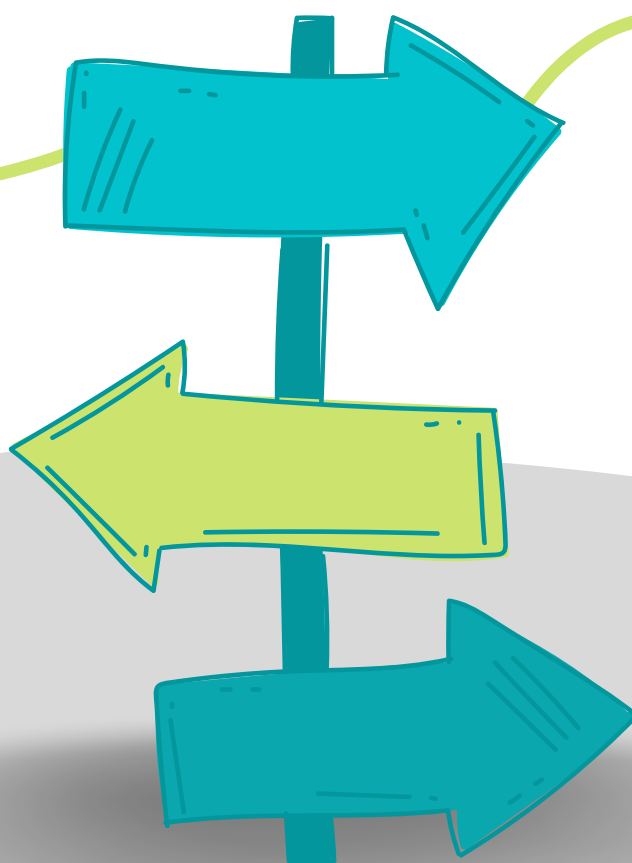


A GUIDE TO BECOME Mentor



MicroHUB

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Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the MICROHUB Guide to Becoming a Mentor for Artisans and Crafters.

This guide is intended to help mentors who specialise in instructing crafters and artisans, as well as to offer useful information and resources for crafters and artisans themselves. It is also designed to meet your needs, whether you're an experienced mentor, a crafter looking to start or grow your business, or a stakeholder supporting the acceleration process.

Mentors can help artisans and crafters succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours by following the advice in this handbook. On the other hand, artisans and crafters will learn invaluable tips and advice to effectively traverse the challenges of starting, expanding, and rebranding their enterprises. Together, we can create a thriving community of artisans and craftspeople that values innovation and entrepreneurship while preserving traditional artisanship.





Background



BACKGROUND

The MicroHub course (and handbook) consists of 7 different areas within the business world that are vital to both understand and to master when thinking about selling your product to the public. Each of these will provide the necessary competences to give the crafter an all-rounded skillset and allow them to face the world of business with courage and confidence.

The **7 areas** where they will benefit from mentoring and where mentoring will help the crafters to better understand the intrepid world of business are:

1. **How to spot opportunities**
2. **Business planning and development**
3. **Business launch and management**
4. **Financial and economic literacy**
5. **Online networking matters**
6. **Ethical and sustainable thinking**
7. **Digital branding**





objectives



OBJECTIVES

The **aim** is to provide a tailored approach for supporting of emerging and current craft entrepreneurs in their process of setting up or transformation of their businesses.

Studies have shown that the entrepreneurial support is effective ONLY if is using tailored approach connected with the specific needs of the learners, their business reality and current environment, along with their sector and skills.

This project results aims at implementing an individual online acceleration procedure for entrepreneurs using digital tools for communication, providing them services for supporting tailored business plan creation and mentoring.





Target Group



TARGET GROUP

The **MICROHUB** project is focused on rural artisans and crafters as its main target group. These are creative people who are living outside of urban centres, and who may not have access to the same level of training, courses or educational resources that people in urban areas would.

They work primarily in the crafts and with their hands. These are imaginative people who generally don't possess the same level of practical skills as the usual businessperson. Often, they are dreamers who are more caught up in their art and in producing real-life works than in the nitty-gritty of the smaller and often valuable details. Without the ability to handle everyday obligations, this crafter struggle at running a long-term business enterprise and suffer not being able to engage the public with their crafts and creations.





What is mentoring?



WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring involves a reciprocal relationship between two individuals who share a common desire for personal and professional growth. Its primary purpose is to assist individuals in their development by fostering confidence and providing support to the person being mentored, also known as the mentee. Unlike training, teaching, or coaching, mentoring does not require the mentor to be a certified instructor or an expert in the mentee's field. Instead, mentors should possess active listening skills and the ability to pose thought-provoking questions that encourage the mentee to determine their own developmental path.

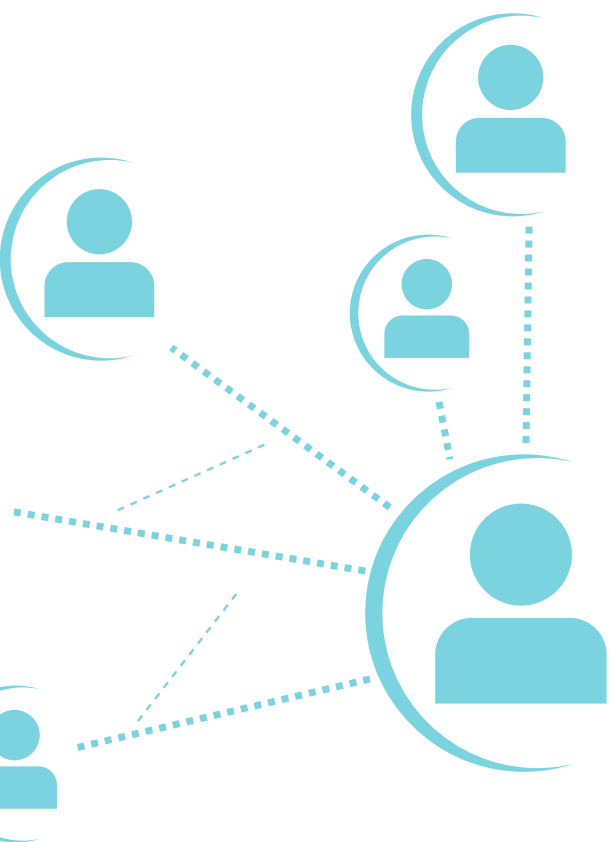
The benefits of a mentoring relationship are numerous:



For the **mentee**, it offers greater clarity in making life and career choices, as well as a deeper understanding of their own career aspirations. Mentoring exposes the mentee to new perspectives on the organization's culture, different cultural values, and the chance to build valuable networks. It also addresses aspects of development that may not be covered through conventional training or on-the-job experiences, leading to increased career satisfaction and higher chances of success.



WHAT IS MENTORING?



Simultaneously, **mentors** gain from the mentoring process by refining their leadership skills and broadening their outlook. They gain fresh insights by seeing the business world from different viewpoints, challenging their preconceived notions, and becoming more aware of organizational issues across various levels. Additionally, mentors have the opportunity to connect with new members of the organization, expanding their network further.





What is a mentor?

