

The Director at Chellery Jewellery, who participated in the Institute's Mentorship Programme 2016-17, notes that making an effort to be a smart mentee will cultivate a rewarding mentorship relationship



...be an effective mentee

A mentorship programme is an invaluable opportunity for people who want to have mentors, professional advisors offering guidance, advice and support, so that mentees can enrich their individual learning and professional growth.

Building a successful mentor-mentee relationship is not easy, but I believe the following are key success factors for mentees to be mindful of in order to establish an effective and productive relationship with their mentors.

Set goals

Consider the issues that you are facing, any resources you need, how your mentor can help you, and what you want to accomplish. Once you have provided these critical pieces of information to your mentor, he or she will be able to advise and guide you on possible next steps and opportunities.

Take the initiative and meet up regularly

As mentees, we are always on the driver's seat. Take the initiative to ask questions and ask for a meet up. Set up a schedule and communicate regularly. It is important to remember that your mentor is a volunteer – they are taking time out of their busy schedule to help you develop skills that they are profoundly more equipped with than you are. Respect their time, and if you need to reschedule your meeting, make sure to tell your mentor in advance.

Respect feedback

The best thing about mentor-mentee relationships is receiving feedback and insight from a knowledgeable mentor. But sometimes the feedback will be less than flattering. We need to be receptive to both positive and negative feedback. Learn how to accept feedback that is intended to improve your performance, work, or career path.

Expect support not miracles

You can expect a certain level of support from your mentor but you shouldn't expect him or her to help you solve problems. Your mentor might not be an expert in your area and he or she might not be as proficient as you might hope. However, the most valuable thing a mentor can offer is an alternative point of view. Their experience can definitely help you meet your goals as well as provide resources that may be useful for you. Treasure your mentor's support and be open minded when listening to feedback, and you will gain something unexpected.

Communication

Prepare for your meeting by identifying your needs beforehand so that you can communicate with your mentor as clearly as possible, and so that time is spent wisely. This will allow you to have deep and effective conversations with you sharing your thoughts and insights with your mentor and asking him or her to do the same.

Develop trust

A successful mentoring relationship is built on trust. Be honest with your mentor and do not be afraid to get personal. Share your career story and personal journey, and ask your mentor to do the same. Be reliable and show up for every scheduled meeting.

Appreciate their support

Consistently show your appreciation to your mentor and the wisdom he or she shares. Let your mentor know that he or she has helped you reach your goals. Doing so will help your mentor to maintain his or her mentoring techniques, and continue successfully supporting others in the future.

Keep an open mind and have fun

A mentoring relationship is like any friendship. Feel free to talk about funny things, and not just about work and career. You could even invite him or her to attend social events with you. It is always good to laugh with your mentor.

The most wonderful thing about mentorship programmes is that the successful people involved are always open to helping people who also want to be successful. So the key point is to "take initiative and ask questions." I have three mentors and I met them through university, my workplace and the HKICPA mentorship programme. I am glad that we are very good friends. Not only are they my career advisors, but they are also willing to know the happiness and sadness of my personal life.

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