



ACCELERATING WOMENS ENTERPRISE MENTORING HANDBOOK

Funded by



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MENTORING PROGRAMME

Programme Overview

AWE aims to address the gender imbalance in enterprise start-up, the gap-in service provision for disadvantaged women, and the lack of capacity and tailored provision in the enterprise support ecosystem in the France Channel England area. Currently unengaged by mainstream support because they are not mainstream Mentees, such women are additionally stigmatised as “hard to reach”.

AWE is being implemented through nine project partner (PP) organisations (5 in UK and 4 in France). Many of the partner’s geographical areas are in the highest levels of multiple deprivation, and characterised by their physical remoteness, poor infrastructure and seasonal economies. Disadvantaged women (including unemployed, low/no educational skills, single mothers) have additional barriers and needs, such as lack of skills and capital, self-esteem and confidence. They need a longer, more intensive and personalised service, which is not provided by mainstream support. AWE will create:

1. New face-to-face skills training in different modules to more deeply address current gaps and the causes of failure, improve accessibility and embed learning.
2. Intensive accelerator sessions will strengthen vital personal support networks and knowledge.
3. A mentor-bank of trained mentors to provide additional ongoing face-to-face support to increase sustainability and future job creation.

Our approach

AWE’s approach to mentoring focuses **on creating mutually beneficial relationships** between mentors and mentees. The mentors’ role is to act as a **critical friend**, balancing **asking questions** with a large amount of **active listening**. The relationship is based on **mutual learning and respect** and hopefully both parties will **be challenged** and changed by the experience.

A mentor's mindset – What to do!

Effective mentoring is a two-way street at AWE we ensure that both parties get some value from the process at the same time of supporting the goals of the project.

An effective mentor creates an open, non-judgemental atmosphere, listens carefully to the presenting challenges of the mentee and then bestows their experience in a way that is engaging and provokes a deeper level of thought and reflection.

The role of the mentor is about guidance and support to help mentees: **find and translate information, understand problems, identify solutions, take action to implement them and reflect on learning from these actions.**

- Each mentoring relationship will be unique and will develop organically over time. Below are some guiding principles, which, from experience, help to engender a constructive relationship.
- Set expectations early on about your commitment and time availability – if this changes take responsibility to inform your mentee.
- Prepare for each meeting with the mentee and remain within the contract agreed
- Engage in effective evaluation and reflection on the mentoring experience
- Enable the mentee to explore options for action and the consequences
- Help and challenge the mentee to find their own answers
- Help the mentee set objectives
- Assist and encourage the mentee to develop, manage and improve their performance
- Give constructive feedback
- Keep confidentiality
- Do what you say you will, be consistent
- Judge the pace required
- Stay positive, be motivated, take it seriously, commit
- Take a non-judgmental appreciation of what the mentee thinks etc.
- Motivate, encourage, but not to the point where there is a false sense of achievement

A mentor's mindset – What NOT to do!

Start for the point of view that you – from your past experience and broader perspective – know better than the mentee what's in their best interest.

1. Be determined to share your wisdom with them – whether they want it or not; remind them frequently how much they still have to learn.
2. Decide what you and the mentee will talk about and when; change dates and themes frequently to prevent complacency sneaking in.

3. Do most of the talking; checking frequently that they are paying attention.
4. Make sure they understand how trivial their concerns are compared to the weighty issues you have to deal with.
5. Remind the mentee how fortunate they are to have your undivided attention.
6. Neither show nor admit any personal weaknesses; expect to be their role model in all aspect of career development and personal values.
7. Never ask them what they should expect of you – how would they know anyway?
8. Demonstrate how important and well connected you are by sharing confidential information they don't need (or want!) to know.
9. Discourage any signs of levity or humour – this is a serious business and should be treated as such.
10. Take them to task when they don't follow your advice.
11. Never, never admit that this could be a learning experience for you too.

Barriers faced - Imposter Syndrome

A significant barrier many women face is Imposter syndrome, it reflects a belief that you're an inadequate and incompetent failure despite any evidence to the contrary. It can also take various forms, depending on a person's background, personality, and circumstances.

Expert on the subject Dr Valerie Young has categorised it into subgroups: the Perfectionist, the Superwoman/man, the Natural Genius, the Soloist, and the Expert.

Through her research, Young uncovered several "competence types"—or internal rules that people who struggle with confidence attempt to follow. This categorisation's often overlooked in the conversation, but her reading of it can be really helpful in identifying bad habits or patterns that may be holding your mentee back from their full potential.

