



PT WORK Force™

Setting Up An Informal Mentoring Program – Checklist

Mentoring is a professional relationship between a more experienced/knowledgeable person (mentor) and a person who wants to learn about the subject matter (mentee). Mentoring relationships are effective only when both the mentor and mentee are involved because they want to be. In an informal program, employers don't select mentors and mentees – they provide the opportunity for employees to self-select and develop their own relationship.

Mentoring programs can increase employee loyalty, have an impact on employee growth and increase employee retention.

If you are considering establishing an informal mentoring program in your company, review the items below before you start and make sure you are willing to provide the support needed to make the program work.

Checklist for establishing and administering an **informal** mentoring program

___ Determine if your employees are willing to engage in a mentoring program. These take time and must be supported by management if they are going to be successful – are you willing to invest in a mentoring program?

___ Don't assume that employees will understand the benefits of a mentoring program. Make sure you share the benefits of what a successful mentoring program will mean for both the participants and the work place.

___ Hold an informal meeting with those who have expressed an interest in participating and find out who wants to learn what and who is willing to share their knowledge in what area.

___ Recognize that employees will need some guidance and training. Consider an orientation meeting for both mentors and mentees that covers program goals, participant roles and best practices/process.

___ Provide additional guidance during the program by offering tips, articles on mentoring, and other resources that might be useful to the members.

___ If you don't want the responsibility of setting up the program, find out who is willing and provide them with the tools and time they need to make the program a success. (There are many resources both free and fee-based that you can find online Below are a few examples.)

<https://www.management-mentors.com/about/corporate-mentoring-matters-blog/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-informal-mentoring>

<https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/articles/2017-10-04/how-to-start-an-informal-mentorship>

<https://trainingmag.com/content/how-start-corporate-mentoring-program/>

<https://learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/tips-for-establishing-a-successful-mentoring-program>

<https://www.insperity.com/blog/how-to-build-a-successful-employee-mentoring-program/>

_____ Establish the ground rules:

- How much time are you willing to let both parties devote to this relationship? (Yes, it needs to be done on company time). Suggest a meeting frequency time – 2-3 hours once a month is considered an ‘active’ program.
- Does this initiative need a budget? If yes, how much?
- Is there an end date for the program?
- Managers should not be a mentor to a direct report. Receiving advice from those who aren’t a direct supervisor will provide a different view point & perspective.
- Recognize that different goals may suggest different type mentoring programs. A mentoring program with the goal of retaining young employees may look different than a mentoring program aimed at preparing minority employees with training to be considered for leadership roles.
- Have mentor partners make SMART goals for program (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant & timely)
- Manage expectations
- If you don’t have a large pool of employees at one location, consider finding mentors at other locations that can meet by teleconference, find mentors at a sister company or division that aligns with your workplace or even look for mentors at professional organizations your company participates in.

_____ Make sure the mentor understands their role is to listen, guide, and share their resources and networks. (See Mentor Checklist)

_____ Make sure the mentee understands their role in the relationship is to ask for the guidance and time they need to develop.

How can the mentee contribute to the relationship?

- Participate. The Mentee is an active role not passive.
- Bring 2-3 specific questions or topics to each mentor meeting to discuss.
- Ask for and accept honest feedback.