

HOW TO START A HIGH-IMPACT MENTORING PROGRAM

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING



Looking to start a mentoring program? That's great. Mentoring is a proven approach to drive rich learning and development for both mentees and mentors. Mentoring also benefits the sponsoring organization.

For employers, mentoring increases retention, promotion rates, and employee satisfaction. At universities, student mentoring is proven to improve student retention, boost job placement rates, and increase alumni engagement when tapping alumni as mentors.

A thriving, impactful mentoring program is within your reach. But great mentoring programs don't just happen. They are built upon thoughtful planning and sustained commitment to guiding participants through the mentoring process while continually improving the program.

Sound like a lot of work? It can be, but the right tools will make the effort much easier.

Mentoring software provides a complete program environment that helps organizations start, manage, and measure all types of mentoring programs.

Read on to learn about five key steps to take when starting a successful mentoring program.

71%
PERCENT OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES OFFER MENTORING PROGRAMS TO THEIR EMPLOYEES.
ATD, 2010

STUDENTS WHO SIGN UP FOR A MENTOR ARE 14% MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN COLLEGE AND 13% MORE LIKELY TO GRADUATE COLLEGE AFTER FOUR YEARS.
NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, 2011

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

1 DESIGN YOUR MENTORING PROGRAM



The starting point for any mentoring program begins with two important questions:

1. Why are you starting this program?
2. What does success look like for participants and the organization?

To answer these questions you will need to dive deep to understand your target audience. Make sure you understand who they are, where they are, their development needs, and their key motivations to participate.

Objectives provide direction to program participants, establish program key performance indicators (KPIs), and help organizational leaders understand why they should offer their support.

Successful mentoring programs offer both structure and flexibility. Structure provides participants a mentoring workflow to follow and is

critical to help participants achieve productive learning that reaches defined goals.

Similarly, flexibility is essential to support varying individual mentoring needs across specific learning goals, preferences, and learning styles.

TRANSLATE YOUR VISION INTO SMART OBJECTIVES:

- o SPECIFIC
- o MEASURABLE
- o ATTAINABLE
- o RELEVANT
- o TIME-BOUND

“Our aim is multi-purpose mentoring. We’re providing career development and self-development of mentors and mentees.”

— SUZ HAHN, LEARNING ARCHITECT AT DAIMLER TRUCKS, CHRONUS CUSTOMER

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

Key design decisions include:

- ✓ Enrollment – is it open, application, or invite only?
- ✓ Mentoring style – can be traditional, flash, or reverse
- ✓ Connection type – possibly 1:1, group, or project
- ✓ Connection duration – typically weeks or months, or perhaps even just a single session
- ✓ Community/social aspects beyond formal mentoring, tracking, and reporting needs.



A good idea is to create a program workflow diagram to explain each step of your program. You can provide details such as key actions, timeframes, support resources, and criteria for moving to the next phase. Mark areas that will require some flexibility to support user needs.



*MENTORING SOFTWARE
ALLOWS YOU TO DELIVER
A WIDE-VARIETY OF
MENTORING PROGRAMS.
REGARDLESS IF A SMALL
OR LARGE PROGRAM,
MENTORING SOFTWARE IS
EASY TO CONFIGURE AND
WILL SAVE YOU TIME AND
COST IN GETTING YOUR
PROGRAM STARTED AND
RUNNING SMOOTHLY*

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

2 ATTRACT PARTICIPANTS FOR YOUR MENTORING PROGRAM



The best-designed mentoring programs won't get far without effective program promotion, mentor recruitment, and training.

When new mentoring programs are introduced in organizations, there is generally natural enthusiasm. Yet this enthusiasm doesn't always translate into high participation rates. A common reason is the absence of effective promotion. Don't assume potential mentors and mentees understand

the benefits. For many, this will be their first opportunity to participate in mentoring. You will need to convince them that participating is worth their time and effort. Beyond participants, key leaders and stakeholders will need to be educated on the benefits of the program and strategic value to the organization.

Consider the needs of mentors. Building a solid base of mentors can be a challenge. It is important to understand the positive and negative factors that impact mentor participation. Once you have identified them, look for creative ways to reinforce positive drivers and lower the hurdles of negative ones throughout the mentoring process. For example, mentors are often busy people with limited time to spend. How can you help

mentors be more efficient with the time they have to dedicate to mentoring?



COMMUNICATE THE BENEFITS OF BEING A MENTOR, SUCH AS:

- *PASS ON IMPORTANT LEARNINGS FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE*
- *BE KNOWN AS A LEADER AND A TEACHER WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION*
- *ADD "MENTOR" TO YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE AND RESUME*
- *LEARN FROM YOUR MENTEE*

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

Also consider recognition and reward strategies. Formally recognizing mentor involvement can be very motivating and help attract additional mentors to the program.