Below is a summary of the competence types Young identifies, it may be helpful to know these profiles if your mentee struggles with Imposter Syndrome:

1. The Perfectionist

Perfectionism and imposter syndrome often go hand-in-hand. Think about it: Perfectionists set excessively high goals for themselves, and when they fail to reach a goal, they experience major self-doubt and worry about measuring up. Whether they realize it or not, this group can also be control freaks, feeling like if they want something done right, they have to do it themselves.

To gauge whether this applies? Ask these questions:

- Have you ever been accused of being a micromanager?
- Do you have great difficulty delegating? Even when you're able to do so, do you feel frustrated and disappointed in the results?
- When you miss the (insanely high) mark on something, do you accuse yourself of "not being cut out" for your job and ruminate on it for days?

- Do you feel like your work must be 100% perfect, 100% of the time?

For this type, success is rarely satisfying because they believe they could've done even better. But that's neither productive nor healthy. Owning and celebrating achievements is essential if you want to avoid burnout, find contentment, and cultivate self-confidence.

Learn to take your mistakes in stride, viewing them as a natural part of the process. In addition, push yourself to act before you're ready. Force yourself to start the project you've been planning for months. Truth is, there will never be the "perfect time" and your work will never be 100% flawless. The sooner you're able to accept that, the better off you'll be.

2. The Superwoman/man

Since people who experience this phenomenon are convinced they're phonies amongst real-deal colleagues, they often push themselves to work harder and harder to measure up. But this is just a false cover-up for their insecurities, and the work overload may harm not only their own mental health, but also their relationships with others.

Not sure if this applies?

- Do you stay later at the office than the rest of your team, even past the point that you've completed that day's necessary work?
- Do you get stressed when you're not working and find downtime completely wasteful?
- Have you left your hobbies and passions fall by the wayside, sacrificed to work?
- Do you feel like you haven't truly earned your title (despite numerous degrees and achievements), so you feel pressed to work harder and longer than those around you to prove your worth?

Imposter workaholics are actually addicted to the validation that comes from working, not to the work itself. Start training yourself to veer away from external validation. No one should have more power to make you feel good about yourself than you—even your boss when they give your project the stamp of approval. On the flip side, learn to take constructive criticism seriously, not personally.

As you become more attuned to internal validation and able to nurture your inner confidence that states you're competent and skilled, you'll be able to ease off the gas as you gauge how much work is reasonable.

3. The Natural Genius

Young says people with this competence type believe they need to be a natural "genius." As such, they judge their competence based ease and speed as opposed to their efforts. In other words, if they take a long time to master something, they feel shame.

These types of imposters set their internal bar impossibly high, just like perfectionists. But natural genius types don't just judge themselves based on ridiculous expectations, they also judge themselves based on getting things right on the first try. When they're not able to do something quickly or fluently, their alarm sounds.

Not sure if this applies?

- Are you used to excelling without much effort?
- Do you have a track record of getting “straight A’s” or “gold stars” in everything you do?
- Were you told frequently as a child that you were the “smart one” in your family or peer group?
- Do you dislike the idea of having a mentor, because you can handle things on your own?
- When you’re faced with a setback, does your confidence tumble because not performing well provokes a feeling of shame?
- Do you often avoid challenges because it’s so uncomfortable to try something you’re not great at?

To move past this, try seeing yourself as a work in progress. Accomplishing great things involves lifelong learning and skill-building—for everyone, even the most confident people. Rather than beating yourself up when you don’t reach your impossibly high standards, identify specific, changeable behaviours that you can improve over time.

For example, if you want to have more impact at the office, it’s much more productive to focus on honing your presentation skills than swearing off speaking up in meetings as something you’re “just not good at.”

4. The Soloist

Sufferers who feel as though asking for help reveals their phoniness are what Young calls Soloists. It’s OK to be independent, but not to the extent that you refuse assistance so that you can prove your worth.

Not sure if this applies to you? Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you firmly feel that you need to accomplish things on your own?
- “I don’t need anyone’s help.” Does that sound like you?
- Do you frame requests in terms of the requirements of the project, rather than your needs as a person?

5. The Expert

Experts measure their competence based on “what” and “how much” they know or can do. Believing they will never know enough, they fear being exposed as inexperienced or unknowledgeable.

- Do you shy away from applying to job postings unless you meet every single educational requirement?
- Are you constantly seeking out trainings or certifications because you think you need to improve your skills in order to succeed?
- Even if you’ve been in your role for some time, can you relate to feeling like you still don’t know “enough?”
- Do you shudder when someone says you’re an expert?