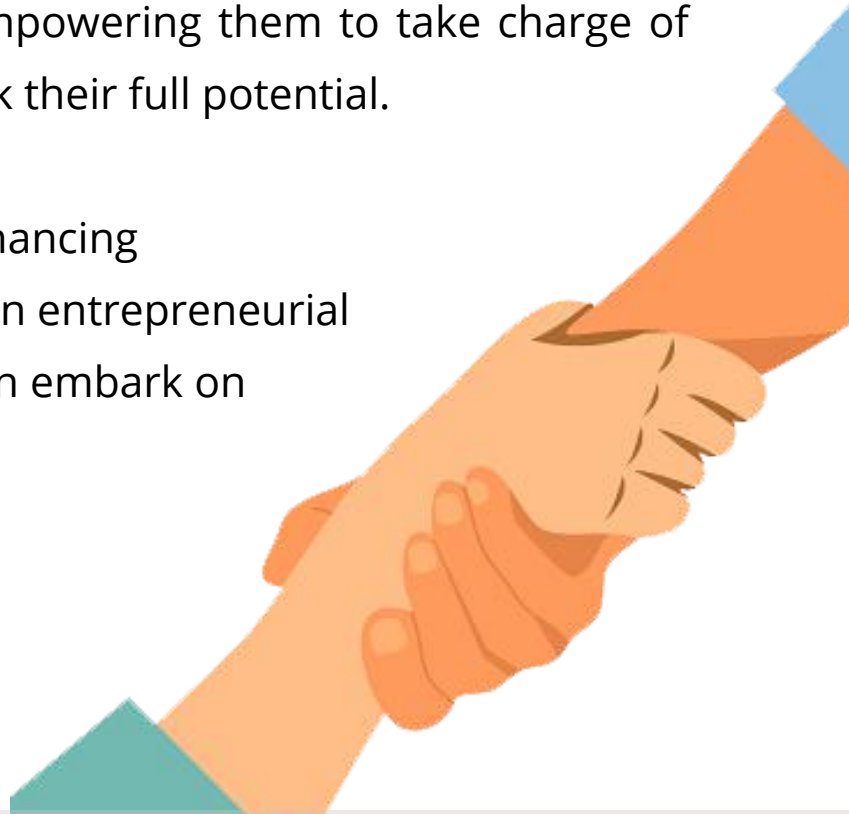


WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A **mentor** is someone who has experience in the field (possibly an entrepreneur) and who leverages their acquired knowledge, skills, and competences from running their own business to educate and guide individuals with less experience. This mentor-mentee relationship is built on trust and serves as a platform for modelling positive behaviours.

As a mentor, you will offer **support** and **encouragement** to adult creative individuals, empowering them to take charge of their own learning and unlock their full potential.

By developing their skills, enhancing performance, and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, these individuals can embark on their own business journeys.



WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A successful mentor comprehends the importance of being reliable, engaged, authentic, and attuned to the mentee's needs. To establish a strong mentoring relationship, certain elements are crucial:

- Alignment of values between mentor and mentee.
- Ensuring confidentiality within the mentoring relationship.
- Balancing honesty with diplomacy.
- Demonstrating objectivity and fairness.
- Exercising compassion and authenticity.

The effectiveness of a mentoring relationship relies on the understanding and implementation of each party's roles. The mentor dedicates effort and persistence while providing guidance, and the mentee establishes trust and willingly communicates their thoughts and ideas.





**Principles for
successful mentoring**



PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

There are certain ingredients that when present in a mentoring relationship can go a long way to guaranteeing its success. When all these are present it helps to ensure a productive and nurturing relationship that will benefit both parties. These include:

Ø **Strive for mutual benefits.** The relationship should be defined from the beginning as mutually beneficial. Each participant has committed to the relationship by choice. Each should openly share his or her goals for the relationship and work collaboratively to help achieve them.

Ø **Agree on confidentiality.** Maintaining an environment of confidentiality is a critical component in building trust between the participants. Without a mutually understood ability to speak freely as the situation warrants, the relationship is unlikely to reach its full potential.

Ø **Commit to honesty.** The participants should be willing to candidly share what they expect to gain from the relationship and their vision for getting there. They should be prepared to offer frank feedback as appropriate, even if the feedback is critical.



PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

Ø **Listen and learn.** Mutual benefit and honesty can only be achieved when both members feel their viewpoints are heard and respected. Mentors, especially, need to remember that the relationship is not primarily about them. Co-mentors should not be intimidated or made to feel their views are not valued.

Ø **Build a working partnership.** Consider structuring a working partnership that includes project consultation or active collaborations rooted in the common ground of shared professional goals. These collaborations can lead to discoveries about each participant's preferred working style, daily obligations, and professional aspirations.

Ø **Lead by example.** Actions create the most lasting impression.

Ø **Be flexible.** It might help for a mentoring relationship to have defined goals, but the process may be as important—or more so—than the goals.

Ø **Accountability** - The mentor and the mentee should be accountable for their actions and commitments. The mentor should hold the mentee accountable for following through on their and goals, while the mentee should hold the mentor accountable for providing the guidance and support they need.





