions with a mentee offer numerous opportunities to practice and build interpersonal skills, such as communication, active listening, empathy and patience. Communication is especially essential to mentorship, as you may meet regularly to discuss the mentee's goals, ideas or concerns and provide instructions or advice. Beyond mentorship, having strong interpersonal skills can help you develop relationships and collaborate more effectively.

2. Being a mentor strengthens your knowledge

When working with a mentee, you share relevant knowledge gained through your career or experiences. You advise them or demonstrate how to perform specific tasks. For example, you may teach your mentee negotiation methods and then practice with them. While the purpose is to help the mentee grow professionally, sharing this knowledge reinforces it within yourself. You may teach them skills you no longer use regularly, so this practice can help you rebuild or strengthen them.

3. Being a mentor expands your network

You can introduce your mentee to contacts to help build their network. In return, they may have relevant or interesting connections to share with you. Networking can aid your career, as these connections can lead to professional and advancement opportunities. You also can join professional mentorship associations to meet fellow mentors. These associations and relationships can help you learn more about mentorship techniques and provide support to one another.

4. Being a mentor can help you receive recognition

If your mentee finds significant success, it can demonstrate your value to others. Part of their success is due to your guidance, which can help your colleagues and peers recognize the skills and knowledge you offer. Other people may show interest in collaborating with you or asking for your mentorship. Beyond making you feel accomplished, this positive reputation or praise could also help lead you to more career opportunities.

5. Being a mentor establishes leadership skills

A mentor is a leadership position because you work directly with someone to guide them on professional development. Through your instruction, they hopefully gain useful skills or advance their career. Leadership skills are valuable for any profession or role, so this experience proves that you can manage others effectively toward specific goals. You can use this experience to help advance your career.

6. Being a mentor adds to your qualifications

Whatever level you are at in your career, you can include a mentorship experience to enhance your resume to differentiate yourself from other candidates. This experience demonstrates that you have valuable knowledge to share and can use it to guide others. Participating in mentorship opportunities can show that you value building relationships and helping others develop professionally.

7. Being a mentor serves as a learning opportunity

You teach and advise your mentee, but you can also learn something from them. If you and your mentee come from different backgrounds, they can teach you about things you have never experienced before. Even when you have more experience in the industry, the mentee may have insights into the latest trends or practices. For example, if your mentee is young and more technologically skilled, they can teach you how to use new software.

8. Being a mentor can build confidence

When you help your mentee succeed, you can gain confidence in your skills and abilities. It demonstrates that you have qualities that support others' improvement or development. This confidence can help boost your professional and personal self-worth. With that confidence, you can feel more assured about your skills and the day-to-day work you produce. This confidence is necessary when negotiating with supervisors for promotions, raises or other advancement opportunities.

9. Being a mentor can help you gain new perspectives

Mentorship serves as an opportunity to look outside your usual network and potentially connect with someone very different from you. For example, you and your mentee may come from different backgrounds or generations. When you discuss ideas or situations, you both have different perspectives and approaches. Listening to your mentee's perspective may help you think differently or discover something you would not have otherwise. This ability can help devise more innovative or creative solutions at work.

10. Being a mentor provides a sense of fulfillment

Beyond providing you recognition or other external benefits, mentorship can offer inner fulfillment. Knowing that you made a positive impact on someone's life or career can make you feel good. If you received mentorship early in your career, serving as one can offer an opportunity to pay it forward. And one day, you may serve as inspiration for your mentee to do the same for someone else.

11. Being a mentor offers self-reflection opportunities

Mentorship lets you think about and share your experiences. While assessing your positive and negative experiences, you may discover lessons that benefit both the mentee and yourself.

Being a mentor may also remind you of what you enjoy about your profession, which can help you feel more engaged at work. Or, if you realize you are unhappy about some things, you can think about ways to improve the situation.

12. Being a mentor can help strengthen your company

When participating in an employer's mentoring program, you use your knowledge and experience to help strengthen their employees. When these employees understand their roles' expectations and form positive work habits, it can make them more efficient and productive.

Besides positive business results, these skills can develop a positive culture and more effective collaboration.

Frequently asked questions

How do you find a reliable mentor?

There are various ways a mentee can find a mentor. One way is to research the type of individuals in their ideal position, establish a network with industry experts and begin conversations with those who know the role and industry well. Another way of seeking a mentor is by asking a trusted former manager or professor. These individuals know you well and understand the career you're striving for, so they can provide personalized guidance.

What are the three Cs of mentorship?

The three Cs of mentorship are:

- **Clarity:** Mentors and mentees require a definitive understanding of the mentorship goals, which involves active listening and building trust or rapport with each other.
- **Communication:** This is how mentors can market their mentorship program and how both parties speak with each other.
- **Commitment:** Both parties, the mentor and mentee, require dedication for the mentorship to be effective.

How do you have a successful mentor and mentee relationship?

Here are a few ways you can facilitate a successful mentorship:

- Communicate often
- Schedule regular meetings, such as once a month
- Prepare before meetings and reflect afterward
- Share goals
- Maintain mutual respect
- Seek feedback