It's true that there's always more to learn. Striving to bulk up your skill set can certainly help you make strides professionally and keep you competitive in the job market. But taken too far, the tendency to endlessly seek out more information can actually be a form of procrastination.

Start practicing just-in-time learning. This means acquiring a skill when you need it—for example, if your responsibilities change—rather than hoarding knowledge for (false) comfort.

Realise there's no shame in asking for help when you need it. If you don't know how to do something, ask a co-worker. If you can't figure out how to solve a problem, seek advice from a supportive supervisor, or mentor. Mentoring junior colleagues or volunteering can be a great way to discover your inner expert. When you share what you know it not only benefits others, but also helps you heal your fraudulent feelings.

No matter the specific profile, if your mentee struggle with confidence, they are far from alone.

If you've experienced it at any point in your career, you've at one point or another chalked up your accomplishments to chance, charm, connections, or another external factor. How unfair and unkind is that? Making your mentee aware of imposter syndrome could be a could step towards them starting to accept and embrace their capabilities.

Dr Young has given the following tips for helping to overcome Imposter Syndrome.

Break the silence

Shame keeps a lot of people from 'fessing up' about their anxious feelings. Knowing there's a name for these feelings (Imposter Syndrome) and that you are not alone, can be tremendously freeing.

Separate feeling from fact.

There are times you'll feel stupid. It happens to everyone from time to time. Realise that just because you may feel stupid doesn't mean that you are.

Recognise when feeling like an outsider is ok.

If you're one of the first or the few women or a minority in your field, it's only natural you'd sometimes feel like you don't totally fit in. Instead of taking your self doubt as a sign of your ineptness, recognise that it might be a normal response to being and outsider.

Accentuate the positive.

Perfectionism can indicate a healthy drive to excel. The trick is to not obsess over everything being just so. Do a great job when it matters most, without preserving over routine tasks. Forgive yourself when the inevitable mistake happens.

Develop a new response to failure and mistake making.

Henry Ford once said, 'Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently,' Instead of beating yourself up for being human and blowing the big project, glean the learning value from the mistake and move on.

Right the rules.

If you've been operating under misguided rules like, 'I should always know the answer,' or 'Never ask for help' start asserting your rights. Recognise that you have just as much right as the next person to be wrong, have an off day, or ask for help.

Develop a new script.

Your script is that automatic mental tapes that starts playing in situations that trigger your Imposter feelings. When you start a new project instead of thinking for example, "Wait till they find out I have no idea what I'm doing,' try thinking, 'Everyone who starts something new feels off base in the beginning. I may not know all the answers but I'm smart enough to find them out.'

Visualise success.

Do what professions athletes do. Spend time picturing yourself making a success of what you are doing. It is better than picturing impending disaster and will help with work related stress.

Reward yourself.

Break the cycle of continually seeking validation and then dismissing validation outside of yourself, by learning to pat yourself on the back.

Fake it til you make it.

Now and then we all have to fly by the seat of our pants. Instead of considering 'winging it' as proof of you ineptness, learn to do what many high achievers do and view it as a skill. The point of the worn out phrase, fake it til you make it, still stands, Don't wait until you feel confident to start putting yourself out there. Courage comes from taking risks. Change your behaviour first and allow your confidence to build.

Copyright Dr. Valerie Young

Create a Frame of Reference

We recommend that the first meeting should be face-to-face at a location that is mutually convenient to both you both, however, subsequent meetings can be via phone or virtual if necessary. The first meeting is a great way to frame the mentoring relationship and set your expectations. Be clear with each other about the amount of time you have to give to the mentoring programme and make a commitment to scheduling in mentoring meetings.

"a frame of reference is a complex set of assumptions and attitudes which we use to filter perceptions to create meaning. The frame can include beliefs, schemas, preferences, values, culture and other ways in which we bias our understanding and judgement"

Tversky and Kahneman (1981) define a decision frame as 'the decision-maker's conception of the act, outcomes and contingencies associated with a particular choice.'

Engaging people in a message is much more than telling or sharing. People will have a range of differing needs in how they receive and process your message. Respect this and you can make your message clear and psychologically compelling.