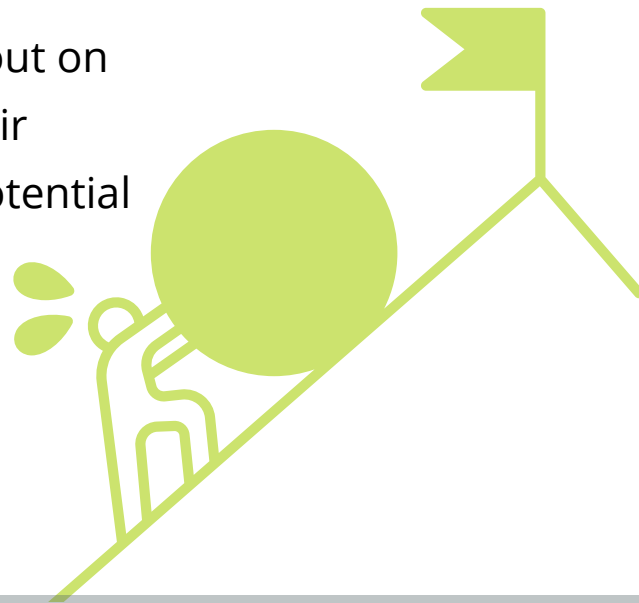
**Challenges of
mentoring adults**



CHALLENGES OF MENTORING ADULTS

The mentee's personal and professional background can affect the success of the mentorship relationship and consequently of the entire mentoring process. As you will mentor adult creative people, it is essential for you as mentor to analyse your mentees' main:

- **PASSIONS** (related to personal human as well as professional attitudes)
- **FEARS** (such as the fear of striking out on their own, or the fear of putting their creative works out there and the potential of criticism or public scorn)



- **PROBLEMS** (for example their restricted capacities to use technologies or personal problems related to their family or lack of perceived business skills, etc.)



**The 3 C's
of mentoring**



THE 3 C'S OF MENTORING

1. Consult

This involves the mentoring sharing their wisdom and knowledge with the mentee in order to help them overcome problems or bring them forward with their own learning and skills. It is important that the mentor listen to the mentees' concerns and provide guidance based on their level of expertise and knowledge.

2. Collaborate

This is essentially a joint relationship and involves the mentor and mentee working together to achieve specific goals and objectives. The mentor will always encourage his or her mentee to share any concerns problems they have, and they can then solve them in a collaborative fashion. Similarly, by sharing perspectives or inspirations a mentee can benefit from the experience of the mentor and they can work together to bring their ideas to life.



THE 3 C'S OF MENTORING

3. Coaching

This is the direct help that the mentor will give the mentee through guidance and practice. They will share hints, tips and advice, and speak in a way that their mentee understands, and which brings them forward.

This also includes valuable feedback about the mentees' performance. Encouragement is also vital at this stage as honest appraisal and positive reinforcement can make all the difference to a mentees future development and skill levels.





**Do's and Don'ts
of Mentoring**



DO'S AND DON'TS OF MENTORING

Mentoring sessions have a commonly accepted list of things to do and not to do – a mentoring etiquette so to speak. These will help the relationship as a whole and the individual sessions to run smoother and be more successful.

By adhering to these both parties will know where they stand and be comfortable with knowing that there are boundaries in place to protect them. These include:

Do's	Don'ts
Keep the relationship professional	Automatically give advice or criticism
Be specific about the meeting norms (e.g. time etc)	Assume your advice will always be followed
Respect your mentees time as much as your own	Not set ground rules for the sessions
Inform your mentee that you don't expect them to follow all of your suggestions	Assume that your schedule takes priority
Work through disagreements in a respectful way	End the relationship on a sour note





**Skills and ways
of operating for a
business mentoring
relationship**



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

When participating in a business mentoring relationship, there are certain skills and ways of operating that will add value and longevity to the process. It will help the mentor and the mentee to meet on a level footing and boost the richness of their interactions. But these are also key skills in the corporate world and will work just as well when conducting business with clients and customers.

These competences will ensure a better standard of relationship with your mentee/mentor and also with the public at large when marketing your products. Some of these are:

1. Positive Mindset

Maintaining a positive mindset is crucial for shaping a positive future. By cultivating optimism, it becomes easier to identify untapped opportunities in the market, develop appealing consumer products, and exploit advantageous situations.



While some may mistakenly associate positive thinking with delusion or denial of reality, it is important to clarify that positive thinkers do not ignore the existing conditions. Instead, they perceive challenges as potential solutions and avenues for growth.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Positive thinking offers numerous benefits for entrepreneurs, including increased resilience. A positive outlook enables entrepreneurs to endure and recover swiftly from negative situations. Moreover, it enhances decision-making abilities, as positive thinkers approach possibilities with clarity and are more open to taking calculated risks. Positive thinking also has a positive impact on sales. Studies indicate that optimism improves persuasive skills, increasing the likelihood of clients purchasing new products. Additionally, when entrepreneurs foster a positive relationship with their employees, the contagious nature of positivity can positively influence customer interactions.

