



10 Tips To Develop People in Your Firm through Mentoring

The mentoring process pays great dividends in creating a firm succession plan by developing future leaders in your firm.

Mentoring is a process **in which the more** experienced person (mentor) helps to guide and develop the less experienced person (Mentee or protégé). An example of mentoring is the Tax Manager (mentor) working with the Tax Supervisor (mentee) on how to supervise staff, work with clients and run engagements on his/her own.

Here are ten steps to follow to ensure you are mentoring the right way.

1. Identify career goals for the mentee: guide and support the mentee toward achieving his/her goals. Help mentee break the negative cycle that he/she may mentally perpetuate. Examples: I can't. I made a major mistake on this engagement. How could I be so stupid? Work in a collaborative way with your mentee to recognize any dysfunctional thinking that focuses away from personal responsibility and development, ultimately preventing him/her from achieving career goals.



2. Give homework assignments between meetings so that the mentee is continually engaged in the developmental process. Some examples of homework are: meeting with partners to better get to know them and their firm goals and direction; shadowing a partner when she goes to meet with clients.
3. Ask the right questions in your meetings with your mentee. Pull out your mentee's thoughts and ideas by asking questions. Sample questions: What did you learn from this engagement? What is the best way for you to work with clients? What will you do differently the next time you have an engagement like this?
4. Ask the mentee to keep a journal of development, which will chronicle individual development and outline trends and changes that the mentee has made.
5. Role-play to re-live business situations. This can be a help in understanding what actually went on. During or after an engagement, you can role-play the client and the mentee can be him/herself. Recapture key aspects of the engagement, things that went right and areas that could be improved.
6. Identify your mentee's recurring issues. Discuss what s/he can do differently to be more effective. Example: if the mentee continually misses details on a corporate tax return, give direct feedback on that to help the mentee learn. You need to identify key areas of learning and guide the mentee to be successful.
7. Identify the mentee's negative dysfunctional attitudes and challenge them. Continue to stress what the mentee is doing right and build on it while helping him/her take corrective action. (Examples of a negative dysfunctional attitude is



blaming the client for not being prepared or blaming staff for not doing work correctly, rather than teaching through review notes).

8. Identify the mentee's vulnerability, or feelings of inadequacy, and work through them. Help the mentee to gain confidence feeling "I can do this".
9. Identify the relationship between taking or not taking action. Remember both are both decisions. Ask the mentee what the outcome would be if ... Guide the mentee to know when to make a decision on his/her own and when to discuss the situation with the mentor before making a decision.
10. Ask follow-up questions to better understand the mentee. (Questions can lead to an understanding of beliefs, assumptions and values through the disclosure of thought.)

The mentor's job is to involve the mentee in the firm in a positive way while helping the mentee grow in his/her ability and confidence. By involving the mentee in the firm, by discussing the operations of the firm, and by providing each mentee with a career plan, you are helping the mentee become an integral part of the firm. The above ten steps will help you to retain and develop the right people in your firm.

Excerpt from Mentoring Process for CPAs/CAs

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