

**ATO Leading Edge Forum 2.0:
Making the Connection
Mentoring Guide**

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Introduction	3
Mentoring: Roles and Expectations	4
Informal Mentoring: Establishing a Network of Mentors.....	6
Benefits to Participating in a Mentoring Program	9
Initial Mentor and Mentee Meeting.....	10
Continuing the Partnership.....	11
Tips for a Successful Partnership	13
Frequently Asked Questions	14
Additional Resources.....	16
Mentoring Partnership Agreement	17

Introduction

In May 2009, managers from across the ATO participated in the *Leading Edge Forum 2.0: Making the Connection*. During the forum, the Mentoring subgroup was established. After the forum ended, managers conducted interviews with employees at their respective locations regarding development opportunities for ATO personnel and the idea of using mentoring as a career development tool.

The results of these interviews offered valuable insight into utilizing mentoring as a career development tool. Mentoring is effectively used in many organizations as a way of developing knowledge of values, beliefs, and practices, thus sharing and strengthening the organizational culture. An effective mentoring program can also be an effective training program for leadership.

Based on the feedback received through the interviews, ATO Organizational Effectiveness developed this mentoring guide to assist local facilities in increasing mentoring activities. There are many additional resources on mentoring and mentoring programs, both for FAA programs and in the private sector, posted on atoleadingedge.com. At the end of this guide, additional information is provided for your reference. We encourage you to incorporate additional resources as your locations create effective and meaningful mentoring programs.

Mentoring: Roles and Expectations

The mentoring partnership is a relationship between two people sharing experiences and expertise to help with individual development. Overall goals for participation in a mentoring program include:

- Building employee self-confidence.
- Motivating and supporting employees at all levels and with diverse career aspirations.
- Developing transferable skills.
- Working with others to set learning or accountability goals.
- Gaining personal satisfaction of the highest standard.

The Mentor

As a mentor, you will be asked to spend time with your mentee to develop an honest and trusting relationship, to provide him/her with objective support and guidance, and to help him/her determine the steps to achieve short- and long-term goals.

Additionally, mentors may play many roles in the mentor-mentee relationship. Key roles for mentors include:

- Trusted Counselor: Listens and reflects the mentee's ideas and career plans. Shares his/her insights and practical experience. May provide the mentee with recommendations on achieving personal success.
- Coach: Reviews the mentee's training and background. Assesses experience level and identifies deficiencies. Provides suggestions for improving skills and abilities for career development.
- Motivator: Encourages and pushes the mentee to test his/her capabilities and to take steps necessary to achieve career goals.
- Role Model: Demonstrates by example the traits, performance, and contributions to the FAA that spell success.
- Referral Agent: Directs mentees to the proper sources to achieve his/her goals.

What does the mentor get out of it?

- Develop your skills by helping others.
- Expand your own professional network.
- Fulfill the goal of making the FAA a better and stronger organization.

The Mentee

As the mentee, you must be receptive to objective feedback and advice, be willing to learn, to “stretch” and try new things, and to take risks.

Characteristics of a successful mentee include:

- Having a strong commitment to learning.
- Assessing current skills and competencies honestly.
- Participating in style preference and needs assessments.
- Working with the prospective mentor to achieve a workable “contract” to reach agreed-upon goals.

What does the mentee get out of it?

- Receive feedback and encouragement for your individual development.
- Develop a roadmap to accomplish your goals.
- Expand your professional network.
- Fulfill the goal of making the FAA a better and stronger organization.

What your peers are saying:

“Success in undertaking mentoring depends on the mentee and the mentor. Are they both dedicated to this effort? Can both commit the time needed to be successful?”

Informal Mentoring: Establishing a Network of Mentors

An Expanded Definition of Mentoring

In today's fluid workplace, several significant people may play a role in guiding your professional growth. The idea of a "network of mentors" is an alternative to the traditional practice of having one primary mentor-mentee connection.

Tips for Cultivating Mentors

A great deal of our professional growth stems from interacting with and learning from others. A good career management strategy is to create a developmental relationship when the opportunity presents itself.

Other Types of Mentoring

Flash Mentoring

Flash mentoring is a new concept growing in popularity. It allows busy executives and other senior staff to mentor without investing a lot of time. The only requirement is one hour or less of a mentor's time to meet with a mentee. During the session, mentors share lessons learned, life experiences, and advice with aspiring mentees.

