

AN INTRODUCTION TO
ENTERPRISE MENTORING:

A POCKETBOOK FOR MENTORS

GET MENTORING

www.getmentoring.org



In this pocketbook

Volunteer mentoring	iii
How to use this pocketbook	v
About SFEDI Group	vi

SECTION 1 Enterprise mentoring

What is mentoring?	2
What is enterprise mentoring?	4
What is enterprise mentoring <i>not</i> ?	5
What should a mentor do?	6
What is a mentor <i>not</i> expected to do?	7
What are the different types of mentoring relationship?	8
The key skills of a mentor	10
Establishing a successful relationship with your mentee	11

SECTION 2 Meeting with your mentee

Your first meeting with your mentee	14
Key principles in building trust	17
Things to think about when communicating with your mentee	19
20 'killer' questions	20
Building rapport with your mentee	22
The 12 habits of a toxic mentor	24
Barriers to an effective mentor/mentee relationship	26
Challenges facing your mentee	27
Confidentiality	28
Tools and techniques	29
Ending the mentoring relationship	37
Useful websites	38

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Volunteer mentoring

Small businesses are the engine of the UK economy. Evidence proves that businesses that use external support are more likely to survive and succeed and business owners have repeatedly told us that the support they value most comes from other experienced business people. From my own experiences running a small business I know how useful it can be to learn from the experiences of someone who has already been there and done it.

Mentoring can be an effective way of promoting more successful start-ups, as well as higher productivity and growth amongst established businesses. I believe that mentors play a crucial role in helping new and growing firms to thrive and prosper.

Strengthening the mentoring network is vital if we're going to help the UK's budding entrepreneurs.

Mentoring is a great way for business owners and entrepreneurs to give back to the enterprise community but a true mentoring relationship works in both directions. As a volunteer mentor you can also learn new ideas to enhance your own enterprise know-how. You will develop your own relationship management and communication skills; you might learn new ways of tackling challenges in your own business.

So I say "Get Mentoring."

Mark Prisk, Minister for Business and Enterprise
at Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

GET MENTORING

PARTNER QUOTES

“Small business owners value talking to other entrepreneurs and we at ACBBA know from experience there is a lot of informal mentoring going on; we are happy to partner in a project that aims to enhance this form of support and mobilises and builds on the resources already present in the business community.”

Armando Pardo Association of Community Based Business Advisers (ACBBA)

“Shell LiveWIRE supports 1000s of young entrepreneurs each year. Our feedback shows that mentors are a key part of what many of them see as vital to support and growth of their business. Making access to mentors easy will enhance the prospects of many young people starting their journey as entrepreneurs and be a key factor for their success.”

Stuart Anderson Shell LiveWIRE

How to use this pocketbook

This pocketbook is designed to help you to understand how, as a mentor, you can help your mentee when they are thinking about starting or running their business. It gives handy tips on how to get the most from the mentoring relationship and what you can expect to happen.



About SFEDI Group

SFEDI is the Sector Skills Body for Enterprise. Run by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs, SFEDI researches leading practice, and sets standards, principles and guidelines. We:

- make sure that self-employment is promoted as a positive choice for a career
- actively seek to increase the survival rate of new businesses
- make sure that the quality of support to businesses is of a consistently high standard
- design our services to give the right help at the right time so that businesses can grow
- set national standards for small, medium and micro businesses, on which this workbook is based.

Our team includes and works with entrepreneurs and owners of real small businesses to sort out real problems. These partnerships enhance the quality and quantity of start-up support provided, and help established businesses to grow.

Enterprise mentoring

1



What is mentoring?

In this context, the term ‘mentoring’ describes a relationship in which a person is supported through a learning or developmental journey. It’s about reflecting, encouraging and supporting the new or existing business owner to make the most of themselves and their business.

Mentoring is about mutual trust and respect. It’s a two-way relationship in which *both* of you get the chance to learn new things and further your personal development.

You probably have many life experiences from which your mentee can learn. Mentoring is also a great way for your mentee to

develop and improve their communication and planning skills.

Every mentoring relationship is different; but all mentoring relationships present the opportunity for both mentor and mentee to learn from each other.

Mentoring is just one type of business support, each of which is used in different circumstances and for different reasons. The main types of enterprise support are shown in the diagram opposite. What they all have in common is the business owner – or mentee – is at the centre.