The following method uses the understanding that people think at differing logical levels of detail:

ABSTRACT – BIG PICTURE



DETAIL FOCUSED

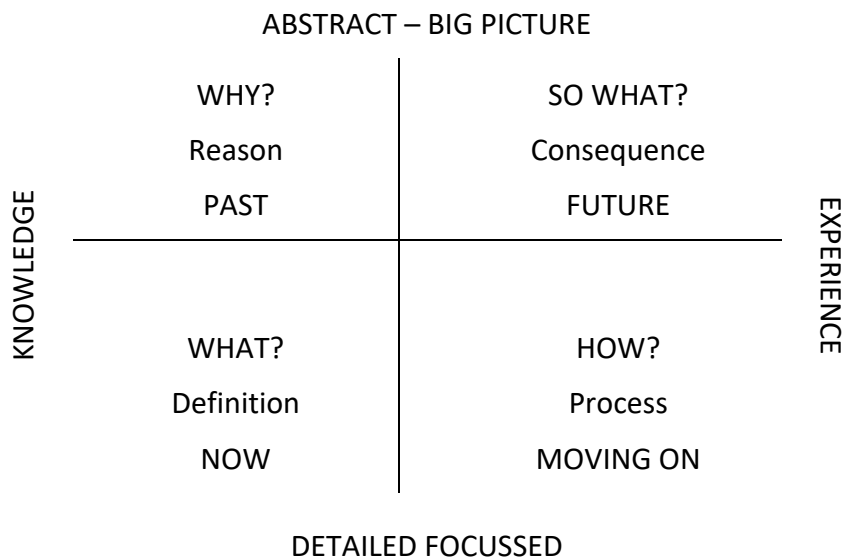
And people have a tendency to learn and absorb information in different ways:



KNOWLEDGE

EXPERIENCE

By asking yourself the following questions you will ensure that you are addressing these dynamics and creating engaging and coherent narratives:



Using this method can help:

- Structure a message at a moments notice so that it is received positively by your audience
- Convince someone of the importance of the feedback you are conveying to them
- Bring to life any message in a compelling way

For the purpose of framing your mentor relationship you might ask the following questions of each other:

Why? Why you took this role on? What led you here?

What? What can you provide? What type of contact will you have? What is your availability?

How? How will you do this?

So what? What will be the outcome? What would you both like to happen as a result? What does the mentee hope to achieve? What do you want to learn?

It is important that when you frame the relationship, that you discuss the end of the mentoring relationship, so the mentee is fully aware of how and when the relationship will finish. Whether this is done by a fixed duration, achieving a specific goal etc., this will be unique to each pairing.

Tools – Using Questions

“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.”

Albert Einstein

The usefulness of the knowledge we acquire and the effectiveness of the actions we take depend on the quality of the questions we ask. Questions open the door to dialogue and discovery. They are an invitation to creativity and breakthrough thinking.

You will all have ways of asking questions and there are many methods and tools you can use. One way to add perspective is to get people to perceive it at a different level of detail. Below is a description of a method called Chunking.

Most psychometrics include a measure of your tendency to think in abstract, big picture ways, or to pay attention to detail. Using the technique of asking questions that ‘chunk’ your thinking either up into the abstract or down into the detail can help when you want to:

- Find out what is driving someone’s motivations and make conversations relevant to them
- Work together to agree specific actions
- Find out what is important to someone so you can understand them

Chunking up – Intentions and drivers

Moves the conversation to a more abstract perspective. Abstract conversations are more agreeable and can be used to become clear about intentions, motives and personal values. When you ask a chunking up question, the listener’s attention will move to a more abstract perspective in order to answer it.

Chunking down – Actions, facts, specifics

Provides you with specifics. Detailed conversations get to the nub of it – the specific factors and actions. When you ask a chunking down question, the listener’s attention will move to a more detailed perspective in order to answer it

Questioning

The purpose of questions is to draw out information and to gain clarity. It is important that your mentee doesn't feel interrogated or that they are being judged. If they feel that they have to justify themselves, they may block communication which could prevent them considering alternatives.

10 tips to better questioning

1. Rephrase questions to avoid beginning with a 'why'
2. Ask one question at a time
3. Wait for an answer
4. Ask questions that prompt deep thinking
5. Seek to promote insight
6. Ask about, and listen for feelings as well as facts
7. Respond to non-verbal communication with feedback
8. Use non-verbal communication to keep questions from sounding interrogative
9. Move from the general to specific
10. Challenge assumptions and generalisations

Other useful questions you could ask your mentee:

- What is most important to you in your work?
- Which are the skills you are best at and enjoy the most?
- What are your business/enterprise goals?
- What potential constraints must you take into account when planning your business/enterprise?
- What changes are you likely to need to deal with in the near future?
- What results would you like to achieve, that you are not achieving now?
- What new skills do you want to develop?
- What knowledge or information do you need to acquire in the near future?
- What is unique about your business/enterprise?
- What does success look like to you?
- What do you want to be different about your work in 12 months?
- What do you want to achieve in 5 years' time?
- How will you know you have made progress?
- What would make the biggest difference in meeting your goals?
- What obstacles are you facing?
- What specific help from your mentor would be most useful?