After this meeting, mentors and mentees decide if they would like to continue the relationship. Mentors and mentees are matched with little or no criteria. Mentees may recruit their own mentors or a staff person can request participants' resumes to match them. Once a mentee is assigned a mentor, the mentee must contact the mentor to set up the meeting. After the initial meeting, the mentor and mentee decide whether to continue the relationship.

Some of the activities mentioned in the formal mentoring program section should be addressed in this type of program. At a minimum, both the mentor and mentee should receive basic instructions on roles and expectations. This type of program should also include follow-up after the meeting and an evaluation form.

Group Mentoring

When one mentor is teamed with several mentees who meet at the same time, this is called group mentoring. As the mentor poses questions,

listens and reflects, he/ she engages all members of the group in the conversation. Each one shares their own experience and insight and draws their own learning from the discussion.

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is usually a relationship with an individual in the same grade, organization, and/or job series as the mentee. Peer mentoring supports colleagues in their professional development and growth, facilitates mutual learning, and builds a sense of community. Peer mentoring is not hierarchical, prescriptive, judgmental, or evaluative.

Reverse Mentoring

Reverse mentoring happens when a junior employee (in terms of age, experience, or position) mentors a more senior person (in terms of age, experience, or position). Reverse mentoring aims to help more senior people gain from the knowledge of junior people, usually in the fields of information technology, computing, and Internet communications. The key to successful reverse mentoring is creating and maintaining an attitude of openness to the experience while dissolving the barriers of status, power, and position.

Situational Mentoring

Situational mentoring provides the right help at the right time when a mentee needs guidance and advice. This short-term relationship usually addresses an immediate situation, but it can transition to a long-term connection.

Supervisory Mentoring

Supervisory mentoring is an inherent responsibility of leadership. An individual's development plan usually outlines expectations for supervisory coaching and feedback. Most frequently, this mentoring is informal and related to day-to-day guidance about the current job. As leaders, supervisors should also encourage outside mentoring partnerships, informal and formal, and allow their employees time to work on them.

Team Mentoring

Team mentoring allows multiple mentors to work with one or more mentees. Team mentoring allows mentors to work together or separately to help the mentees reach identified developmental goals. (If mentors

work separately, they should communicate regularly to share information and ideas.)

Virtual Mentoring

Virtual mentoring uses technology like videoconferencing, the Internet, and e-mail instead of face-to-face meetings for the mentoring relationship. This arrangement benefits those who cannot leave their workplace and those who live in rural or remote communities. Virtual mentoring is usually less expensive compared to face-to-face mentoring and provides an individual with more choices of mentors. Even with virtual mentoring, the mentor and mentee should meet in person at least once.

Benefits to Participating in a Mentoring Program

By participating in a mentoring program, you commit to fostering a positive working relationship to enhance your career development. If both parties are dedicated and actively engaged, a mentoring program can be a mutually beneficial experience for the mentor and the mentee.

As a result of being a mentor, the employee:

- Renews enthusiasm for the role of expert.
- Obtains a greater understanding of the barriers experienced at lower levels of the organization.
- Enhances skills in coaching, counseling, listening, and modeling.
- Develops and practices a more personal style of leadership.
- Demonstrates expertise and shares knowledge.
- Increases generational awareness.

As a result of having a mentor, the employee:

- Makes a smoother transition into the workforce.
- Furthers professional development.
- Learns to translate values and strategies into productive actions.
- Complements ongoing formal study and/or training and development activities.
- Gains some career development opportunities.
- Develops new and/or different perspectives.
- Explores ideas with fresh perspective and assistance.
- Demonstrates strengths and explores potential.
- Increases career networks and receives greater agency exposure.

What your peers are saying:

“Mentoring is imperative to the organization for the development of Managers and Employees. The process exposes the parties to new ideas. Both gain from the experience if the parties have a desire to participate.”

Initial Mentor and Mentee Meeting

Soon after you are paired, we recommend you meet in person if possible, although you may also meet via telephone or email. A neutral setting without distractions allows for the privacy needed to ensure a successful first meeting.

