

YOUR FIRST SESSION

Feeling excited? Maybe a little nervous?

That's completely normal. Meeting your mentee for the first time can be a mix of emotions, so we've put together a little something to help you feel at ease:

Here are 4 key things to aim for:

- 1 Get to know and trust your mentee
- 2 Clarify what mentoring is/isn't
- 3 Chat about what they'd like to achieve and agree on their goals
- 4 Set some ground rules
- 5 Assess their level of commitment
- 6 End on a high note!

1 Establish trust

Building your mentoring relationship is key. After all, you want your mentee to be able to talk to you and trust you. Here are some good starting points to help you get to know each other:

- Introduce yourself and your work
- Tell them about your workplace, what are the people and the environment like?
- Talk about your past experience and how you've moved up - what were your ambitions when you were in their shoes?

2 Clarify what mentoring is/isn't

It's worthwhile asking the mentee what her understanding of mentoring is, and how she thinks it will help her reach her goals. You'll then be able to manage her expectations from the offset:

Here's a memory jog for you:

A mentor is: a career navigator

A mentor can help explore all possible outcomes with the added power of foresight. They have usually travelled a similar path to the one the mentee is currently on and that experience is a fountain of knowledge for them to tap into. A successful career is often the result of a strategically chosen path at many forks in the road. But so often it can be hard to see what that correct direction really is.

A mentor is: a sounding board

A mentoring session is a safe space to explore the solution to tough challenges. A mentor provides a mentee with the opportunity to test out theories or solutions before executing them in real life.

A mentor is: a confidant

Unlike a boss or coworker, a mentor has no conflicting interests. Your number one priority in this relationship is to see the mentee succeed, which means you should build trust so that your mentee can confide in you about sensitive issues without worrying if it'll come back to bite them from behind.

A mentor is: an advocate

A good mentor will be with the mentee through the highs and the lows. They'll brag for their mentee when they're feeling too humble about their wins. They are on their side.

3 Discuss general goals

Your mentee should have thought carefully before the first session about what her challenges are. They will be thinking big and will need your help to create the stepping stones to the end goal.

Areas to think about:

- What are her interests and potential areas for development?
- What does she hope to achieve?
- How can mentoring help her get there?
- How would she like to see her work-life change as a result of mentoring?
- What's her biggest challenge right now?

Here's a great way to help you set your goals. It's called SMART.

S is for specific

E.g 'By July 2015, I would like to be running my first pitch' (It's important that together you state the intention in a positive way, don't focus on what they do not have/know).

M is for measurable:

Make sure they know how to measure their success. E.g 'I will have been promoted to Associate Creative Director'

A is for attainable:

Make sure they are able to achieve their goal. E.g If they have to rely on someone else leaving the company before they can get the promotion, that's not in their control.

R is for realistic:

Stretch goals are great, but going from a Junior Art Director to Associate CD in 6 months, is probably unrealistic – so help them set goals you know they have the power to achieve.

T is for timely:

Give their goals a time frame, that way you will be able to break them down into steps – meaning they'll have small chunks to break off every week. It will stop them from feeling overwhelmed.

Smart is a great starting point, and once you've agreed on 3 general goals, we suggest you discuss more specific objectives on a regular basis. And, don't forget you can use the WYMM worksheet in the resource centre to help you log their progress.

One last thing! Don't forget to plan how you will celebrate when they hit their goal – this is VERY important!

**Set ground rules**

Sounds a bit heavy, right? But make sure you and your mentee are on the same page. Set clear expectations from the get-go.

Discuss and agree on:

- How will we know it's working?

- Ask your mentor “What are your expectations – of me and the process?”, to make sure you’re on the same page.
- The confidential nature of your conversations
- Methods of communication and how frequent you get in touch, how often you meet and how long for and when you plan to follow up, via email or chats.
- How to communicate, particularly any feedback that may feel uncomfortable.
- How you plan to give constructive feedback and support one another
- How you will measure your progress
- Boundaries, limits to the relationship – no 4 am phone calls for example!

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Assess Commitment

It’s really important that you check how committed your mentee is. Particularly as you’re giving you them your time for free! A really good question to ask is in the first session is:

“On a scale of 1 – 10, how committed are you to this?”

All mentees should be 100% committed, so if they answer less than 10 we advise you tell them that you’re not able to give your time at this moment.

This may seem a little harsh, but you don’t want any time wasters. It doesn’t mean this is the end for them, just suggest they get back in touch with WYMM when they feel 100% ready to commit.

End on a high note

A good practice is to:

- Review the meeting - Have you made a good start? Any questions?
- Confirm when you will next meet/talk/chat
- Agree on your next topic in advance. Choose something engaging that interests you both, such as:
 - How to start writing your career plan
 - Learning from each other's business cultures
- Agree on the agenda and send it prior to the next meeting – this is the Mentee's task!

And remember to have fun! Mentoring relationships should be rewarding for both parties, so relax, open up and most importantly enjoy it – this is going to be great!