



Mentoring Action Plan: Learning Activities



A Guide for the Mentorees and Mentors

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What is a Mentoring Action Plan (MAP)?

A Mentoring Action Plan (MAP) can help build a bridge between where the mentoree is now to where they want to be in the future. An effective plan addresses developmental areas that are important to the mentoree, produce a concrete result, and most importantly, are manageable in scope.

Here are some thought-provoking questions for developmental planning:

- ◆ What are the skill(s) you want to develop?
- ◆ What type of organizational knowledge do you need to develop?
- ◆ What new partnerships and alliances are you hoping to make?
- ◆ How will you know when you have successfully enhanced this skill?
- ◆ What developmental activities would help you to develop the most? (Brainstorm a list of possibilities and options.)
- ◆ Of all the ways you might develop, which are most feasible?
- ◆ How will you apply your new skill on-the-job?

Remember the Success Triangle:



Drahosz and Rhodes, "The Success Triangle." *Dynamic Mentoring*, 1997.

Expertise - how effective an individual is at mastering the expertise required of their job or career field.

Building relationships - how effective they are at building relationships and connections with others.

Navigating the organization - how effective they are at understanding and navigating the organizations and its formal and informal structures.

Creating a Vision Statement

Formulating a vision statement is the ability to see yourself in a situation that has not yet occurred. The following questions will help focus your thoughts on creating a vision of where you see yourself in five years:

- ◆ Where do you want to be?
- ◆ What do you want to be known for?
- ◆ What do you stand for?
- ◆ How are you making a difference?

Sample Vision:

My personal vision is to be recognized as an expert in fiber optics and known for getting things done while maintaining positive relationships with peers and managers.

Mentoring Goals and Objectives

After you formulate your vision statement, the next step is to create solid mentoring goals and objectives. These goals and objectives will be the driving force of your mentoring relationship and will create a starting point for the mentoree and mentor to come up with learning activities.

Sample Mentoring Goals and Objectives:

- ◆ *To develop a better understanding of the organizational structure.*
- ◆ *Fine-tune presentation skills.*
- ◆ *Enhance my reputation as a medical engineer.*

Establishing a support person for each mentoring goal is important for two reasons. The first is that it is nice to know you have someone who can coach you and not only wants you to succeed, but will help you get there. The second reason is to have someone who can hold you accountable for completing your goals.

Learning Activities

This is the final phase of the action planning process. Learning activities are the “stepping-stones” between where you are now and where you plan to be in the future. By identifying the developmental areas that will offer you the greatest opportunity for growth (which you have already done with your mentoring goals and objectives), you will experience greater rewards at the end of the program and beyond!

To come up with learning activities, refer back to the mentoring goals and objectives you have established. It is a common misconception that classroom training is the best and only option for learning. As a matter of fact, the most successful plans are those that have a range of learning activities that encourage:

- ◆ Developmental Project. (Ex., special project, writing a memo, etc.)
- ◆ Networking Opportunity. (Ex., shadowing, situational mentoring, etc.)
- ◆ Learning from challenging experiences or “stretch assignments.” (Ex., project outside of department, leadership role, etc.)

Think about what side of **The Success Triangle** you would like to work on, and pick a competency to narrow down the learning activity. Brainstorm some possible learning activities with your mentor to help you reach your goal.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ *Prepare and deliver a presentation for your division.*
- ◆ *Shadow an SME for the day and write a paper to reflect on what you observed/learned.*
- ◆ *Read a book on difficult conversations. Discuss interesting points with your mentor.*

Program Accomplishments

By bringing actions to a conscious level, you are better equipped to understand the significance of your learning experiences and activities. List the most important accomplishments you have made in the mentoring program to date. Please keep in mind, that while some of the accomplishments will be concrete and tangible, others may not be visible or observable.

Sample Program Accomplishments:

- ◆ Developed a User Guide highlighting tips for getting through the procurement process more quickly.
- ◆ Presented my quarterly program brief without getting sweaty palms or heart palpitations.