Your first meeting should reinforce your commitment to having a successful mentor-mentee relationship. It is important to discuss expectations that each participant has of the other and establish boundaries for the relationship. Suggested topics to be covered in your first meeting include:

- Confidentiality: You might want to discuss this informally. Talk about what it means and why it is important. Reassure your mentee that everything you share will be confidential. If a mentee confides in you about an issue which is very serious, local HR staff can give you guidance.
- Goals/Targets: On a practical level, discuss what each of you wants to gain from mentoring
- Format: What topics do you hope to cover in your sessions? Will they all be talking sessions? Is your mentoring relationship going to be social, academic, or professional?
- Meeting Frequency: Discuss when you will meet and how often. Weekly meetings help you get to know each other and set up goals. After reaching an initial goal, you may meet less often or schedule a quick call to see how things are going. A monthly check-in keeps the partnership alive.
- Ending the session: You might want to decide on a topic, plan, or agenda for the next session to ensure continuity and prevent uncertainty when you next meet.

What your peers are saying:

*"I'm currently mentoring two subordinates to take my spot when I leave.
"To have power is to empower'."*

Continuing the Partnership

After outlining expectations, both parties need to maintain commitment to developing the relationship. Tips for continuing the partnership include:

- Identify the mentee's short-, medium-, and long-term individual development goals and plot an action plan. The mentor should be careful not to decide the mentee's goals for him/her.
- Discuss what needs to be done to fill in the gaps between the present state and the future state. Develop a roadmap to achieve the mentee's goals.
- Use the mentor's experiences, ideas, and guidance to expand the options open to the mentee. Could the mentor introduce the mentee to someone who works in their desired career field? Does the mentor know of training that may aid the mentee?
- Work to build the mentee's self-esteem and confidence. Encourage them to stretch, perhaps by taking a risk and aiming high. The mentor should understand if the mentee is hesitant and not yet ready to reach.
- Discuss the progress of each meeting, experiences shared, and next steps.

Have a periodic check-up:

Both mentee and mentor should describe the relationship's progress and discuss if it is worthwhile to continue the partnership. If not, the partners may decide to find another mentor who can help the mentee more with current or future goals.

- This is a good time for the mentor to ask some questions:
 - Am I giving my mentee the guidance he/she is asking for?
 - Is there more I can do?
 - Can I recommend more resources?
 - Am I providing guidance while allowing my mentee to make his/her own decisions?
 - Am I really listening?
 - Am I really there for my mentee?

- This is good time for the mentee to ask some questions:
 - Am I constructively receiving the guidance my mentor gives?
 - Is there more I can do?
 - Am I asking for all of the support I need?
 - Am I using the mentor's guidance to making my own decisions?
 - Am I really listening?
 - Am I reaching out to my mentor?

Tips for a Successful Partnership

Mentoring relationships follow an unspoken etiquette. As with all etiquette, the overriding goal is to make the other person feel comfortable and valued. In general, this means showing kindness, flexibility, and appreciation, using a combination of good business and social manners. More specifically, the following suggestions help lead to successful mentoring relationships.

Suggestions for Mentees:

- Be considerate of your mentor's time. Return phone calls promptly and be on time for meetings.
- Listen attentively to what your mentor has to say. Store information for future use if it does not apply to your immediate situation.
- Seriously consider all advice you receive.
- Show evidence that you have utilized help. If you choose an alternative, point out how you used the help to make your choice.
- Show appreciation for the various forms of assistance your mentor gives you. Saying thank you goes a long way!
- Be open to constructive feedback.

Suggestions for Mentors:

- Take the initiative in the relationship. Invite your mentee to meet, suggest topics to discuss, and ask if you can offer advice.
- Respect your mentee's time as much as your own. Do not assume your schedule always has top priority.
- Always ask if you can make a suggestion or offer feedback.
- Tell your mentee that you do not expect him or her to follow all of your suggestions.
- Expect your mentee to move towards his/her (not your) goals.
- Recognize and work through conflicts in caring ways. Invite discussions of difference with your mentee.

What your peers are saying:

Communication should be open and honest. "Keep the door open and create a non-threatening environment for mentees to express their concerns without fear of reprisal."

Frequently Asked Questions

How flexible are the meeting times?

