



A MANAGER'S GUIDE
TO SUPPORTING
MENTORING

LEGACY
TALENT DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is about helping employees grow by developing skills, knowledge, connections, and mindsets to achieve professional goals. Mentoring can take both formal or informal approaches.

Informal mentoring is unstructured. The terms "mentor" or "mentee" may not be used. It often occurs naturally between two individuals who work together. Over time, one person offers professional guidance to the other.

Formal (or structured) mentoring is more intentional, with clear objectives. These partnerships are supported by a program coordinator within your company and include defined development goals, expectations, learning activities, and a set time frame.

Workplace mentoring benefits everyone. Mentees grow their skills and confidence, expand their networks, and gain new opportunities. Mentors experience fulfillment, learn from their mentees, gain recognition as developers of talent, give back to the mentors who helped them, and gain fresh career insights. Companies also benefit through improved employee satisfaction, effective knowledge transfer, and stronger collaboration across departments.



MENTORING VS. MANAGING



The best managers often serve as mentors, helping their employees grow and develop. However, there are important distinctions between the roles of a manager and a mentor.

As a manager, your primary responsibility is the success of the organization. Like many effective managers, you stay focused on daily tasks, with your employees' development often taking second priority. You also conduct performance evaluations and, even if you maintain positive relationships with your team, you're seen as an evaluator. At times, you may need to discipline, issue warnings, or even terminate employees.

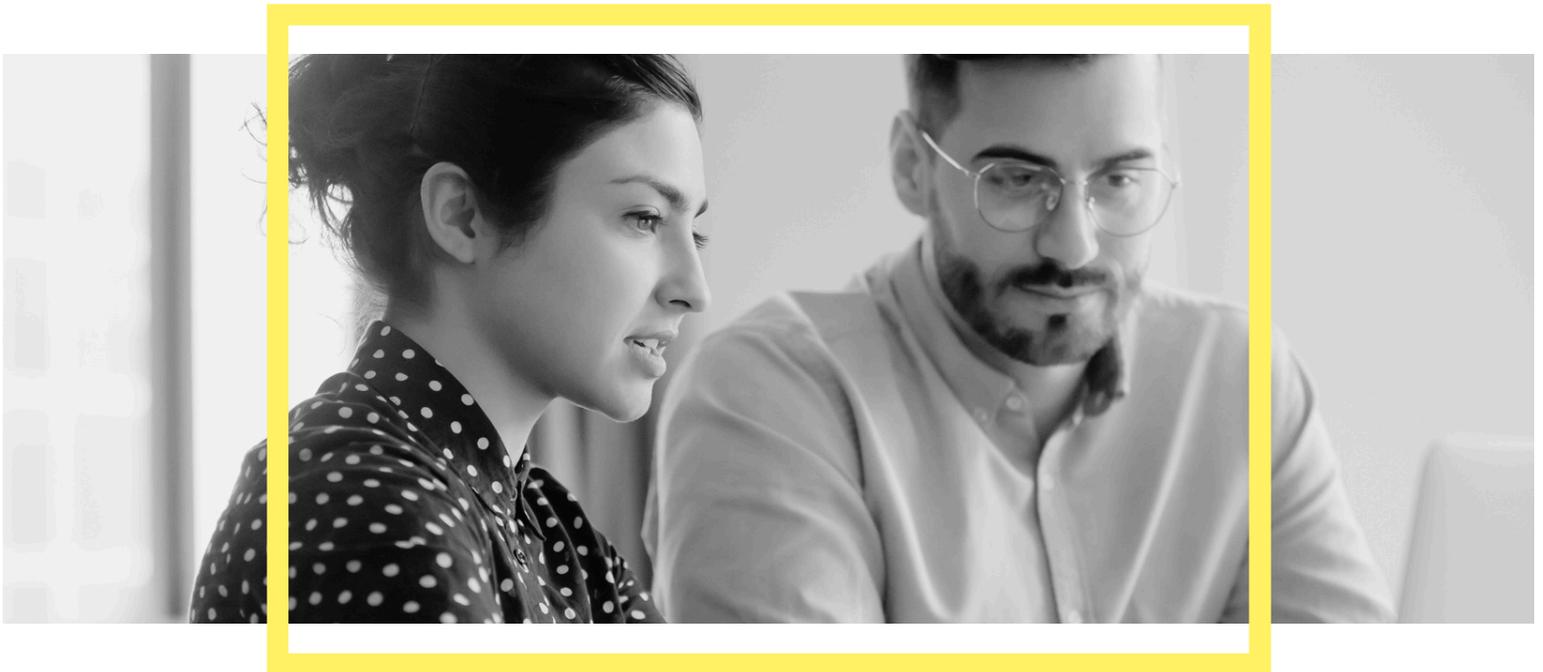
A mentor's primary focus is employee development.

While your team members seek guidance from you, they also need a confidential, non-evaluative relationship with a mentor outside of the direct reporting structure. The good news is, you can excel as a manager while supporting your employees in a mentoring program!

3 WAYS TO SUPPORT MENTORING

1 Embrace mentoring by weaving it into your everyday leadership approach.

- **Listen Actively:** Be fully present with your direct reports. Pay attention to not only to what they say but also to the underlying meanings and emotions in their words.
- **Build Trust:** Take time to really get to know your employees. Share information freely, delegate responsibilities as appropriate and gradually offer more significant opportunities as they demonstrate their reliability.
- **Encourage:** Provide sincere praise and recognition to boost your employees' confidence. Highlight their achievements, express gratitude, and convey your belief in their future success.
- **Develop Capabilities:** Support employees in expanding their knowledge and skills. Teach them by explaining concepts, providing examples, and asking insightful questions.
- **Open Doors:** Connect employees with others in your network. When appropriate, assign projects/responsibilities that allow them to gain visibility.



3 WAYS TO SUPPORT MENTORING



2

Become a Mentor!

You may have the option to serve as a mentor in a future mentoring program. Say yes! After all, you've already informally guided other individuals successfully.

However, the question arises: should you, as a manager, serve as a direct mentor to your employees? The answer is: rarely.

If you plan to transition from your current role, you may be preparing for your eventual successor. The succession planning process requires identifying selection criteria and potential candidates for your position. Once the top candidate is selected, you may then act as a mentor to them.

Beyond this situation, it's generally advisable *not* to take on the role of a formal mentor for your employees. Remember that a formal mentor does not evaluate, judge, discipline, or conduct performance reviews. You can use mentoring skills with your employees and encourage their engagement with other mentors, but it's best to avoid having a structured mentoring relationship with those who report directly to you.

3 WAYS TO SUPPORT MENTORING

3 Support Employees in the Mentoring Program

As a manager committed to your employees' development, you can:

- **Promote Mentoring:** Share your own experiences with mentorship and emphasize the importance of mentoring as part of your company culture.
- **Allow Time & Resources:** Support the success of your employee's mentoring relationship by allowing them time away from work to meet with their mentoring partner. When appropriate, allocate resources to help them achieve their learning goals.
- **Recognize Mentors:** Acknowledge and celebrate employees who mentor others. They are the talent developers inside your company!

Discuss these with employee(s) participating in your workplace mentoring program and let them guide your involvement.