Communication

Mentoring Goals:

Speak clearly and concisely.

Explain strategies and goals in ways that are easy to understand and act upon.

Explain the reasoning behind actions and decisions.

Listen carefully.

Ask questions and confirm to ensure understanding.

Encourage open dialogue.

Write clearly and concisely.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Increase awareness of how others perceive your communication style (i.e., what mannerisms engage others in conversation; what behaviors seem to intimidate them?). Ask a trusted colleague for feedback after meetings.
- ◆ Seek opportunities to promote the accomplishments of your team. Prepare a 60 second presentation that highlights your team's mission and accomplishments and present it at the next team meeting.
- ◆ Practice listening skills by listening to someone explain an issue or challenge and paraphrase back to them what you heard. Ask for feedback in terms of how well you captured his/her key points.
- ◆ Remove sarcastic remarks, profanity and other insulting language from your vocabulary. Ask for feedback from a trusted friend or colleague.
- ◆ Draft a written memo and seek feedback from your mentor. Ask if your writing style fits the "style, tone or flavor" of the organization.
- ◆ Prepare for your next briefing thoroughly. Craft a compelling opening, defend your point with clear outcomes and conclude with highlights of points you want your audience to remember. Ask at least two people who were in the audience to summarize your key points.
- ◆ Ask your mentor to observe you giving a presentation and give productive feedback.
- ◆ Observe three people who communicate effectively and give them feedback in terms of what you appreciate about their communication style.

Conflict Resolution

Mentoring Goals:

Understand all sides of an issue.

Seek input from all affected parties.

Participate constructively in generating a solution.

Use mediation skills to resolve differences and help create a productive and trusting work environment.

Stay within organizational boundaries when resolving conflicts.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Ask someone to monitor your non-verbal communication (i.e., body language, posture, and eye contact). Seek feedback on any possible negative messages you might be sending.
- ◆ Observe dynamics of effective conflict management or negotiation skills and discuss those techniques with your mentor.
- ◆ Increase sensitivity to and respond appropriately to feedback provided by co-workers.
- ◆ Role-play a difficult conversation with your mentor.
- ◆ Participate in a negotiation and/or conflict resolution process in a community-based organization.
- ◆ When getting ready for a conversation where you know others will disagree with your opinion, take time to understand their side of the issue. Look for as many areas of agreement before dealing with the disagreements.

Customer Focus

Mentoring Goals:

Understand who the external and internal customers are.

Seek to understand customer expectations.

Keep customers up-to-date on important issues.

Follow up with customers to make sure commitments have been met.

Respond calmly to customer issues or concerns.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Brainstorm a list of customers you are currently working with (both internal and external). Create a list of ideas on how to visibly demonstrate your commitment to customer service. Select at least one new idea a month to implement. Seek feedback from the customers after the idea has been implemented.
- ◆ Facilitate a focus group with both internal and external customers. Explore their needs and get a better understanding of their expectations.
- ◆ Create a follow-up system for keeping customers up-to-date on important issues.
- ◆ Organize a team building session with at least one key customer every three months. Spend time interacting and getting to know each other better. Take time to learn about them as a person.
- ◆ Develop and implement a customer service feedback tool. Pay attention to complaints and explore possible causes. Prioritize those items that you have control over and create a plan to improve customer service in that area.
- ◆ Create your own personal guiding principles for exceeding customer expectations. Post them in your office and review them frequently.
- ◆ Make their day! Look for opportunities to make your customer's day. At the end of the day, investigate how you feel about yourself as a result of these spontaneous acts of kindness.

Leadership

Mentoring Goals:

Consider the needs of all stakeholders.

Continually seek new ideas.

Exhibit high standards of professional and ethical behavior.

Promote organizational values through words, actions and behaviors.

Set challenging goals.

Keep people focused.

Take the time to develop others.

