



Mind-to-Mind Mentoring Program

Mentor Toolkit

Talent Development Capability Model

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What practitioners need to **KNOW** and **DO** to develop themselves, others, and their organizations.



The Talent Development Capability Model is your blueprint for impact. It sets a new standard for the field. This future-oriented model can be personalized. It responds to those trends affecting talent development, such as digital transformation, data analytics, information availability, and partnerships between talent development and business.

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Mentor Toolkit

This Mentor Toolkit provides a roadmap to help you understand your goals for mentoring and establish a fruitful partnership. You will find resources, tips, and tools to use throughout your mentoring experience. This toolkit is a framework and provides information on best practices.

The toolkit is organized into three sections:

1. **REFLECT:** *Understand Your Role.* Reflect on the role mentoring has played in your life and career and learn the characteristics of a successful mentor.
2. **BEGIN:** *Establish the Partnership.* Lay a solid foundation with the mentoring partnership by using the Mentoring Partnership Framework. To continue a strong and productive partnership, evaluate it on a regular basis.
3. **END:** *Navigate the Transition.* Reflect on your mentee's growth and provide feedback about the value of your partnership.

Mentoring versus Coaching

Comparing mentoring and coaching can be helpful as you explore your role as a mentor. Effective mentoring includes coaching techniques, but a mentor uses his or her judgment to decide when to switch from coach to advisor. Both approaches can help individuals accelerate their development and find solutions.

Here are some key distinctions.

Coaching

Coaching emphasizes supporting someone through their own intentional change and discovery. The coach focuses on eliciting client generated solutions and strategies (versus "telling" or "advising"). Professional coaching focuses on setting goals, creating outcomes and managing personal change.

Mentoring

A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Like coaching, mentoring focuses on solutions rather than problems. There is more "telling" in mentoring than in coaching, since the mentor serves as an advisor and guide. Mentoring may include advising, counseling and coaching.

Effective Questioning

As a Mentor, it can be very easy to want to take on a problem-solving role. Your role, however, is to help the mentee think for himself or herself. This means asking thought-provoking questions. Help your partner discover answers by asking open-ended questions. (An open-ended question is one that **requires** a thoughtful answer. And it may take your mentee time to articulate that thoughtful answer.)

Coaching is one of the tools in your mentor's toolbox. Use thought-provoking, open-ended questions to help your mentee reflect on their experiences and learn from yours. Offering coaching gives you, the mentor, an opportunity to:

- Uncover additional facts and information about your mentee
- Confirm your mentee's goals, aspirations, and needs
- Explore strong feeling about situations
- Define problems and possible solutions
- Discover your mentee's commitment to their growth

Exploratory questions – to assess the real issues and gain greater understanding:

What are the most interesting aspects of your job?
Why did you pick this to concentrate on?
What do you want to gain?
What do you want to be known for?
What do you understand the issue to be?
What tells you that your assessment is correct? What are other people's perceptions of this issue?
What assumptions are you making here?
What other ideas do you have?
How long has this been as issue?
What did you learn from past experiences that you didn't expect to learn?
What are the reasons behind an issue?
Have you tried to resolve this issue before?
Why or why not? If yes, what was the result?
What choices do you have?
What progress have you made?
What other ideas do you have?
How are you using the things/ideas we've spoken about?
What results are you looking for?

Empowering questions – to assist the Mentee to think for him/herself:

What are the skills you want to develop?
What strategies come to mind when looking at a situation?
What do you see as possible solutions here?
What outcomes are you after here? Are these outcomes reasonable given the circumstances?
What resources are available to help you move forward?
What key players do you need help from?
What forces may help and/or hinder you?
What other information do you need to arrive at a solution?
What are the pros and cons of each solution?
What is the first step you need to take to achieve your preferred outcome?
What alternative strategies should you develop?
How will you know you have mastered or successfully enhanced a competency?
How will you apply your new skill?

Coaching approach:

Establish the Goal

First, you and your mentee must look at the behavior change sought, and then structure this change as a goal. Be sure to leverage the **Talent Development Capability Model**.

