

MENTORING FAQs

Below are a range of frequently asked questions we see from those who are involved in mentoring for the first time, either starting their journey as a mentor or being mentored.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring, simply put, is the act of one individual sharing their knowledge, skills and experience, to help another person to develop and grow. This can either be professional or personal growth. Where PushFar is focused, this relates to professional growth and development. Mentoring is, by its very nature, far more flexible than coaching, although people often confuse the two. The primary difference between mentoring and coaching is that mentoring focuses on an individual's own career goals and growth over a longer period of time, with varying aspects of development. Coaching, on the other hand, typically focuses on set training and goals, over a shorter, more focused period of time. Furthermore, a coach may not be using their own experience in order to teach, whereas, typically, a mentor is speaking from their own experience.

Who can be a mentor?

Nowadays, there are several different types of mentoring. Traditional mentoring was the act of a senior and experienced individual in an industry acting as a support and adviser to someone less experienced. Indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of mentoring is just this - "An experienced person in a company or educational institution who trains and counsels new employees or students." And while this is largely still the case, there are other mentoring techniques and types popping up, such as reverse mentoring. Reverse mentoring is, as it suggests, where new, junior and less-experienced individuals' mentor those who have been in the industry or a specific company for considerably longer. The idea behind this is that those with a fresh, new perspective can help to push change. Almost everyone is ultimately capable of being a mentor. Anyone who believes they have experience or insight and can offer valuable support and advice to another individual can be a mentor.

What are the benefits of mentoring?

A mentor can help with a huge number of aspects of an individual's career, their challenges and their achievements too. A mentor could help you with interview training, updating your resume or CV, providing insight into a certain industry, assisting you with staying connected to industry trends and standards, office or individual conflict, management challenges and a whole host of additional aspects of the working world. Some people question why a mentor is a better option than a friend. We firmly believe that it is important to keep the right work/life balance. With mentoring, professionals can help to provide an outside, unbiased, fair and experienced opinion, advice and support, where friends and family might not be able to. Being able to speak to someone more experienced who can guide one through their career is so important. Equally, for a mentor, it can be hugely rewarding training and aiding a mentee. Passing on one's experience, knowledge and insight is a great way of giving back and can even help personal growth too.

How long should a mentoring relationship last for?

There is no fixed time period for mentoring. Some mentoring programmes and schemes like to implement a fixed-term for them, such as 6 months or a year. However, most mentoring relationships last for anywhere from a few months to a few years, based on an individual's needs, challenges they're facing and how they wish to manage their mentorship. We would recommend aiming, initially, for a 6-month mentoring relationship, as a general guide. However, if you are looking for a mentor to assist you with a specific challenge or aspect to your career development, it is likely that within this there will be a clear time-frame, defined by results (such as overcoming the challenge in question).

Why should someone become a mentor?

Typically, the benefits are seen to be far clearer for the mentee, however, the benefits for a mentor are significant too. Being a mentor is a fantastic way to learn, develop and grow in one's own career. By mentoring someone else, a mentor will typically learn a lot by offering their support to a mentee. Learning about different roles within an organisation, specific challenges an individual may be facing and improving their own interpersonal skills at the same time. Often, mentoring is seen as a great first-step on the management ladder too. Being able to mentor someone can help an individual to learn skills they will similarly require as a manager.

Should I have both a mentor and a manager?

Yes. A mentor and a manager both have very important and separate roles within an organisation. Both a manager and a mentor are there to offer support. However, a manager's primary focus is typically on achieving organisational goals. Therefore they must ensure their advice is aligned with the organisation's vision. Furthermore, a manager typically sets targets and goals for an individual. However, a mentor is focused on the individual's career progression, their own goals and their objectives. Ultimately, both are there to help an individual to flourish within an organisation and longer-term.



How often should I meet with my mentor or mentee?

We would recommend a mentoring meeting once a month, as a general guide. This, however, is ultimately best decided and agreed upon with both a mentor and a mentee, during the introductory meeting, where expectations are set. Some mentoring relationships that go on for longer work best with fewer meetings, whereas mentoring relationships focused on shorter-term goals or challenges might benefit from meeting more frequently.

What is reverse mentoring?

Reverse mentoring is slightly different from traditional mentoring, in that it is often a less-senior individual who is mentoring someone with more experience, in certain aspects of the career that they may not be so experienced at. This could be in a number of ways, such as a junior professional mentoring a senior director of an organisation on certain challenges that may not be realised at a more senior level. Reverse mentoring can also play a big role in diversity and inclusion. Having someone from a minority group, such as an LGBT+ or disabled individual, educating another individual on certain challenges or areas in which may not be educated or insightful otherwise, such as LGBT+ rights internationally or accessibility issues and awareness's.

Why should companies offer mentoring programmes?

Mentoring has been proven, in studies and research from Gallup, Deloitte and several others, to help with employee engagement, employee retention and overall employee upskilling too. By offering mentoring programmes and schemes for employees, you will actively encourage both mentors and mentees to think about their career, their objectives and how they can achieve goals and aims within their role and their wider career journey. What is more, mentoring can help companies and organisations to drastically reduce coaching and training costs, by focusing on sharing knowledge that already exists in-house.

How can PushFar help?

PushFar's mentoring platform is designed to make mentoring programmes and schemes as seamless as possible, with maximum impact and minimal resource required by HR and learning teams to implement. Traditionally managed through excel spreadsheets and with manual processes, PushFar can take care of everything from matching and management, through to reporting and feedback. Our reports give learning teams and organisations full visibility of matches, impact, engagement and much more too. Our platform, across both web and mobile, is branded and customized to your organisation's culture and requirements, with the PushFar team right there to support with mentoring resources, onboarding, training and much more.