

What is a Mentor?

Mentoring the next generation of young professionals can be a new and rewarding experience in helping guide the way for the future of the public relations industry. Mentors lead by example and set the tone through two-way communication and exemplary behavior. Sometimes experience alone does not result in the most success possible, and a mentee needs guidance from an individual willing to invest time in him or her. Mentors are patient, keep the door open for questions and provide mentees with chances to grow as a professional and as a person.

How to be a Successful Mentor

Successful mentoring should be a mutually beneficial experience for both the mentor and mentee. Developing the right relationship with your mentee is crucial to success as a mentor.

Ask questions instead of giving advice. It can be tempting for mentors to tell mentees exactly how to solve problems. Instead, teach them to ask questions that might lead to solutions (i.e., Have you ever had this problem before? What have you tried? What was working until things went wrong?).

Give actionable, specific feedback. Words of praise or criticism are only effective when you are specific about what they did well or what needs improvement.

Provide structure. Mentorship programs sound great in theory, but can easily fizzle when mentors/mentees play endless games of phone and email tag. Make sure you set up recurring meetings in your first touch base. Talk with your mentee about understanding their expectations and guiding them to set goals.

Identify goals. Have your mentee set three realistic goals for being in the mentoring program and make them measurable and specific.

Provide enriching opportunities and service as a support system.

Qualities of a Mentor

- A desire to help others succeed
- A willingness to pass along information
- A willingness to give and receive feedback
- A desire to work with others
- A desire to engage with others on an interpersonal level
- A desire to learn
- A motivation to teach
- Strong listening and communication skills
- Good questioning skills and common sense
- Good people management and leadership skills
- Knowledge of the PR industry
- Self-confidence and self-awareness
- Strong ethics
- Lack of prejudice
- Patience
- Honesty
- Trustworthiness
- Empathy