

Step 1 Suggestions on starting a relationship

Here are several suggestions to help you start a successful mentoring relationship



**Boston Area
Chapter**

Get to know each other before diving into mentoring objectives

Take time to talk about personal or general issues during the initial stage of your relationship. This helps to build a solid foundation that will maximize your mentoring relationship and will give each party a better understanding of the other.

Maintain Confidentiality at all times

To have an effective mentoring relationship, it is important to respect sensitive information shared within the context of the mentoring relationship. That said, material that is company confidential should not be shared between mentor and mentee as it may create a conflict of interest.

Establish Goals and Objectives

Establishing objectives for the relationship will help to dictate the duration, frequency and type of meetings as well as the interim evaluations. Goals are best if they are well defined. Use the SMART acronym to help (specific, measureable, actionable, realistic, and time bound) with the process.

Establish a timeframe for the relationship

Agreeing to the approximate duration of the relationship will serve two useful purposes. First, it can motivate by instilling a sense of urgency to make the development activities rigorous. Second, discussing a timeframe sets expectations about the temporary nature of the relationship.

Use Time Wisely

Be prepared for scheduled meetings so that you can spend the time wisely. Bring questions and examples of concerns so that you can get the most out of the session. It is not always necessary to schedule a lengthy meeting. Use other ways of communicating such as telephone, e-mail, videoconference, etc.

Be Realistic

There is often a tendency to be overly optimistic about what can be accomplished within a one year period. Try not to plan for more activities than you can realistically accomplish within a year. Also, do not ask for something the other party does not control, and do not offer anything you cannot deliver.

Be Committed

Your commitment to fulfill your part of the agreement is not just to the other party, but to yourself as well. Ultimately, the only truly binding forces that sustain an agreement are commitment, good faith and integrity.