Types of enterprise support



What is enterprise mentoring?

- **A one-to-one relationship**, usually over a set period of time, in which an established business person (mentor) provides consistent support, guidance and practical help for a less experienced person (mentee).
- **A voluntary relationship**, which the mentee or the mentor can end at any time.
- **A two-way process** in which the mentor shares their personal skills, knowledge and experience with the mentee to enable him or her to explore their personal and professional situation, and in which the mentor and mentee work together to achieve predetermined goals and objectives.
- **A way of enabling** the mentee to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform at a higher level, and of giving them access to impartial, non-judgemental guidance and support.

What is enterprise mentoring *not*?

It is important to keep a clear focus, otherwise a lot of time can be wasted on activities that aren't strictly part of the mentoring brief.

The style of the process – for example, how formal or informal it is – is very much up to the mentor and mentee. However, there are some things that are definitely *not* part of the mentor's role.

As mentor, your role is *not*:

- to act as a parent
- to act as a counsellor
- to give the mentee an excuse to moan
- to be a best friend
- to dispense discipline
- to be a god.

What should a mentor do?

An enterprise mentor is normally someone who has a great deal of entrepreneurial business experience and who acts as a trusted confidante over a flexible period of time. It can be a close and meaningful relationship, in which the mentor shares their personal knowledge and experiences, and promotes a self-discovery approach. A mentor should:

- provide an outside perspective on the business owner and his or her business
- listen, in confidence, to the things that are worrying the business owner about their business
- help by sharing their own experience of failures and successes
- give friendly, unbiased support and guidance
- provide honest and constructive feedback
- be a sounding board for ideas
- facilitate decision-making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience
- provide ongoing support and encouragement.

What is a mentor *not* expected to do?

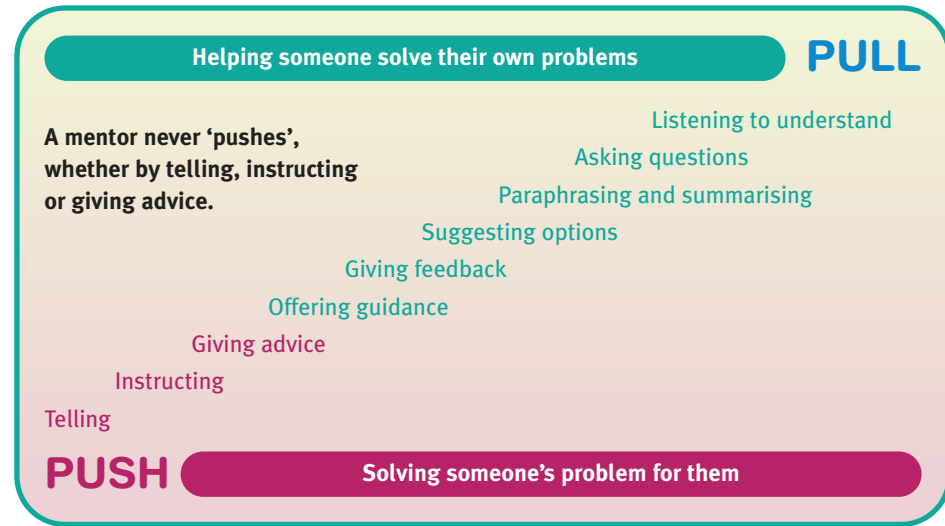
A mentor is *not* expected to:

- give advice (this will normally be provided by a qualified business adviser)
- provide a counselling service
- provide a training service
- provide a coaching service
- provide therapeutic interventions
- sort out all the mentee's problems
- **take responsibility for making their mentee's business a success or make decisions for the mentee; the ultimate responsibility for making the business successful is down to the business owner themselves.**

What are the different types of mentoring relationship?

- **Face-to-face, one-to-one mentoring** is the most common sort of mentoring.
- **Face-to-face group mentoring** (or **peer mentoring**) is where a small group of business owners come together to discuss their opportunities.
- **Telephone mentoring** is usually part of a *blended* mentoring approach, used in tandem with face-to-face mentoring.
- **e-mentoring** can be part of a blended mentoring approach or used on its own.