Arrange meeting times to suit both mentee and mentor. It is a good idea to always have the next two meeting times scheduled. Ideally a meeting should last between thirty minutes to one hour. If you are unable to attend, please try to reschedule a meeting rather than cancel. You do not have to stick to a strict schedule if this is inconvenient. It is more important that the times are convenient for you.

What happens if I need to cancel a meeting?

We understand that sometimes time constraints or other difficulties mean you have to cancel meetings. Please let your mentee or mentor know as soon as possible.

What am I expected to achieve?

When you begin mentoring, we hope you will follow some of our tips in this guide. We also hope that you discuss what it is that you both want to gain from the experience. The mentor is available to increase the mentee's level of confidence or provide encouragement and support to improve individual development. The mentor typically develops his/her own skill set, such as improving coaching or listening skills.

What can I personally expect to gain from Mentoring?

You can expect to gain whatever you set out to achieve — this could include:

- Developing leadership skills.
- Developing interpersonal skills.
- Learning about different cultures and groups of people.
- Gaining personal satisfaction through helping a mentee to achieve.
- Increasing your own self-confidence and self-esteem.

How will I know if what I am doing is useful?

We encourage both mentees and mentors to talk to their supervisors and share progress.

Who am I accountable to?

Ultimately both mentee and mentor are accountable to each other. Sometimes the mentee’s manager may be involved.

What do I do if I do not get along with my mentee or mentor?

The first step is to discuss the situation between yourselves and work out why you are not getting along. Changing targets, meeting times, and venues may improve the situation.

What is the procedure if I cannot continue mentoring?

We value the time you put into mentoring, but also recognize that other commitments may take precedence. You may end the mentoring relationship at any time. Please talk to your mentee or mentor directly about this.

What happens once the mentoring program ends?

After the mentoring relationship has ended, you choose how to continue the relationship. If you wish, you may continue your mentoring relationship. Some mentoring pairs form friendships and keep in touch for many years. We hope you will want to continue a relationship with each other.

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: *What your peers are saying:*
:
: “[Mentoring] builds a sense of belonging; that your peers and superiors
: truly care about how you develop, your future and what you will be able to
: contribute to the Agency.”
:
:

Additional Resources

Recommended eLMS Courses:

- Achieving Success with the Help of a Mentor
- Effective Mentoring
- Conquering Conflict Through Communication
- Communicating with Power and Confidence

Web Sites:

- The atoleadingedge.com web site has a section dedicated entirely to mentoring. On this site you will find various links, briefings, and informational documents on mentoring.
<http://www.atoleadingedge.com/community/blog4.php/2009/06/29/mentoring>
- The Human Resources Management (AHR) section of the FAA employee site has a section devoted to Learning and Development. On this site you will find information on all learning and development programs and tools in the FAA.
https://employees.faa.gov/org/staffoffices/ahr/learn_develop/

Books:

The books below are listed on OPM's web site as resources that have been used successfully by a number of organizations and top researchers in the field. OPM does not endorse these resources. This is for informational purposes only.

- *Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors And Mentees Get The Most Out Of Their Relationships*, by Ellen Ensher and Susan Murphy (2005).
- *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide*, by Lois J. Zachary (2005).
- *The Mentoring Advantage: Creating the Next Generation of Leaders*, by Florence Stone (2004).
- *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*, by Lois J. Zachary (2000).
- *The Step-by-Step Guide to Starting an Effective Mentoring Program*, by Norman H. Cohen (2000).
- *The Mentoring Coordinator's Guide*, by Linda Phillips-Jones, Ph.D. (2003).
- *The Keys to Mentoring Success*, by Kathy Wentworth Drahosz (2004).
- *ASTD Handbook for Workplace Learning Professionals*, edited by Elaine Biech (2008).

Mentoring Partnership Agreement

Success in mentoring relationships is largely due to mutual respect and trust between the mentor and mentee. A mentoring agreement is a means to align the expectations of both parties in the relationship. Being respectful of each other includes preparing for and attending arranged sessions promptly, or giving adequate notice when a meeting has to be cancelled, and having regular meetings free from distractions.

Our agreement has three basic ground rules:

1. We will meet _____ times per _____.
2. Our primary source of communication will be _____.
3. We will work with _____ on the Individual Development plan. (Mentee's supervisor)

Mentor

Mentee

Date _____

Date _____