POSITIVE
MINDSET



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

2. Empathy

Developing empathy as a skill enables effective communication with various individuals, including customers, employees, and partners, and the mentor-mentor relationship. Empathy entails understanding and being able to empathize with others' emotions, even putting yourself in their shoes. By employing empathy in the workplace, you can:

- **Attain Better Solutions:** When you approach situations with empathy, you gain the ability to see things from others' perspectives. This broader understanding facilitates the generation of improved outcomes for your organization's activities.
- **Acknowledge Diverse Perspectives:** Embracing the notion that people may have different viewpoints, and in some cases, better ideas than your own, fosters an environment of trust and acceptance. Such an environment encourages individuals to contribute more actively and generate superior ideas.
- **Cultivate Customer Loyalty:** By demonstrating empathy and being able to understand and relate to customers' experiences, you can forge a stronger connection with them. This emotional bond nurtures customer loyalty, enhancing their commitment to your brand.

It is important to note that empathy does not require adopting others' opinions as your own. Instead, it involves recognizing and respecting that others possess unique viewpoints. Developing empathy enables you to foster a more inclusive and harmonious work environment, leading to better collaboration and outcomes.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

3. Willingness to share knowledge and experiences

As an entrepreneur, creating an organization that fosters open interaction among employees (if you have any), or with your mentor, can lead to a willingness to share knowledge and improve outcomes and actions. Conversely, in an environment of unhealthy competition, employees may view knowledge sharing as a weakness and refrain from engaging in it.

Let's explore the benefits of investing effort in promoting a culture of knowledge and experience sharing...

- **Accelerated Organizational Growth:** When employees share knowledge, organizations can progress at a faster pace. By avoiding the need for each individual to rediscover information, time and resources are saved, enabling efficient problem-solving and decision-making processes.

The same is true for the mentoring experience, as when both parties are open to sharing what they know they cultivate an atmosphere of trust and a rapid increase in assimilation of benefits that come from a close collaborative relationship.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

- **Increased Attractiveness to Potential Employees:** A culture that promotes knowledge sharing makes your organization more appealing to prospective employees. Individuals seeking a collaborative and learning-oriented environment are likely to be attracted to an organization that values knowledge exchange.
- **Connecting better with your target marker:** When you foster a relationship that is open and honest with your customers, they are apt to return and purchase more of your offerings as they feel more connected to you and your brand. They feel like they are part of your story and that you share a bond.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

4. Networking

Networking encompasses various aspects of communication, collaboration, idea generation, and cultivating relationships with potential investors. It serves as a gateway for entrepreneurs seeking connections, inspiration, advice, opportunities, and mentors.

While engaging in networking, it is crucial to remain true to yourself and present yourself with sincere principles, establishing a foundation for potential business relationships and with your mentee or mentor, whatever the case may be.

Ensuring alignment between your goals and the desired outcomes of a particular meeting is vital for leveraging networking opportunities effectively.

To effectively represent yourself, active participation is key. Strive to make a lasting impression, offering value to others through your presence and leave them eager to maintain contact.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

5. Commitment

Building a relationship or a company from the ground up requires unwavering commitment and determination. In fact, one of the key factors that sets apart successful entrepreneurs from those that get stuck along the way is the entrepreneur's ability to wholeheartedly commit to their ideas and transform them into a thriving organization. Commitment is the cornerstone of long-term success. An aspiring entrepreneur must understand the level of commitment required, be prepared to work diligently, embrace criticism and failure, and, most importantly, transform setbacks into future opportunities. When fully committed to an idea, you will often find yourself facing scepticism from others who may doubt the potential for success.

Once you embark on the entrepreneurial journey, your **commitment** to your idea will be tested on various fronts. This includes your willingness to work exceptionally hard, often with unpredictable hours, and accepting that your social life may have to take a backseat. Embracing failure becomes essential because not everyone you encounter along the way will share your project's vision. It is vital to have unwavering faith in yourself and your venture. Self-confidence becomes a valuable asset, as it attracts potential investors who are drawn to individuals who are fully engaged and dedicated.