Mentors 'pull' – they don't push



The key skills of a mentor

- 1 **Listening in order to understand**
- 2 **Questioning to clarify and make sure they've understood correctly**
- 3 **Questioning to explore additional options and consequences**
- 4 **Being prepared to act on what has been agreed with their mentee**

Establishing a successful relationship with your mentee

Once you have been matched with your mentee through your mentoring organisation, we suggest that you:

- draw up a timetable of regularly spaced meetings in advance
- establish a set of ground rules to which you will both abide
- keep notes of your meetings, and use these as the basis for ongoing discussions
- work towards developing a trusting relationship and establishing a good rapport with your mentee

- use your questioning and listening skills to establish your mentee's individual needs, remembering that these will be different based on their background and experiences
- aim at maintaining the relationship for as long as is appropriate to the needs of your mentee.

Effective mentoring meetings provide a sense of purpose and achievement.

I think you may be exaggerating the personal safety issues involved in mentoring just a LITTLE!



Meeting with your mentee

2



Your first meeting with your mentee

- The relationship that evolves between you and your mentee over a period of time is crucial to the success of the mentoring journey. As mentor, you are the guardian of the relationship because of your experience and knowledge.
- Your first meeting is vital because it will set the tone of the relationship. Ideally, this will get off to a swift and productive start.
- You might feel a bit nervous about your first meeting but don't worry about it – a lot of people do. You might be thinking, 'How will we start?' or 'What are we going to talk about?'
- It's a good idea to devote some thought to your first meeting because it's extremely important. If you get off to a good start, everything else should be much easier.

Starting the first meeting

To get started, you could:

- **make yourselves comfortable:** pour some tea or coffee, sit down and get to know each other
- **tell your mentee something about yourself:** this could include information about your personal life as well as your professional life – whatever feels right for you
- **explain why you got involved:** for example, talk about what you think you might do together and what you both might get out of it.

Remember: if you don't hit it off straight away, don't panic. It takes time to build any relationship and it will get easier the more you meet because you'll build up trust and get used to each other.

If you're worried about anything after the first meeting, get in touch with your mentoring organisation; it's there to provide you with all the support you need.

What is the first meeting for?

The first meeting is all about getting your relationship off to a good start by establishing some ground rules and acknowledging that the relationship is two-way. This is also the best time to agree about what you hope to achieve, and share your expectations with one another.

As a 'starter for ten', we recommend you cover the mentee's ambitions and goals in relation to:

- particular issues they face
- their achievements so far and how to build on them
- realistic expectations
- scale of priorities
- areas in which they would find input most useful.

You should also cover a few basic essentials:

- when you would like to meet – how often and for how long
- venue for follow-up meetings
- how you'll keep in touch (by email and/or telephone?) and how you'll remind each other of future meetings.
- discussing and agreeing how you will work together
- confidentiality
- responsibility
- how you will record progress and issues/targets for further development.

Key principles in building trust

- 1 Get to know your mentee.** Talk about their business and their life outside it. Try to understand what they think and why. Value their viewpoint.
- 2 Do what you say you're going to do.** Agree what you are aiming to achieve through your mentoring sessions. Be reliable and always do what you say you are going to do.
- 3 Communicate openly and honestly.** Discuss issues as soon as they arise. Ask for and give feedback.
- 4 Don't be afraid to challenge.** Your open, honest relationship will allow you to challenge your mentee constructively to explore a wider viewpoint.

“Trust is the highest form of human motivation. It brings out the very best in people.”

Stephen Covey,
management development
consultant

Building a trusting and respectful relationship with your mentee

Mutual trust and respect between you and your mentee should be key. Your mentee's trust in you will depend on your ability to show that you care, on your competence and integrity.



Things to think about when communicating with your mentee

If you are meeting your mentee face to face, you need to be aware of body language. This is an excellent indication of how people *really* feel and makes up a large proportion of the message they send. If someone is being less than honest, their body language will usually give them away.

A lot of body language is universal, but some gestures differ between cultures so be careful not to give (or take) offence to your mentor unwittingly!

Take great care to recognise how cultural diversity influences all aspects of verbal and non-verbal behaviour. See Useful Websites on page 38.

Remember, body language involves four stages:

- 1** Learn what to look for.
- 2** Recognise people's body language so you can 'read' them better.
- 3** Recognise your own body language.
- 4** Control your own body language and use it to your advantage so you give the right messages to other people.

20 'killer' questions

Here are 20 'killer' questions that may be useful to ask in your meetings with your mentee.