Probing questions – getting the mentee to talk more openly:

- Can you say a little more about
- Would you expand on that idea a little more.....
- Perhaps you could tell me.....

Cushions – softening a confronting question:

- Do you mind if I ask....
- I'm wondering....
- Would you like to talk more about....

Tools - Goal setting and action planning

Goal setting and action planning is a great way to start with your mentee and it will help keep them on track:

- Find out where your mentee needs support
- Set goals that they can work on
- See how you're doing
- Keep an eye on your goals and pat each other on the back for your successes

Don't forget, useful goals are SMART:

- Specific –** so rather than just 'get a website' it could be 'choose a suitable domain name for my business' or 'source three quotes for a web design'
- Measurable –** decide how you'll know when you've done it
- Achievable –** is it a long or short term goal and you can do it?
- Realistic –** do you think you have a real prospect of reaching your goal?
- Timed –** look at different timescales for your goals – you won't be able to get everything done at once?

Here's a blank action plan template that could be used with a mentee:

Goal Setting and Action Planning

| Goal to be achieved | What actions will I take and in what sequence? | What resources do I need to achieve these actions? | When does this need to be achieved by? | How will I monitor my progress to make sure I achieve my goal? |
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SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis is a useful technique for understanding Strengths and Weaknesses, and for identifying both the Opportunities open to you and the Threats you face.

Used in a business context, a SWOT Analysis helps you carve a sustainable niche in your market. Used in a personal context, it helps you develop your career in a way that takes best advantage of your talents, abilities and opportunities.

What makes SWOT particularly powerful is that, with a little thought, it can help you uncover opportunities that you are well placed to exploit and by understanding the weaknesses of your business, you can manage and eliminate threats that would otherwise catch you unawares.

More than this, by looking at yourself and your competitors using the SWOT framework, you can start to craft a strategy that helps you distinguish yourself from your competitors, so that you can compete successfully in your market.

How to Use SWOT Analysis

Originated by Albert S Humphrey in the 1960s, SWOT Analysis is as useful now as it was then. You can use it in two ways – as a simple icebreaker helping people get together to “kick off” strategy formulation, or in a more sophisticated way as a serious strategy tool.

To help you to carry out a SWOT Analysis, using the SWOT matrix provided, write down answers to the following questions.

Strengths

- What advantages does your business have over competitors?
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What unique or lowest-cost resources can you draw upon that others can't?
- What do people in your market see as your strengths?
- What factors mean that you “get the scale”?
- What is your organisation's Unique Selling Proposition (USP)?

Consider your strengths from both an internal perspective, and from the point of view of your customers and people in your market.

You should also be realistic! Also, if you're having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of the characteristics of your business. Some of these will hopefully be strengths.

When looking at your strengths, think about them in relation to your competitors. For example, if all of your competitors provide high quality products, then a high quality production process is not a strength in your business market, it's a necessity.

Weaknesses

- What could you improve?

- What should you avoid?
- What are people in your market likely to see as weaknesses?
- What factors lose you sales?

Again, consider this from an internal and external basis: Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you don't see? Are your competitors doing any better than you? It's best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities

- What good opportunities can you spot?
- What interesting trends are you aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale.
- Changes in government policy related to your field.
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, and so on.
- Local events.

Threats

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are your competitors doing?
- Are quality standards or specifications for your job, products or services changing?
- Is changing technology threatening your position?
- Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your business?

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

What do you do well?
What unique resources can you draw on?
What do others see as your strengths?

Weaknesses

What could you improve?
Where do you have fewer resources than others?
What are others likely to see as your weaknesses?

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Opportunities

What opportunities are open to you?
What trends could you take advantage of?
Can you turn your strengths into opportunities?

Threats

What threats could harm your business?
What is your competition doing?
What threats do your weaknesses expose?

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G Star Model

A particularly useful technique in mentoring is the G-STAR model of questioning. This model should be used as a process of questions around a particular issue with your mentee and can often be a fast track to the real answers your mentee is looking for.

For each point ask specific questions:

G

What are the Goals of your mentee?

What are your goals for today's discussion?
What will give you the most value from today's session?
Do you have control over this issue?
When do you need to achieve this goal by?