Lastly, productive mentoring doesn't just happen. Provide training to mentors and mentees regarding the program's goals, participant roles, mentoring best practices, and your mentoring

process. Help mentors and mentees clarify their own objectives. The need for training and guidance doesn't end after the initial orientation.

Provide tips and best practices throughout the mentoring program to help participants stay on track and get the most out of the program.

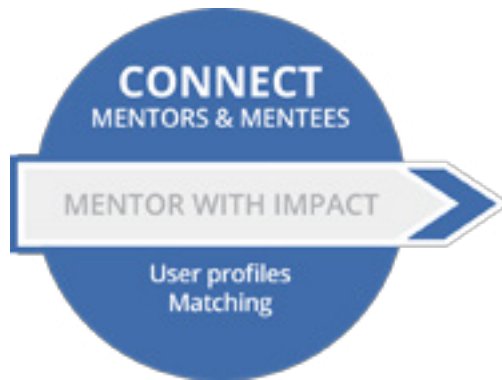


ATTRACTING PARTICIPANTS CHECKLIST

-  Promote the benefits to participants and stakeholders
-  Consider recognition and rewards for participation
-  Provide training and reinforcement throughout the program

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

3 CONNECT MENTORS AND MENTEES



A productive mentoring relationship depends on a good match.

Matching is often one of the most challenging aspects of a program. Participants will bring various competencies, backgrounds, learning styles and needs. A great match for one person may be a bad match for another.

Matching starts by deciding which type of matching you'll offer in your program: self-matching or admin-matching. Consider giving mentees a say in the matching process by allowing them to select a particular mentor or submit their top three choices. Self-matching is administrative light, which in larger programs can be a huge plus.



3 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTOR MATCHING

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

For more structured programs, such as large groups of new students at universities, or groups of new corporate employees, you may want to get the program started by admin-matching, which can be made more efficient with software. Evaluate various match combinations before finalizing as ensuring quality mentors for hard-to-match mentees can be challenging.

Matching best practices start with a solid profile for all participants (mentors and mentees). Critical profile elements include development goals, specific topical interests, location, experiences, and matching preferences. Think

about how you'll want to match people, or if you'll want them to save time by having them match themselves.

For example, you may want to match female leaders with younger female employees, or experienced sales personnel with new recruits. For self-matching, perhaps participants might like to connect with someone from the same previous employer, or the same college. The more you know about your participants, the better chance your participants will have for a great fit and a happy, productive mentoring outcome.



“Bulk matching has allowed us to improve the efficiency of the matching process, while also enhancing the quality”

— KATIE CONNOR, DIRECTOR OF THE PROFESSIONAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AT LEEDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, CHRONUS CUSTOMER

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

4 GUIDE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS



Now that your participants are enrolled, trained, and matched, the real action begins.

It is also where mentoring can get stuck. Left to themselves, many mentorships will take off and thrive. But some may not. Why? Because typically, mentoring is not part of one's daily routine. Without direction and a plan, mentoring relationships are vulnerable to losing focus and momentum. That is why providing some structure and guidance throughout the mentorship is vital to a successful mentoring program.

One best practice is to ensure all mentorships have goals and action plans. This serves two purposes. First, it brings focus at the onset, which helps a mentorship get off to a good start. Second, it adds accountability to accomplish something.

Provide all mentoring relationships with timely and relevant "help resources" (topical content, mentoring best practices, etc.) throughout the mentorship. Chunk-sized content delivered at key points is ideal.

As a mentoring connection progresses, establish checkpoints where mentorships report on their progress. Even if your organization doesn't choose to formally track the details, just the act of reporting progress helps mentors and mentees stay productive.

Lastly, have a formal process that brings closure to the mentoring experience. Within this process, provide an opportunity for both the mentor and mentee to reflect upon



PROVIDE STRUCTURE AND GUIDANCE:

- *CREATE GOALS AND WORKFLOW PLANS*
- *PROVIDE HELP RESOURCES*
- *ESTABLISH CHECKPOINTS AND PROGRESS REPORTING*
- *HAVE A FORMAL PROCESS THAT BRINGS CLOSURE*

what was learned, discuss next steps for the mentee, and provide feedback on the benefits of the program and process.

Chronus software makes guiding, or "facilitating," your program's mentoring connections very easy and enables your participants to be highly productive.

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

5 MEASURE YOUR MENTORING PROGRAM



Understanding how your program measures up to expectations may well be the most important phase of all.

Mentoring is a significant investment when you consider program management, infrastructure, and the valuable time of participants. Articulating the impact is essential to secure ongoing funding and support. In addition, the measure phase is also focused on assessing program health to identify trouble spots and opportunities.