- 1 "What will give you the most value from today's session?"
- 2 "What do you want to focus on today?"
- 3 "What is keeping you awake at night?"
- 4 "What is the present situation in detail?"
- 5 "What is happening now that is working well?"
- 6 "What is happening now that tells you that you have a problem?"
- 7 "What do you have control over?"
- 8 "What strengths and resources do you bring to this?"
- 9 "Where do you want to be a year from now? How will you measure your success?"
- 10 "If you had to find a way, what would it be?"
- 11 "What do you not know about this situation/project? How could you find out?"
- 12 "If you improved one thing you do, what change would make the biggest improvement to your business's performance?"
- 13 "What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?"
- 14 "What do you enjoy about what you do?"
- 15 "What might you be overlooking?"
- 16 "Who else has done this before?"
- 17 "What have you learned from this?"
- 18 "What can you do differently next time?"
- 19 "What did you do well?"
- 20 "What will you do next?"

Building rapport with your mentee

- Taking time to build rapport with your mentee will help you to get the most from the mentoring relationship.
- Rapport comes from shared values or experiences, and sometimes from a 'chemistry' that is hard to define.
- One sign that there is comfort or rapport between two people is that they have similar tone of voice, body language, movements and so on.
- Next time you're in company, watch other people talking together. Look for examples of similarities or 'synchronicity' between them. Ask yourself:
 - Are their body postures similar?
 - Do they use similar hand movements?
 - What do their faces tell you, especially their expressions?
 - Do their moods seem similar?
 - How similar are their voices?



The 12 habits of a toxic mentor

Here's David Clutterbuck's lighthearted take on what he calls 'toxic mentoring' – how not to do it!

- 1 Start from the point of view that you – from your vast experience and broader perspective – know better than the mentee what's in his or her interest.
- 2 Be determined to share your wisdom with the mentee whether they want it or not; remind them frequently how much they still have to learn.
- 3 Decide what you and the mentee will talk about and when. Change dates and themes frequently to prevent complacency sneaking in.
- 4 Do most of the talking, checking frequently that the mentee is paying attention.
- 5 Make sure the mentee understands how trivial their concerns are compared to the weighty issues you have to deal with.
- 6 Remind the mentee how fortunate they are to have your undivided attention.
- 7 Neither show nor admit any personal weaknesses. Expect to be the mentee's role model in all aspects of career development and personal values.
- 8 Never ask the mentee what they think they should expect of you – how would they know anyway?
- 9 Demonstrate how important and well connected you are by sharing confidential information they don't need (or want) to know.
- 10 Discourage any signs of levity or humour. This is a serious business and should be treated as such.
- 11 Take the mentee to task when they don't follow your advice.
- 12 Never, never admit that this could be a learning experience for you, too.

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Barriers to an effective mentor/mentee relationship

Most barriers to effective mentoring stem from:

- personality issues
- lack of awareness of the role of the mentor.

Common barriers include:

- poor mentor/mentee matching
- lack of support from the mentoring organisation

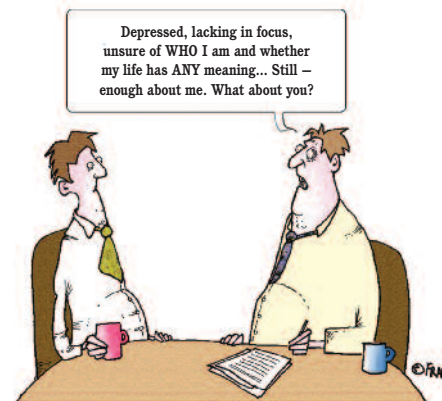
- mentor or mentee dissatisfaction about the way the mentoring is conducted
- unrealistic expectations about what mentoring can achieve
- the lack/blurring of boundaries in the mentor/mentee relationship.

Your mentoring organisation is there to help you to overcome any barriers you may encounter.

Challenges facing your mentee

Challenges facing your mentee may include:

- finding new customers and markets
- being more energy-efficient
- accessing finance
- managing money
- taking on staff and developing people
- developing new products and service ideas
- taking new products and services to the market
- investing in plant, machinery or property
- exporting or funding overseas partners
- making the most of the Internet.



From your experience, think about how you can help your mentee to address these challenges.

Confidentiality

It's really important that you respect each other's confidentiality. Remember that anything you talk about when you meet up is between the two of you so you shouldn't talk about it to someone else. But, legally, you should report any criminal conduct or possible harassment or bullying. Speak to your mentoring organisation if you're worried about anything like this.