S

What Situation are they facing?

How do you feel about the situation?
How can you describe the situation?
What do you know about the current situation?
What do you not know about the current situation?

T

What is their Thinking at this time?

What options have you considered about the situation?
What underlying assumptions are you making?
Think how others would solve this problem?
Think about how you will measure your success?

A

What Actions are they considering?

What do you need to do first?
By when do you need to have this done?
What sequence will you do these tasks?
Can you think of anything that may disrupt your actions?

R

What Results do they expect?

Are the results realistic?
Have you considered other outcomes?
What contingencies can you put in place?
What are the consequences of not achieving these results?

Road Maps

To help your mentee see how some of their goals link into the overall vision of their business the Road Map model can be used. This is where they think about different areas of their business on the Road Map . Then picking on 3-4 Short Terms goals and break these down further on the next sheet (one for each Goal). This will help them focus on some of the core areas of their business and can be reviewed with the client at the next mentoring session.

Road Maps



Short Term Goal

Tools – Platforms/Software for Virtual Meetings

Get familiar with the platform you're using

Every platform is different. What you see as the meeting host and what others see can be different. Familiarise yourself with the basic controls for how to set up and adjust audio, turn on and off the video, use the chat facility and screen share.



Take the tours – watch the intro videos provided, and if possible have a few practice sessions with colleagues. You'll get to know where the controls are on both sides so you can help others when things go awry.

Be aware there can be differences between devices and where to access controls. The screen and controls for a PC can be different to the screen on a Mac. Tablets and phones are different again.

First session tour

Be prepared to do a quick tour of the platform. Show each other where the main controls are and any features that might be valuable such as how to hide yourself so you don't see yourself on screen (important so people don't feel self-conscious which might impact their openness).

Let each other know what to do if the host loses connection.

Some platforms will end the session if the host connection is lost. You will both need to re-connect. With others the meeting will continue without you and you can re-join. Know which you are on so you can let each other know.

Be contactable

Technology can and does fail occasionally. Be prepared. Sometimes the problem is the platform itself, other times it's the internet connection and even power cuts and devices running out of charge!

Either before or in your first session make sure you have each other's phone numbers so you can call or message in case of difficulties.

Building Rapport

In face to face and in some virtual interactions a lot of the meaning we take from communication comes from body language, so creating and maintaining rapport with people is essential when you want to have influence.

We tend to fixate our attention on the explicit content of the communication 'what was said' and ignore the fact that the same sentence can have two completely different meanings as a result of 'how it is said'.

Physiological rapport can help when you want to...

- Build relationships with new people more quickly
- Deliver messages with congruence
- Sense when what someone is saying might not be what they are really thinking
- Create a non-defensive atmosphere

In natural interactions that are comfortable and agreeable, body language tends to be 'matched'. Mismatched body language makes the conversation a little more difficult.

Follow their lead and match the general body language.

Working with physiological rapport can:

- make a difference by creating an interpersonal dynamic that promotes engagement;

- detect resistance or disagreement and be responsive to any power imbalances;
- create comfortable interpersonal dynamics to enrich your relationship.

The three methods described above were developed by an organisation called ‘Noggin’ (<http://www.mynoggin.co.uk/>) and are used with their kind permission.

Body Language

Noting body language can be extremely beneficial in mentoring. Below are some signs and signals and what they could be telling us.

The Head

To agree with someone we move our head up and down, to disagree we shake our head from side to side. However in some cultures it’s the other way around. Tossing the head backwards, rather like a restless horse, can indicate boredom or restlessness or frank disagreement.

When someone puts the palm of their hand up to support the side of their face (often round a table, with the elbow on the table) – this could be a sign of extreme boredom.

Chin holding – usually associated with decision-making.

The Eyes

When we meet someone we like, or would like to know, we give an eyebrow flash. This is a slight, unconscious rising of the eyebrows. It happens very quickly and we are not conscious of doing it or seeing it in others. However, subconsciously we know it when we see it – or don’t! Good eye contact is a must! To look someone straight in the eye is an indication of trustworthiness. Be relaxed about it. It gets a bit worrying if someone won’t stop looking at you!! Looking up and to the side when having a conversation often indicates searching for an answer. Pupils dilate when we are attracted to someone.

The Hair

People who stroke and touch their hair are often seeking reassurance. It may be an unconscious reminder of the way in which a consoling parent smooths a child’s head.

Hair twiddling is also a sign of assurance.

Hair flicking or ‘tossing’ is also a way of flirting – you are baring your neck which, shows vulnerability and therefore trust.