Mentoring programs should be tracked, measured, and assessed at three altitudes: the program, the mentoring connection, and the individual. To be effective you need the ability to capture metrics and feedback throughout the program lifecycle.

At the program level, build metrics around defined business objectives. For example, in a diversity mentoring program you may want to compare promotion rates of program participants to non-participants. Also track conversion metrics, which show the progress participants make at each step of the mentoring program starting at enrollment. Conversion metrics provide essential insight into program health.

A MENTORING PROGRAM CASE STUDY

Sun Microsystems released the results of a study that explored the value of mentoring. The researchers looked at data from more than 1,000 Sun employees over a five-year period. The study concluded that, “mentoring has a positive impact on mentors and mentees, producing employees that are more highly valued by the business.” The study also found that 25 percent of employees in a test group who took part in the company’s mentoring program had a salary grade change, compared with five percent of employees in a control group who did not participate in the program. Mentors were promoted six times more often than those not in the program; mentees were promoted five times more often than those not in the program. In addition retention rates were much higher for mentees (72 percent) and mentors (69 percent) than for employees who did not participate in the mentoring program (49 percent). Gartner.

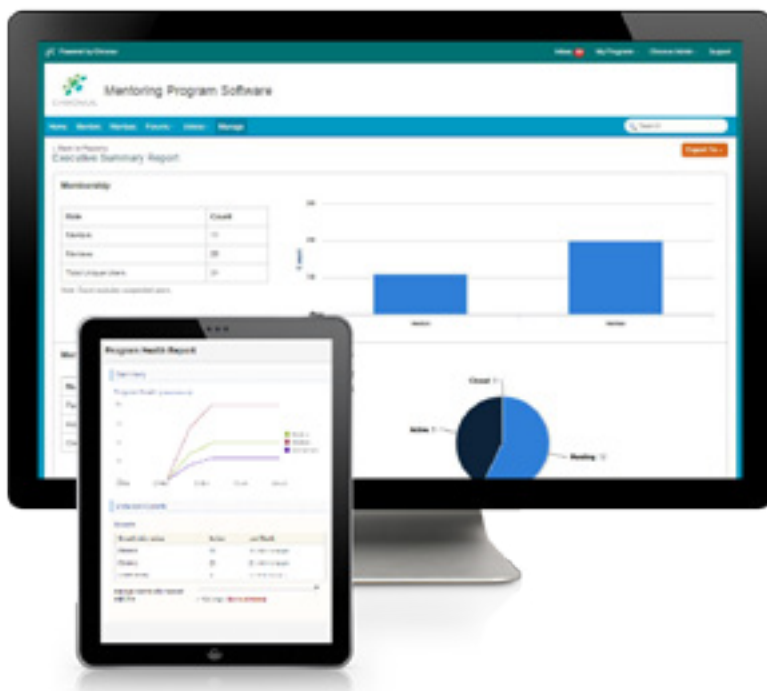
5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

For mentoring connections, you want to understand mentorship behavior to identify roadblocks and opportunities. Common questions you will want to ask are: Is the mentoring timeframe too long, too short, or just right? Are mentorships getting off to fast starts or lagging? Are participants leveraging content resources you have provided?

For participants, you want to understand the impact of mentoring in terms of outcomes while acquiring program feedback. One of the easiest ways to capture outcome and feedback is through surveys. Ask participants and stakeholders how well the mentoring program met their goals and the goals of the organization. Also ask them for their ideas for improving the program.



MEASURE MENTORING
AT THREE LEVELS



THE ROLE OF MENTORING SOFTWARE

As a development strategy, mentoring is one of the most effective methods of long-lasting learning. Running an effective mentoring program goes way beyond just matching people up. For true impact on your organization, it takes effort, resources, and know-how. Mentoring software enables you to create a cloud-based program that is easy to use, complete with guided workflows for participants. Plus, for program administrators, mentoring software includes an automated toolset to attract, enroll, connect and guide participants, saving significant administrator time and cost. Finally, software provides measurement tools to ensure your program provides effective learning that you can measure to produce return on investment (ROI) metrics for your program.

For more information on mentoring, contact [Chronus](#) Or, visit our [website](#) to see what Chronus software for mentoring can do for you.



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MENTORING**

ABOUT CHRONUS

Chronus is the leader in mentoring software. Our configurable platform is powering hundreds of successful mentoring programs for some of the world's largest companies, educational institutions, and professional associations. With unique MatchIQ technology, a guided experience for participants, and the most configurable platform in the industry, Chronus enables mentoring programs to efficiently scale and drive more strategic value for organizations worldwide. Visit www.chronus.com to learn more.



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