Four things to think about are:

- 1 Concerns.** If you've got any, chat to your mentoring organisation – they're there to help.
- 2 Secrets.** Don't promise to keep any secrets. Make that clear from the beginning and remember to ask your mentee if they mind you sharing confidential information with anyone else.
- 3 Information.** Keep information about your mentee (like their phone number) somewhere secure. Never share any of their financial details.
- 4 You.** Confidentiality works both ways. Be aware of those personal areas of your life you're happy to share with your mentee and those you are not.

Tools and techniques

Goal setting and action planning

A great way to start is by setting goals and making an action plan. This will keep you on track and help you to:

- find out where your mentee needs support
- agree goals that they can work towards
- gauge how you are doing
- keep an eye on your goals
- pat each other on the back for your successes.

Don't forget, goals are most useful when they are SMART:

Specific	For example, rather than 'get a website', say 'choose a suitable domain name for my business'.
Measurable	Decide how you'll know when you've achieved it.
Achievable	Can you do it?
Realistic	Do you think you have a real prospect of reaching your goal?
Timed	Is this a long-term or short-term goal? Agree timescales for each goal –you won't be able to get everything done at once.

SWOT Analysis

This is a useful technique for understanding *strengths* and *weaknesses*, and identifying *opportunities* and *threats*. It is a framework that your mentee can use to analyse both themselves and their competitors, and can help them to craft a strategy that distinguishes them from their competitors.

The following questions can help you to guide your mentee to complete the SWOT grid for their own business

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

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 sale'?
- What is your organisation's unique selling proposition (USP)?

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?

Opportunities

- What good opportunities can you spot?
- What interesting trends are you aware of?
(Useful opportunities can come from such things as local events or changes in technology, markets, government policy, social patterns, population profiles and lifestyle changes.)

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?

Encourage your mentee to think widely and creatively with their SWOT. Could any threats become opportunities, for example?

G-STAR model



This is a particularly useful technique in mentoring. Use it to ask your mentee about a particular issue – it can often be a fast track to the real answers your mentee is looking for.

G What are your mentee's GOALS?

- 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 is your mentee 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?
- In what sequence will you do these tasks?
- Can you think of anything that may disrupt your actions?

R What RESULTS do they expect?

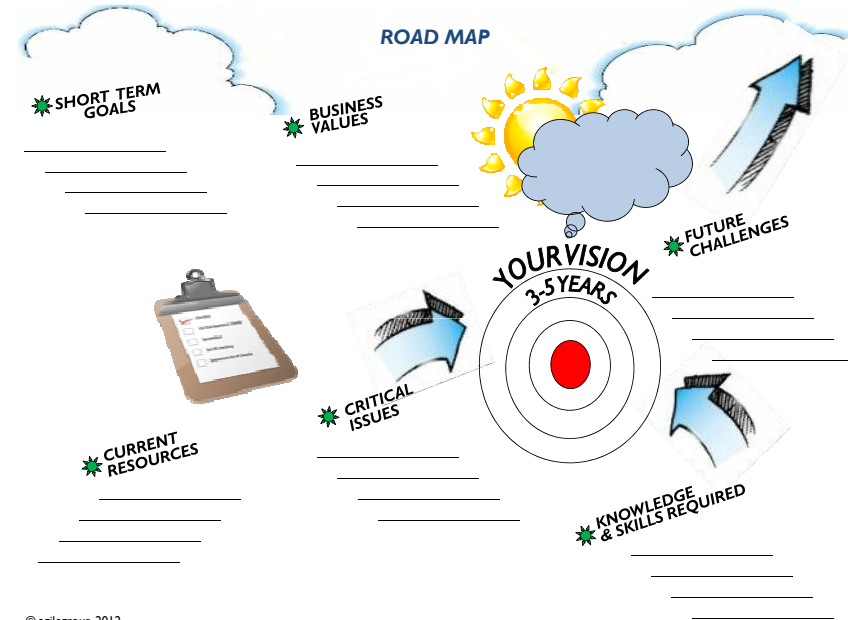
- Are the results realistic?
- Have you considered other outcomes?
- What contingencies can you put in place?
- What are the consequences of not achieving these results?

Road maps

The Road Map model can help your mentee to see how some of their goals link into the overall vision of their business.

