

*"CWITA was a good opportunity that brought to light a lot the different companies in the area who are looking for people to hire. I never realized the number of different companies in the area that were looking for more people."*

*CWITA Mentee*

*"I felt very special being at the CWITA event. The best part was how all of the CEOs, leaders, and bosses made all of the students feel equal as leaders. You can't put a word on the feeling that gave me! I truly had an amazing time."*

*CWITA Mentee*

# A Guidebook for the Mentoring Journey: A Practical Guide for Mentees

## Three Step Mentee Protocol

### Step 1: Prior to the initial meeting

- Obtain and review each other's information statement or bio.
- Identify your three most important development needs.
- Identify critical success factors and key barriers to success.
- Formulate SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely.

### Step 2: During the first meeting

- Get to know each other
- Share your mentoring goals and jointly finalize them
- Agree on the ground rules for your relationship
  - How often you will meet
  - Types of meetings (face-to-face, telephone, email, etc.)
- Boundaries – what is appropriate and what is not (i.e. Is it OK to call the mentor at home? Evenings? Weekends?)

### Step 3: Manage the relationship

- Communicate effectively
- Send an agenda to your mentor a couple of days before meeting
- Give and receive feedback
- Send an email summarizing meetings within 7 days
- Follow through on any action items
- Stay on track towards your mentoring goals

## Preparation for the first meeting

### Goals and Objectives

Reflect on your plans for your career, personal vision, and goals, as well as your goals for the mentoring relationship. Then start thinking smaller, in terms of what you'd like to accomplish within the confines of the CWITA Mentorship Program.

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than general goals. To set a specific goal, try to answer the Who, What, When, Where and Why. For example,





a general goal might be "Learn more about how to start a management consulting firm," whereas a specific goal would be "Meet with two successful entrepreneurs in the consulting industry to understand what I need to do."

Establish criteria, or indicators, for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. How will you know when you've met your goal? Be open to change. As you learn from your mentor, you may find your goals changing; this will be an opportunity to discuss your new thinking with your mentor.

Most importantly, your goals should be things you feel passionately about, so you should **WRITE THEM DOWN** and present them to your mentor during your initial face-to-face meeting.

Keep in mind that although many of your goals will be work-related, you should also think in terms of non-work related goals, such as increasing your confidence in your public speaking skills; learning how to write compelling emails; building a network; how to have better time management; or how to balance studying, working and individual time.

## **What do you want from mentoring?**

It is useful to determine why you want a mentor, what you expect from the relationship, how you think it might operate and what the outcomes might be for you as a result of mentoring. These are things that need to be negotiated with your mentor at the first meeting.

- **WHY:** Why do I want a mentor? List the benefits you hope to gain and your main interest in having a mentor.
- **WHAT:** List your expectations. What do you want/not want to happen in the mentoring relationship?
- **HOW:** How will the relationship operate? How will you communicate? How often? How will I know if the relationship is working?
- **WHAT ELSE:** What concerns do you have about mentoring? Are there additional possibilities that may occur as a result of the mentoring?

## **Suggested topics to discuss with your mentor**

### **Personal**

1. What do you do for fun?
2. Tell me about yourself.
3. What are your hobbies?
4. What keeps you awake at night?
5. If you could go back in time, what advice would you give your younger self?
6. What do you do to de-stress?
7. How do you balance work, play, family and individual time?

### **Career**

1. Tell me about your career path (starting with college) to where you are now? Would you have foreseen this for yourself?
2. How do you set and achieve goals? What are some of your current goals?
3. Do/Did you have a mentor? Do you have or have you had mentees?
4. Do you think it's important to earn certifications / a graduate degree in order to advance in your career? One or both?

5. When you interview someone what is your favorite question to ask? Why, what do you think it reveals? What type of answer are you looking to hear?
6. What types of networking tips do you have for me? Once you meet someone how do you make sure to keep in contact with them. What types of “best practices” do you have for networking?
7. What skills and abilities are the most important building blocks for my future and how do I make sure to build those skills up?
8. What would be “words of wisdom” that you would leave with me in order to reach the level of success that you have in your career?

### **Suggested activities to interact with your mentor**

1. Invite your mentor to campus events, presentations, or lectures
2. Engage in recreational or other social activities
3. Inquire about the possibility of informal office or job shadowing experiences.

### **Key mentee skills**

1. Listening actively
  - Show interest in what your mentor is saying and reflect back important aspects to show that you've understood.
  - Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention.
  - If you are talking by phone, reduce background noise and limit interruptions.
2. Building trust over time
  - Keep all your communications and conversations with your mentor confidential.
  - Be on time for all phone calls and meetings.
  - Follow-up in a timely manner on all assigned tasks or discuss a new plan.
  - Respond to all emails and phone calls within 48 hours.
3. Encouraging/ mentors respond well to positive reinforcement
  - Express appreciation.
  - Point out concrete examples of how you've utilized their guidance and input.
  - Send a summary email of the meeting (telephone or face-to face) one week after the meeting, including a thank you for their time.
4. Learning quickly/mentors report being highly motivated by mentees who learn quickly and well.
  - Asking appropriate questions to clarify what your mentor is teaching or clarifying.
  - Applying the information and strategies offered and reporting back on how you made the applications.
  - Going beyond what your mentor suggests --taking their ideas and showing creative ways of using them.

## Tools for the Mentor and Mentee

Both mentors and mentees will have expectations for the mentoring relationship itself. Interpersonal behaviors and communication skills play a major role in how the relationship develops and progresses.

### Giving and Receiving Feedback

Feedback is valuable and important development tool. It raises awareness of specific behaviors and their impact on others, and provides for the opportunity to modify those behaviors if necessary. Giving and receiving feedback for both mentors and mentees is central to the mentoring relationship.

### Potential Pitfalls and Suggested Remedies

Even good mentor-mentee relationship will have occasional roadblocks or pitfalls. The following table lists some typical examples and suggests some remedies for addressing them.

| Pitfalls   | Suggested Remedies  |
|--|---|
| Unrealistic Expectations                         | Discuss expectations and reach agreement on expected outcomes   |
| Differences of style, age seem to get in the way | Take time to understand your mentor/mentee. Learning to work with those differences is valuable development. Consider differences as a meeting topic for discussion.            |
| Relationship gets off track                      | Use good feedback skills to raise the issues in a non-threatening way. Build open communication. Refocus and reiterate mentoring goals.   |
| Relationship not a fit                           | Please reach out to the CWITA coordinator at <a href="mailto:info@cwita.org">info@cwita.org</a> for support and advice; in some cases it may make sense to assign a new mentor. |

## Closure Meeting

Coming to closure may present the greatest challenge for mentoring partners, for many reasons. It is difficult to plan for closure, because although the understanding is that the relationship will last the academic year, relationships can end earlier or last longer than anticipated. Closure involves evaluating, acknowledging, and celebrating achievement of learning outcomes. When closure is seen as an opportunity to evaluate personal learning and apply that learning to other relationships and situations, mentees leverage their learning and growth and reap the full harvest of the relationship. This is a time to celebrate the journey you and your mentor have been on this past year and express your thankfulness for your mentors time and commitment.