

Tips and Tricks for getting the most out of your mentoring sessions

Maximize the impact of your mentoring sessions with practical strategies and proven techniques



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Maximizing the mentoring relationship

Here are a few strategies that can help you get the most out of your mentoring relationship and sessions with mentor

01

Goal setting

One of the key benefits of a mentoring relationship is the ability to set specific goals and work towards them with the guidance and support of your mentor. To maximize the mentoring relationship, it's important to be clear about your goals and communicate them effectively with your mentor. Set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals that align with your career aspirations, and work with your mentor to create an action plan that outlines the steps you'll take to achieve them.

03

Reflection

Regular reflection is a key component of maximizing the benefits of a mentoring relationship. Take time after each mentoring session to reflect on what you learned, how you're progressing towards your goals, and what you can do to improve. Use this reflection to adjust your action plan and set new goals for future mentoring sessions.

02

Action planning

Once you've set your goals, it's important to create an action plan that outlines the specific steps you'll take to achieve them. Your action plan should include specific tasks, timelines, and metrics for success. Share your action plan with your mentor, and work together to refine and adjust it as needed. Remember that your action plan should be a living document that evolves over time as you make progress towards your goals.



Building trust and rapport with your mentor



Building trust and rapport is an essential aspect of any mentoring relationship. It enables you and your mentor to communicate effectively, share insights, and work collaboratively towards achieving personal and professional goals. Here are some strategies for building trust and rapport with your mentor:

● Active listening

One of the most important ways to build trust and rapport with mentors is through active listening. This means giving your full attention to your mentor, listening to what they have to say, and asking clarifying questions to ensure you understand their perspectives. Active listening also involves being open to feedback and willing to make changes based on your mentor's insights.

● Open communication

Building trust and rapport requires open and honest communication. You should be willing to share your thoughts, feelings, and concerns with your mentor and to receive their feedback in return. This means being vulnerable and authentic in your conversations and avoiding defensiveness or deflection.

● Mutual respect

Building trust and rapport also requires mutual respect. You should value your mentor's expertise, knowledge, and experience and be willing to learn from them. At the same time, your mentor should respect your unique strengths, goals, and perspectives and support your growth and development.

Consistency

Consistency is key to building trust and rapport with mentors. You should strive to be reliable, accountable, and responsive in your interactions with your mentor. This means showing up on time for meetings, following through on commitments, and being proactive in seeking feedback and guidance.

Authenticity

Finally, building trust and rapport with mentors requires authenticity. You should be true to yourself and your values and avoid trying to impress your mentor by pretending to be someone you're not. Authenticity fosters genuine connections and enables mentors and mentees to build strong and meaningful relationships.

Questions to ask during your first meeting

These questions can help you establish a strong foundation for your mentoring relationship and ensure that you and your mentor are aligned in terms of goals, expectations, and communication.

- Can you tell me a little bit about your background and experience in the field?
- What motivated you to become a mentor, and what do you hope to achieve through our mentoring relationship?
- How do you see yourself supporting me in achieving my personal and professional goals?
- What are some key skills and qualities that you think are essential for success in this field?
- Can you share some of your own experiences with overcoming challenges and setbacks in your career?
- What are some trends or emerging technologies that you see as important for this field in the coming years?
- How do you stay current and up-to-date with industry developments and best practices?
- Are there any specific areas where you think I could improve my skills or knowledge, and how can I work on those?
- How often do you think we should meet, and what should be the focus of our meetings?
- Is there anything else you'd like me to know about your approach to mentoring or your expectations for our relationship?

Pre-meeting checklist

While there is significant flexibility in how you approach mentoring sessions with your mentor, it is advantageous to be prepared, and there are specific tasks that you should accomplish before each session.



Review your goals. Take some time to review your personal and professional goals and consider how your mentor can support you in achieving them.



Prepare a list of questions that you would like to ask your mentor during the meeting. This can help you stay focused and ensure that you get the most out of your time together.



Review your progress. If you and your mentor have already had previous meetings, review the progress you have made since your last meeting. This can help you identify areas where you need additional support or guidance.



Gather materials. If there are any materials or documents that you need to share with your mentor, gather them before the meeting. This can include resumes, cover letters, or project samples.



Set goals for the meeting. Consider what you hope to achieve during the meeting and set some specific goals for yourself. This can help you stay focused and ensure that you make progress towards your overall objectives.



Arrive prepared. Make sure that you arrive (or connect online) on time for the meeting and that you are prepared to engage in a productive conversation. This means being attentive, engaged, and open to feedback and guidance.

The art of asking questions

We have already covered quite a lot of questions because they are an integral part of mentoring. It is a great instrument help you get valuable insights and guidance from your mentor and set yourself up for success in the tech industry. In case you need a bit more inspiration to get your ideas flowing here are some more examples of questions to ask:

- What inspired you to pursue a career in tech, and what has your experience been like in the industry?
- How did you acquire the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in this field, and what advice would you give to someone looking to requalify to tech?
- What are some of the biggest challenges facing women in tech, and how can I prepare myself to navigate these challenges?
- What skills or experiences do you think are most important for someone looking to enter or advance in the tech industry?
- Can you share any strategies or resources that have been particularly helpful for you in your career?
- What are some of the current trends or emerging technologies that you see as important for this field, and how can I stay up-to-date on these developments?
- How can I build my network and connect with others in the industry to expand my opportunities and stay informed about job openings and other relevant information?
- What are some common mistakes that people make in this field, and how can I avoid them?
- Can you provide feedback on my resume, cover letter, or project samples, and offer suggestions for improvement?
- Are there any specific career paths or roles that you would recommend exploring based on my skills and interests?

Post-meeting checklist

By following this post-meeting checklist, you can be sure that you are closing out the meeting with your mentor effectively and setting yourself up for success in future meetings.



Review your notes. Take some time to review the notes you took during the meeting and reflect on the key takeaways and action items discussed.



Follow up on action items. If there were any action items that you agreed to during the meeting, follow up on them in a timely manner. This can help you demonstrate your commitment to your goals and to the mentoring relationship.



Reflect on feedback. If your mentor provided you with feedback during the meeting, take some time to reflect on it and consider how you can incorporate it into your work or development plan.



Update your goals. Based on the discussion and feedback from the meeting, update your personal and professional goals as needed. This can help you stay focused and ensure that you continue to make progress towards your objectives.



Send a follow-up message to your mentor to thank them for their time and expertise. Expressing gratitude can help you build a strong relationship with your mentor and demonstrate your appreciation for their support.



Schedule the next meeting with your mentor to ensure that you continue to make progress and stay on track towards achieving your goals.



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