

TIPS FROM MENTORS for a great mentorship experience

- Establish the time and location for the conversation, specifying both the starting and ending time. Agree on how much advance notice each of you would need if a session has to be rescheduled.
- Learn about each other in advance. Mentors might request that Mentees provide a brief biography and resumé prior to the meetings. Mentees could research their Mentors' backgrounds and areas of expertise.
- Mentorship is not a sales appointment. On occasion, Mentors reported that Mentees used the mentorship session as a prelude to a sales presentation. It is not the reason Mentors contribute their valuable time and the mentorship sessions are not to be used (or perceived to be used) for sales or job-search purposes.
- Mentees arrive prepared. Mentees could have agendas of topics they wish to cover, and prepare some open-ended questions that will guide the discussions without restricting Mentors' feedback. Ask if a Mentor would like to see the agenda in advance, should they feel it will help them prepare as well. As the meeting unfolds, both parties will have an opportunity to provide context, brief updates, or ask specific questions that enhance the exchange.
- A mentoring session is an exchange, not an interview. It is common for Mentees to take notes, however don't do so excessively, or you may not be engaged in the conversation and fail to establish a relationship.

TIPS FROM MENTEES for a great experience

- Set the stage for a great experience by conveying your enthusiasm and making a personal connection via the tone of your email or phone communication.
- Be fully present. Sharing requires excellent listening skills and your full attention. Both parties should set aside daily pressures during a mentoring session so that you can get the most from the experience.
- Make it a goal to establish a personal connection during the session. One of the pleasures of a mentoring relationship is the sense of connection between two people. This happens when conversation is shared equally and one listens with an open mind.
- Summarize each session. At the close of a meeting, Mentees could speak about the insights gained. This would help your Mentor know to what extent the session was helpful.

Have a Plan and Ask Good Questions

Based on survey results, the number one recommendation Mentors have for Mentees is to prepare an agenda or questions in advance of each meeting. Perhaps even share this with Mentors prior to meetings. This is a clear sign of an organized person who also is respectful of others' time. Naturally, questions should be relevant to the background of the individual with whom you will meet.

A good starting point is to decide what outcome you hope to achieve in the 60 minute session with each Mentor. Perhaps zero in on three or four topics you want a Mentor to talk about / share, so when you leave each session you will have gained the knowledge that is most helpful to you.

As an idea starter, here are some questions you might ask to break the ice and steer the conversation in the direction you want. Then listen for openings to delve into key topics important to you.

1. How did you get where you are today?
2. What do you like most about your career?
3. Share one of the greatest successes during your career. Was there a specific action or event that led you to this success?
4. Share a failure you experienced and what you took away from that experience.
5. I am looking to accomplish _____ with my career. Can you provide some advice or recommendations on how I should proceed?
6. What do you see as some of the emerging trends in the industry?
7. How would you recommend I get into _____ (insert a specific specialization/role/company/sector etc.)?
8. What do you know now that you could share with me about how you achieved professional success?