Persistence, preparedness, self-belief, adaptability, and wholehearted involvement are some of the characteristics that individuals embarking on a challenging entrepreneurial journey require. The more committed an entrepreneur is, the greater the likelihood of success.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

6. Emotion Regulation

Emotional regulation is crucial for everyone, particularly for entrepreneurs and those engaging in one-to-one collaborative relationships. It is essential to understand that emotions themselves are neither good nor bad, but rather the impact they have on specific situations can be positive or negative. Emotions possess significant influence over behaviour, making it essential to gain control over them in order to govern our actions effectively.

Emotional regulation operates in two directions. Firstly, it involves learning to manage intense emotions such as excessive excitement or anger. Allowing these emotions to dictate our decisions can lead to impulsive choices or responses that may not be appropriate for the given situation. Therefore, it is important to learn how to temper these emotions when necessary.

On the other hand, emotional regulation also entails amplifying emotions when we lack enthusiasm or fail to feel adequately motivated to make timely decisions. By consciously boosting our emotional engagement in such instances, we can enhance our commitment and drive to take action.

By mastering emotional regulation, entrepreneurs can navigate their emotions skilfully, harnessing their positive influence while mitigating any negative impact. This ability empowers individuals to make informed decisions, respond effectively to challenges, and maintain a balanced and productive approach to their entrepreneurial endeavours.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

7. Persistence

Persistence stems from a deep belief in oneself, the potential for achievement, and the unwavering pursuit of goals without giving up. When starting a new business, failures are inevitable, but persistence and consistent effort can lead to project success. The same is true for a mentoring relationship and by persisting through awkward or difficult moments (granted the relationship is a healthy one) we can turn them into something that carries much benefit for all parties involved.

Furthermore, persistence offers additional benefits. Refusing to quit enhances confidence, and increased confidence, in turn, fuels even greater persistence, ultimately resulting in professional success. Another outcome of persistence is the ability to make progress and overcome obstacles with a positive mindset.

Developing persistence is a crucial skill in the business world. Here are some ways to cultivate it:

- Ø **Identify your wants and desires:** Clearly define your goals and aspirations to maintain focus and motivation.
- Ø **Determine your motivation:** Understand what drives you and use it as a source of inspiration during challenging times.



SKILLS AND WAYS OF OPERATING FOR A BUSINESS MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Ø **Outline an action plan:** Create a strategic roadmap that outlines the steps needed to achieve your goals, providing a clear direction for your efforts.

Ø **Keep a positive outlook:** Cultivate a positive mindset, focusing on possibilities rather than dwelling on setbacks or failures.

Ø **Build successful relationships:** Surround yourself with individuals who support and encourage your aspirations, as they can provide valuable guidance and assistance.

Ø **Develop discipline and habits:** Establish routines and habits that promote consistent effort and progress, such as adhering to a structured work schedule.

However, none of these strategies can be effectively implemented without self-discipline, which plays a vital role in driving persistence with less effort. Self-discipline is a skill that can be cultivated and applied in various aspects of life, enabling individuals to harness their persistence effectively.





**Strategies for
preparing the
relationship**



STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING THE RELATIONSHIP

Finally, we have a brief overview of things to consider and remember when beginning a mentoring relationship. If executed early, these will be the building blocks on which to build a productive and fulfilling relationship.

- Initiate contact with your mentee.
- Exchange background information before you talk for the first time.
- Take time to get to know each other.
- Share past mentoring experiences and those who influenced us.
- Talk about the learning and development goals.
- Determine the personal expectations of the relationship.
- What do you need from your mentor?
- Define the “deliverables” and desired outcomes.
- Candidly share personal assumptions and limitations.
- Discuss personal and learning styles.





conclusions



CONCLUSIONS

Mentoring is a special form of relationship between two people are looking at gaining benefit from the partnership – more often the mentee but also the mentor as both are learning vessels and teach each other valuable lessons.

In this manual, we have given tips and advice for how a mentee and mentor can ensure a smooth working relationship, and one in which both feel comfortable, valued and productive. We have warned of the risks to the mentoring relationship and how to avoid them by taking the relevant steps.

Overall, the main things it boils down to are:

- Ø Respect for each other from the outset,
- Ø Determination to get as much as you can from the relationship,
- Ø Coming into the mentoring process with an open mind and a belief in yourself and your mentor/mentee,
- Ø A dedication to last it out until the end,
- Ø Meet your mentor/mentee beforehand, set the ground rules and know what each can expect going forward.





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