Make sure that this is a **SMART** goal: one that is *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic*, and *Time-bound*.

When establishing the primary goal, it's useful to ask questions like:

- Does this goal fit with my mentee's overall career objectives? And does it fit with their development objectives?

Examine the Current Reality

Next, ask your mentee to describe their current reality. This is an important step. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering their starting point, and often they're missing some information needed to effectively reach their goal.

As they tell you about their current reality, the solution may start to emerge.

Useful coaching questions in this step include the following:

- What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)? What is the effect or result of this?
- Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?
- Does this goal conflict with any other goals or objectives?

Explore the Options

Once you and your mentee have explored the current reality, it's time to determine what is possible – meaning all the possible options for reaching his/her objective.

Offer your own suggestions in this step. But let your mentee offer suggestions first and let them do most of the talking. It's important to guide them in the right direction, without making decisions for them.

Typical questions that you can use to explore options are as follows:

- What else could you do?
- What if this or that constraint was removed? Would that change things?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
- What factors or considerations will you use to weigh the options?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to achieve this goal?
- What obstacles stand in your way?

Establish the Desire

By examining the current reality and exploring the options, your mentee will now have a good idea of how they can achieve their goal.

That's great – but, this may not be enough. The final step is to get them to commit to specific actions in order to move forward towards their goal. In doing this, you will help them establish the will and boost their motivation.

Useful questions to ask here include:

- So, what will you do now, and when? What else will you do?
- What could stop you from moving forward? How will you overcome this?
- How can you keep yourself motivated?
- When do you need to review progress? Daily? Weekly? Monthly?

Most importantly—Ask more questions, and don't jump in to supply answers.

Step 1

REFLECT: Understand Your Role

Reflecting on Mentorship in Your Life & Career

Adapted from Mentoring Skills Bite-Sized Training™, Mind Tools™

One of the best ways to discover the mentor in you is to examine mentoring you have received. It could have been a one-time intervention or a long-term partnership; it might have happened formally or informally. However, when your life has been enriched by a mentor, you know it.



To understand how you have benefited from mentoring, reflect on your own experiences:

1. What kind of mentoring did you receive?

2. How did it compare to the mentoring received by people around you?

3. What did you find helpful and not helpful?

4. How well did the mentoring you received apply to your professional and/or personal success?

5. How well did your mentor prepare you for your career?

6. As you look back, what other kinds of mentoring would have been helpful? Were there occasions when mentoring would have helped you handle a difficult situation more effectively, gain clarity about your career, or avoid “learning the hard way”?

Your answers help define the kind of mentor you want to be and identify building blocks for developing productive mentoring partnerships.

Identify your key mentoring discoveries with the questions below.

Reflect on the significant events and people who have shaped the mentoring you've received across your career.

1. Have you had an "aha" moment in your life? Who helped you make the discovery? How did this person impact your life? In what way is that person a mentor?

2. Has someone quoted something or said something to you that was so profound you've carried the meaning with you ever since? Who was it? Do you consider this person a mentor? Why or why not? What mentoring qualities did you learn from this person?

3. Did someone help you uncover a latent talent, ability or desire? How did this person encourage you and help you with your discovery? How has this influenced your life and your mentoring vision?

Becoming a Mentor

Effective mentoring, like wisdom itself, is multidimensional. The best mentors adjust their role to meet the mentee's needs. There is no single formula for good mentoring, yet key characteristics and behaviors build a foundation for good mentoring.

Tips for Success in the Mentoring Partnership Once you embark on a mentoring partnership, keep in mind these tips for success.

Develop the partnership	Every mentoring partnership needs two elements. First, what are the mentee's goals for the partnership and what are yours – what do you want to learn or achieve? Second, what role does the mentee want you to play? Are you comfortable with that role? Explore these questions early on to set the foundation for the partnership.
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Recognize the power of feedback

Mentors provide the gift of feedback. By sharing unbiased perceptions in a kind and honest way, mentors have tremendous impact. Provide coaching points as well as recognize growth and change. Feedback given in the spirit of helpfulness and progress is appreciated and acted on, as long as it is specific and direct, solicits the mentee's input, and points the way to change.