The Mouth

A person may place their hand over their mouth when they are speaking of something painful or distasteful or maybe they are lying – it could also mean that they are speaking with their mouth full!! Also if they don’t really want to be heard, or feel what they say has little importance.

A smile only takes a second, but it gives the message that says we are a happy, confident, friendly, relaxed person and easy to get on with, also a positive attitude towards life and towards other people. It can also give the impression that we are entirely open and honest and have nothing to hide. However, if you want to know if someone is faking it, pay attention to the lines/muscles

around the eyes. They will rise and crinkle if the smile is genuine – also real smiles tend to come and go quickly.

Mentoring Styles

Research suggests there are six broad styles of mentoring that people may use. While a mentoring relationship might make use of all six styles at various times, individuals often have a fall-back or natural preference towards one or a few styles over others. It is useful to have an awareness of both of your natural mentoring style. However, you may draw on some or all of the styles on different occasions throughout your mentoring relationship.

Here is a description of the different mentoring styles:

Creating a Compelling Future

Creating a compelling future is about helping to set a clear vision for what could be achieved that is both relevant and motivating. As well as helping to create new ideas, this could also be about helping a mentee to focus and prioritise if they have too many ideas so they arrive at a realistic vision for what can be achieved that still motivates a mentee to pursue. Creating a compelling future is about establishing a vision and helping a mentee to decide what success looks like.

Providing an Appropriate Role Model

A mentee may well identify their mentor as someone they look up to for a number of reasons. Rather than give advice, some mentors may selectively share some of their experiences to similar challenges they have experienced in the past (while acknowledging that a similar challenge may have different answers for different people). Equally, through behaving in a given way, a mentor may role model

what being effective looks like to help mentees determine the new behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that will help them to make their enterprise a success. A mentor may not use themselves as the role model but may encourage the mentee to consider who else is great at the skills a mentee wants to improve on and helping them to unpick what about these people allows them to perform effectively. Providing an appropriate role model is about demonstrating effective behaviours through doing and through understanding how others achieve great performance.

High Performance Expectations

It may be that by setting high expectations and encouraging a mentee to push themselves further, a mentor can help to enhance a mentees performance and challenge them to achieve new levels of performance. Likewise, if performance expectations feel unrealistically high, mentees may feel discouraged and demotivated. Expectations of high performance might be about helping a mentee to always ask how their performance could be even better and showing belief that the mentee is capable of achieving even better levels of performance or taking their idea even further or working even harder

Individualised Support

Some mentees might enjoy the aspect of their relationship which gives them time focussed on themselves and their needs. Individualising support means mentors adapt their approach to the individual in front of them and ensure that the work is focussed on what is meaningful for the

mentee. This might be about giving space for the mentee to discuss other areas of their life and how this is impacting their working life and might also be about providing a non-judgemental space for mentees to work through their challenges in a supportive environment. This kind of mentoring would usually encourage a mentee to express how they think and feel, building the relationship from this rather than the norm or what one might typically expect as it's about the individual mentee and their needs.

Intellectual Stimulation

Some mentors may enjoy encouraging mentees to be creative and share new ideas, models and concepts as a way of supporting the mentee. This style of relationship will often focus on new possibilities, ideas and concepts that are different or could change the way a mentee thinks about a problem. It will also often help the mentee to refine their ideas of what approaches are effective and to consider critically what approaches are based in evidence. A mentor may play devil's advocate and invite mentees to explain and explore their rationale for thinking about a challenge in the way they do. These relationships will invite reflection and provide food for thought or can be frustrating for people who are very keen to get on and do.

Directive Leadership

Directive leadership is about providing direction, often in the form of instructions or to tackle a specific challenge the mentee is having. Broadly speaking, we try to encourage mentors to steer clear of being directive in their approach as we find this works best when mentoring relationship is focussed on a specific skill area or subject matter expertise where the mentor has more experience than the mentee. Being overly directive could undermine some entrepreneurs ability to find their own answers to challenges and suggest a power imbalance in the relationship (i.e. that the mentor believes they know enough about the mentees situation to identify answers to their challenges). However, some mentees may be more comfortable with this kind of relationship, particularly when feeling overwhelmed or less confident about how they will meet their current challenges.

Managing the Relationship

Mentoring meetings meeting structure

A typical mentoring conversation may follow the following structure:

- Establish rapport
- Opening questions/statement
- Opening questions/statements
- Reflective questioning for clarification
- Summarising
- Suggestions for next steps
- Options exploration
- Action Planning

Get the group to make suggestions for each element on write on the board.