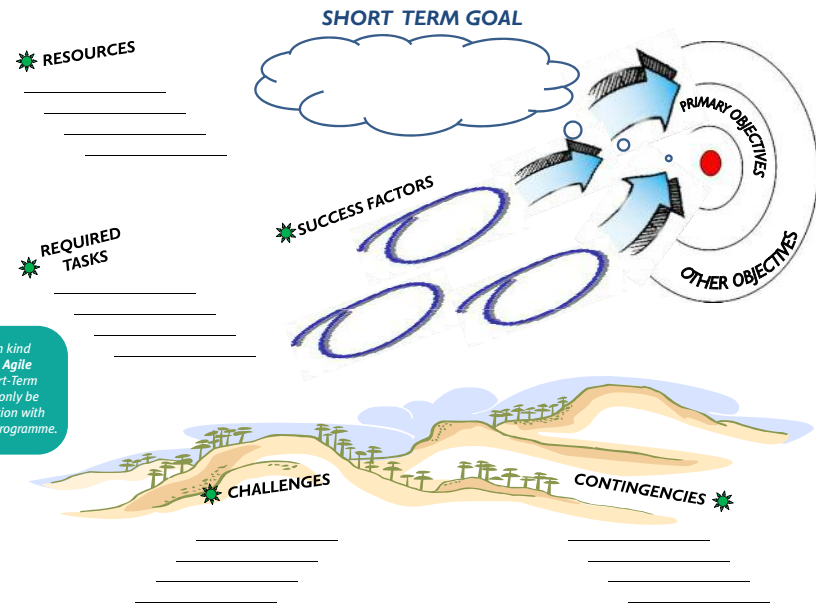
In this model, the mentee thinks about the different areas of their business as shown on the **Road Map** opposite and lists three or four short-term goals under each area.

The next stage is to break these goals down further under the heading **Short-Term Goal**, using one sheet for each goal (see page 36). This will help your mentee to focus on some of the core areas of their business. The Road Map can then be reviewed with the mentee in subsequent mentoring sessions.



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Reproduced with kind permission from Agile Group. This Short-Term Goal sheet may only be used in conjunction with this mentoring programme.

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Ending the mentoring relationship

There will come a time when the mentoring relationship will begin to draw to an end. At this point you must both 'let go' so that your mentee can maintain their independence. It will then become their responsibility to put what they have learned into practice. Although the two of you will probably continue to have some form of interaction, it should be on a more casual basis, where you consider each other as equals.

Here are some tips to help you end your mentoring relationship successfully:

- **Fix a date for your final meeting.** Decide on a date with your mentee. Remind each other of this in your penultimate meeting so that you can prepare for it.
- **Find other ways to support your mentee.** For instance, look at ways you can continue to support your mentee's learning.
- **Celebrate your success.** Have a look at the goals you set when you first met. Consider what you have both achieved during the process and reflect on what you can take to your next mentoring relationship.
- **Say goodbye.** End the session on a positive note so it's not awkward. You could talk about what you most enjoyed, what you'll remember most or the most important things you've both learned.

Useful websites

As a mentor, it is important for you to know where to go for more information/support for your role. The following list provides a starting point:

British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) www.bacp.co.uk

For mentees who identify a need for counselling.

Business Link

www.businesslink.gov.uk

Government's online resource for businesses, offering information, support and services.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

www.equalityhumanrights.com

EHRC has a statutory remit to promote and monitor human rights, and to protect, enforce and promote equality.

Growth and Improvement Service

www.improve.businesslink.gov.uk

Resources to help people take their business forward, together with information on government support and business events.

Leonard Cheshire

www.lcdisability.org

Information, support, assistance and publications for people with disabilities.

mentorsme

www.mentorsme.co.uk

An online gateway for small and medium-sized enterprises looking for mentoring services. Connects companies with

mentoring organisations that can support and guide their growth. Its library of online resources includes articles about mentoring and case studies.

My New Business

<https://online.businesslink.gov.uk/hub/action/render?pagelD=mynewbusiness>

Section of the businesslink.gov.uk website for new businesses.

UK Trade & Industry (UKTI)

www.ukti.gov.uk

Works with UK-based businesses to ensure their success in international markets.



The logo consists of a white speech bubble with a red outline and a red drop shadow. Inside the bubble, the words "GET MENTORING" are written in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

GET MENTORING

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