Be Yourself	Be straightforward about your strengths and weaknesses – model how a successful person deals with reality. Offer your own lessons learned, struggles, and successes. Being a mentor does not mean being perfect. Many mentees report their mentors helped them by disclosing how they handled difficult aspects of their own temperament or personality.
Be a coach	Mentors need not have all the answers – they help their mentee self-discover. Use questions to help your mentee reflect on experiences and draw out key learning points. Promote reflection and insight by asking questions such as these: What did you learn from this situation? How might you approach it next time? What patterns are you noticing about yourself?
Shine a new light	Mentors have the luxury of being distant from their mentee’s work problems and challenges. Use this built-in distance to provide the “big picture” as a context for daily ups and downs. Teach your mentee to do the same.
Let actions speak louder than words	Most people learn by doing. If possible, involve your mentee in one of your work experiences that could be a learning opportunity. Afterward, debrief the events and relate them to the mentee’s development. Share your thought process regarding how you handled or acted in the situation. In the process, the mentee may contribute some valuable feedback.
Be a great listener	Adopt these key listening skills for mentors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a desire (motivation) to listen, regardless of your level of interest in what your mentee is saying. • Increase your capacity to listen. • Infer your mentee’s intent or purpose: What is the mentee implying or suggesting about goals or needs? • Determine your own purpose in every listening situation. • Become aware of your biases and attitudes. What words, ideas or beliefs function as “shock” words to you? • Learn to use your “spare time” effectively and productively as you listen. • Analyze your listening habits (both productive and unproductive). • Be mentally and physically prepared to listen. • Delay judgments; hear your mentee out before making judgments. • Listen not only for facts, but for main ideas, principles, concepts and patterns.

Step 2

BEGIN: Establish the Partnership

By creating a Mentoring Partnership Framework, you and your mentee can find out more about each other and the focus for your partnership. In this section you will also find agendas to guide your meetings, tools to evaluate your partnership on a regular basis, as well as do’s and don’ts.

Partnership Framework

Use this **3-step Mentoring Partnership Framework** with your mentee to find out more about each other and set goals and expectations. The Partnership Agreement is also included in the Mentee Toolkit.

Partnership Agreement Step 1: Who Are We?

To launch a successful mentoring partnership, it is important to get to know each other. Below are some items you may want to know about each other.

- Personal Background: Life history, career history, experiences, core values, personal motto...
- Goals: Personal, career, progress toward achieving, obstacles in achieving...
- Perspectives: Keys to success, development needed, about work, about organizations, your commitments...
- Thinking Process: How you like to learn, solve problems, or make decisions...your new areas of interest...
- Skills and Abilities: What you do best, what you want to do more of, what you want to learn to do...

Notes

Conversation Starters for Mentors

- Which assignments have provided you with the most challenge? The least challenge? Why?
- Tell me about an accomplishment of which you are particularly proud.
- What are your most important values? Which values are met and not met at work?
- What makes you unique? Talk about values, interests, competencies and skills, personal traits, style...
- What part of your education or work experience has been the most valuable over the years?
- What actions have you taken to manage your career? What assistance may I provide?
- What lessons have you learned from your successes and failures?
- What is your biggest challenge in trying to balance your work life and personal life?



Partnership Agreement Step 2: What are Our Expectations and Goals?

One of the most important things both partners can do is agree to expectations, goals, ground rules and a time frame for your mentoring partnership. Periodically come back to these and evaluate “how we are doing”. Write your thoughts to the questions below individually, then fully discuss them with each other.

The Mind-to-Mind Mentoring Program is 6 months of duration.

1. Why do I want to be part of a mentoring partnership?	
2. What do I want from you?	
3. How do I want this partnership to function?	
4. How much time can I invest?	
5. What should be the approximate length of our meetings?	
6. What other support will/do I need from you?	
7. What ground rules do I want for our meeting/partnership (e.g., confidentiality, reciprocal trust/respect, commitment, etc.)?	



Mentor/Mentee Worksheet

This worksheet sets the parameters of a mentoring partnership to meet the needs of both the mentor and mentee. Any questions and answers from the previous two pages can be used for this worksheet.

