

Tips from MENTORS

- Establish the time and location for the conversation, specifying both the starting and ending time. Agree on how much advance notice you would give each other if a session needed to be rescheduled.
- Learn about each other in advance. Mentors might request that mentees provide a brief biography and resumé prior to the meetings. Mentees could research their mentors' backgrounds and areas of expertise.
- It is not a sales appointment. Mentors have reserved their valuable time to share their knowledge and experience. They trust that mentees will approach the meetings in the same spirit of mentorship and refrain from viewing the sessions as sales presentations or job interviews.
- Mentees arrive prepared. Mentees could have agendas or topics they wish to cover, and prepare some open-ended questions that will guide the discussions without restricting mentors' feedback. Ask if a mentor would like to see the agenda in advance, should they feel it will help them prepare as well. As the meeting unfolds, both parties will have an opportunity to provide context, brief updates, or ask specific questions that enhance the exchange.
- A mentoring session is an exchange, not an interview. It is common for mentees to take notes, however don't do so excessively, or you may not be engaged in the conversation and fail to establish a relationship.

Tips from MENTEES

- Immediately after you book mentors through the website, reach out to them. Especially if the meeting dates are distant. Log in on your mentorship program site and click the "My Sessions" page to see a personalized summary of your mentor bookings. Next, connect with them using the authorized email addresses shown there. Set the stage for a great experience by conveying your enthusiasm and making a personal connection via the tone of your email.
- Be fully present. Sharing requires excellent listening skills and your full attention. Both parties should set aside daily pressures during a mentoring session so that you can get the most from the experience.
- Make it a goal to establish a personal connection during the session. One of the pleasures of a mentoring relationship is the sense of connection between two people. This happens when conversation is shared equally and one listens with an open mind.
- Summarize each session. At the close of a meeting, mentees could speak about the insights gained. This would help your mentor know to what extent the session was helpful.

Have a Plan and Ask Good Questions

Based on survey results, a key recommendation mentors have for mentees is to prepare an agenda or questions in advance of each meeting. Perhaps even share this with mentors prior to meetings. This is a clear sign of an organized person who also is respectful of others' time. Naturally, questions should be relevant to the background of the individual with whom you will meet.

A good starting point is to decide what outcome you hope to achieve in the approximate hour-long session with each mentor. Perhaps focus on three or four topics you want a mentor to talk about, so when you leave each session you will have gained the knowledge that is most helpful to you.

As an idea starter, here are some questions you might ask to break the ice and steer the conversation in the direction you want. Then listen for openings to delve into key topics important to you.

1. How did you get where you are today?
2. What do you like most about your career?
3. Share one of the greatest successes during your career. Was there a specific action or event that led you to this success?
4. Share a failure you experienced and what you took away from that experience.
5. I am looking to accomplish _____ with my career. Can you provide some advice or recommendations on how I should proceed?
6. What do you see as some of the emerging trends in the industry?
7. How would you recommend I get into _____ (insert a specific specialization/role/company/sector etc.)?
8. What do you know now that you could share with me about how you achieved professional success?