Managing the phases of the relationship

The phases of the mentoring relationship may include the following:

Initiation

Initial contact

Time to define the relationship Rapport building is key element

Development

Focus on goals and tasks

Care needs to be taken to avoid over-dependence Mentor helps mentee discover options

Maturity

Mentee becomes autonomous Mentor becomes less influential Development has peaked

Disengagement

Need for relationship is less evident

Can be sad/happy time as partners realise relationship is coming to an end Acknowledgement of end is useful as transition may not be easy

Redefinition

Need for the relationship to be redefined

Potential issues areas

One of the potential issues with a close dynamic, is that a positive working chemistry could be misunderstood as a more intimate relationship/friendship. This can be a tricky situation for mentors to manage. Especially when things are going well. Care must be taken to ensure that the mentee knows that THEY are the ones bringing positive change and that the mentor has just enabled it. Maintaining profession boundaries is the key to the success of a mentoring dynamic. There-fore the mentor may find it helpful to refresh the boundaries of the relationship that were discussed at the beginning.

It is also possible for a mentee to get emotional during your meetings and potentially cry. If this happens, it is best to call the meeting to a pause and allow the mentee to take a few minutes to compose themselves. Mentoring can unleash some strong emotions, so being prepared by having some tissues is a good idea, but it is important to maintain the professional setting, acknowledge the distress and deal with the situation by giving control of it to the mentee to come back when they are ready.

Closing down a mentoring relationship can be difficult. If you believe your mentee no longer need your input, it is best to be open and honest about how you see the situation. If they still feel that they would benefit from mentoring, discuss helping them find a new mentor. It is far better to end and celebrate the relationship on a positive note. You can always stay in touch professionally with your mentee, if they would like to do so, and follow their continuing progress and success.

SOME OTHER HINTS & TIPS FOR MENTORING

DO

Listen and seek to understand what drives the entrepreneur you are supporting. Ask questions and challenge where appropriate.

Help your mentee to reflect on issues and come to their own conclusions.

Celebrate your differences Understand that you and your mentee may have different approaches to the way you work.

Be led by your mentee It may be clear to you what 'the problem' is. However, your mentee may want to focus on a different matter. A key part of the mentoring relationship is building trust – sometimes it can take months to reach a point where your mentee is ready to discuss certain issues. Give it time.

Share your networks with your entrepreneur if appropriate.

Say 'I don't know' if you don't have the answer.

Know your support is making a difference Ask your mentee if the process is working, have a clear conversation about the way forward even if you don't see tangible results you can still be making a huge difference to mentee's confidence and ability to work through issues.

Give and receive honest feedback Ask how you are helping and what is most useful and review how you can improve the mentoring relationship.

Stay connected to us and let us know sooner rather than later if there's a problem or if you have any concerns.

DON'T

Get involved in operational issues For example if your mentee asks you to help them draft a section of their business plan, prepare a cash flow statement or sit on their board/advisory group, you should decline. You may, however, agree to read a business plan once drafted and ask questions to help your mentee make sure that the information within the plan is clear.

Be a counsellor Please contact the team if you feel that the mentoring relationship has strayed beyond the boundaries of mentoring to addressing personal issues.

Be afraid to say no if your mentee is asking for something that is outside of your remit as a mentor. If you're not sure ask for help.

Take ownership Be careful not to take ownership of the mentee's issues – they should not expect you to solve their problems – you are helping them to do this themselves.

Give up if the relationship loses momentum Talk to your mentee; find out why it's not working. Speak to us sooner rather than later if you feel that the relationship isn't working.

Ending a mentoring relationship

If an agreed time period for the relationship has come to an end or you think the time has come for the mentorship to end, tell your mentee. If you are unsure whether the mentorship should continue, discuss the question with the Mentoring Coordinator.

It is important to discuss from the beginning how you will end the relationship. There can be a variety of reason for ending the relationship:

- The relationship has fulfilled its purpose. Most mentoring relationships are started to help the mentee achieve a particular goal and once this has been achieved another mentor might be more appropriate
- The mentor and mentee do not really getting on.
- A change of priorities or commitments.

To avoid awkwardness at the end discuss at the beginning how you will end the relationship, e.g. how will one let the other know that they think it is time to end the mentoring relationship.

At the end of the mentoring relationship, look back over the time and discuss what went well and what you might do differently another time. Comment constructively on each other's handling of the role and complete the Mentoring Feedback forms. Please make sure to send completed feedback forms to the Mentoring Coordinator.