Planning Meeting	Date/Time (Recommend that you meet 1x a month for the duration of the program.)	
Goals/Expectations:	1. 2. 3.	
Teaching/Learning Styles	Mentor Teaching Style	Mentee Learning Style



Partnership Agreement Step 3: What Are We Going to Do?

Work together to define at least one action item that will help reach the mentee's goal(s). Mentors are there to facilitate the discussion and move it toward a definable action chosen by the mentee— it is the mentee who take action and make something that is easily incorporated into daily activities and is short term.

1. Incorporate practice: Consider simulating the actual situation, asking “what if” questions and role playing or rehearsing what the action will look like in real time.
2. Reflect on outcomes: Did things go as planned? If not, what actions are needed? What was learned that has broader application?

Move to action!

The first action plan is:
The target date for completion is:
What do we want to work on together, or what does the mentee need to practice?

Tips and Agendas for Mentors and Mentees

- Have a focus for each discussion: compelling question, case study, new experience, article, etc.
- Be open and honest. Ask for what you need, solicit feedback, share what you are learning.
- Keep confidences. It's important that you can count on each other to respect information that is shared confidentially.
- Honor the commitments you make to each other (meetings, follow up, etc.).
- Ask powerful questions, and cultivate curiosity about each other as individuals.
- Enjoy the experience! It's a gift to have someone who is interested in the same work you are and wants to learn and share knowledge.

Possible Mentoring Agendas	
Month 1, Meeting 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know each other • Review Who Are We Activity, Expectations & Goals, Mentor/Mentee Worksheet • Set up the next meeting 	Additional areas to explore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs, functions, and roles the mentee might benefit from and enjoy • Current job functions, skills, successes, failure, and obstacles/challenges • Challenges or concerns created by change • Opportunities for further exposure and challenge • Managing work-life balance • Challenges in the development toward goals • Influences of the functional group and management perspectives of mentee's performance • Options for training, education, continuous learning • Organizational culture and how to influence and impact the organization • Networking and creating social capital • Mutual feedback on your partnership and progress
Months 1.5-4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss any situations that occurred between meetings • Discuss action plan • Offer positive and constructive feedback 	Potential Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has taken place since we last met? • What questions or issues were raised for you by the experience? • What did you learn from the experience? • What will you do differently in the future? • What could you do to continue to advance your growth?
Month 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore possible career interests and questions • Set clear professional development goals • Identify potential action plans 	Last meeting prior to closure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss final project outcome • Evaluate results • Discuss future actions and potential actions

Month 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solidify the action plan(s) • Create a series of achievable goals • Agree on how the formal partnership will conclude at the end of the mentoring period 	Closing Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss closing items for the action plan • Reflect on the mentorship process • Discuss positive changes that occurred for both of you • How are you going to apply and integrate what you have learned through the mentoring? • Redefine the partnership • Any terms going forward • Celebrate your success
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Step 3

END: Navigate the Transition

The **Mind-to-Mind Mentoring Program** is scheduled to last 6 months. At the end of the six months you are responsible to end the partnering. Ending well is important – first impressions and last impressions are what we remember most about others.

Remember that a mentoring partnership is not a permanent commitment. The goal is to help the mentee move forward in career and life goals. Perhaps these goals have been met. Or if this is not occurring and you do not see adjustments that can be made to meet those goals, end the partnership respectfully and honestly.

Your “formal” mentoring partnership may shift to a more informal, infrequent interaction. You never know when your paths may cross again, under what circumstances, and when you may need help or advice from each other in the future.

Tips to End Your Mentoring Partnership on a Positive Note

- Be clear about why you and your mentee are ending the partnership. If the mentee has achieved his or her goals – celebrate!
- If either of you has chosen to end the partnership for other reasons, share them. Perhaps the partnership is not moving the mentee forward, and other professional development activities would make more sense.
- Regardless of the reason, give mentees clear feedback about what went well, what growth you have seen, what strengths you see in them, what they might do differently in future mentoring partnerships, and what you gained from the partnership

