

How to find a good career mentor as a new graduate

Written by Brooke Skubnik, 13 April 2021.

A good career mentor can be such a valuable addition to your life and career progression. A bad one can be a waste of your time. As a new graduate finding a good or great one can be so helpful in getting you into your dream job and being successful at it.

What is a career mentor? [Indeed](#) (2021) explains 'a mentor is an individual who acts as an advisor or coach for a less experienced or advanced mentee, providing expertise and professional knowledge from a more experienced perspective.'

Whilst you may come across or find a lot of individuals that are above you in the hierarchy of your industry, that does not necessarily mean that they are all going to be a good mentor for you. [Kalish](#) (2021) believes that there are seven qualities that make a good mentor, which are 'relevant expertise or knowledge', 'enthusiasm for sharing that expertise', 'A respectful attitude', 'eagerness to invest in others', 'the ability to give honest and direct feedback', 'reflective listening and empathy' and 'willingness to be a sponsor'.

Even with those seven qualities, they still may not be a perfect fit for you, as a good career mentor really needs to align with you in more ways than your career path.

Here are three simple steps you should be taking to find a good career mentor for you as a new graduate:

Step one: Research the field

Every industry has some sort of hierarchy so there is always going to be a group of people at the top. They will be people well known for their work in the field, their skills or career progression. Find out who they are, why people look up to them. Do you aspire to be like them? Do your values seem to align with theirs? If not keep looking for a different mentor. If yes, start further investigating to see if they are someone who you would enjoy being mentored by, and if they seem like a good fit create a list of these people and order them starting with who you'd most like as your mentor to who you'd least like. Remember options are great, do not put all your efforts into finding just one person, because they may not want to mentor you, or may not be up for it.

Step two: Begin contacting individuals on your list

Start at the top of the list, whoever you felt would most suit you as a mentor, who's career progression, values, and interests most align with yours. It is important to make a good first impression, a polite and formal introductory email is a good place to start. Mention who you are, a slight summary of your career aspirations, your qualification, and what you are

requesting of them. Also, what you hope you can get out of having them as a mentor. Give them a few days to respond, and if they do not reply or are not up for the challenge just keep moving down your list until you find someone who is willing to be your mentor.

Step 3: Starting a relationship

An individual responding to you and potentially agreeing does not make them automatically a good mentor and furthermore a good fit for you. You still need to work to build a relationship. If you are beginning speaking to them and they do not seem like they would be a good fit for you, and their values do not align, have the confidence to thank them for their time and response, advise them that you have decided to keep looking for a mentor who is better suited to your desired career progression. You should be able to feel if you have found a good mentor for yourself, they need to motivate you to do better whilst being able to advise you on your career path or decisions.

In order to find a good career mentor, you need to be open to building a relationship and trusting their opinion but with the confidence to question it if needed. You need to be aware that not every senior in your industry will be the right career mentor for you, however when you find the right mentor for you, you should feel like that are a good fit and a good motivation for you to strive to progress in your new career.

Reference List

Indeed (6 January 2021) 'What is a mentor', Indeed, accessed 13 April 2021.

Kalish A (2021) '7 Qualities That Make a Good Mentor', The Muse, accessed 13 April 2021.