Motivate others to achieve goals.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Explore a problem or challenge that the organization/team is experiencing. Analyze the problem from the perspective of all of the stakeholders involved. Use this insight to create a plan to address problems and challenges. Take it to the next step and put the plan into action.
- ◆ Learn the “unwritten rules” of the organization by interviewing at least three situational mentors. Ask them to discuss what they consider to be the “unwritten rules” of the organization.
- ◆ Create discussion forums to share information and promote organizational values.
- ◆ Walk through your office space with “new eyes.” Does your environment reflect the culture and values that are important to you? Discuss insights gained with your mentor.
- ◆ Promote a “continuous learning” environment. When mistakes are made, bring a small group together to discuss any possible lessons learned. Ensure that the information that is shared in the forum is openly discussed without fear of retribution.
- ◆ Consider having an informal meeting away from the workplace. Encourage teamwork and allow opportunities for employees to get to know each other. Identify a stretch assignment that can be delegated to an employee or team member who is ready to advance their career. Set up an action plan and spend at least one hour per week of your time transferring your knowledge.

Demonstrates and Promotes Teamwork

Mentoring Goals:

Share ideas and information with others to solve problems.

Build strong relationships with customers and peers.

Consider how decisions will affect other members of the group.

Break down barriers between individuals and organizations.

Bring people together successfully to accomplish goals.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Invest time each month to share new knowledge and information with your team members. This might occur in a formal setting such as a team meeting or informally over lunch.
- ◆ Investigate upcoming trends (future opportunities or barriers) that may impact your team. Create a brief presentation to share this knowledge and a plan of action with your colleagues.
- ◆ Ask three colleagues to give you honest feedback in terms of how “team oriented” you are. Do you tend to push your own ideas rather than listen to the collective ideas of others? Are you independent or interdependent? Do you consider how decisions affect other members of the team?
- ◆ Seek an “ad hoc” team or committee assignment. Rather than take on a leadership role, be willing to participate as a team member. After each team meeting, jot down insights gained regarding how well you participated on the team. What would you do differently? At the next team meeting, set a goal to change at least one behavior.
- ◆ Serve on a project team that requires collaboration with a variety of different perspectives and people. Pay careful attention to what becomes a barrier for you—is it the communication styles of others? Gender issues? Age? Position? Look for patterns and discuss insights with a mentor or colleague.
- ◆ Offer to assist a peer or teammate with a project that is falling behind. Explore how this act of kindness makes you feel. Is it an energy giver? Or an energy drainer?
- ◆ Facilitate a team building session. Discuss the strengths of the team and where the team is going? Give team members personal and sincere praise for their accomplishments!

Human Resource Management

Mentoring Goals:

Hire the right people based on the needs of the job.

Hold people accountable for results.

Deal with personnel on a fair and consistent basis.

Provide challenging assignments to effectively develop others.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Write a “want ad” for a position on your team. Write the ad with behavioral characteristics of the team/organization as well as the behavioral demands of the job. Ask at least three people on the team to critique your ad and give you honest feedback on whether or not they would apply for the position.
- ◆ Facilitate a mock interview with your mentor.
- ◆ Volunteer to be on a group interview panel.
- ◆ Interview three situational mentors who you feel are really good at holding people accountable for results. Investigate themes and patterns. Discuss insights with your mentor.
- ◆ Create a list of developmental activities that will help your employees grow personally and professionally.
- ◆ Interview a professional employee relations counselor. Find out what the most compelling issues employees have about their employers.
- ◆ Give positive feedback to someone who has the skill but does not have the confidence.

Problem Solver

Mentoring Goals:

Sort out the facts.

Create and understand a strategy.

Use available information to make good decisions.

Consider new approaches.

Think "out of the box."

Consider both immediate and longer term issues.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Isolate at least one recurring problem. Take a broad view by looking at several alternative solutions. Explore pluses and minuses with your mentor. Adopt a new approach.
- ◆ Shadow a senior executive who is very good at making gut level decisions. Investigate how many times in the past they have had to make a similar decision and whether or not his/her past experience impacted the current gut level decision.
- ◆ Explore what time of day you feel the most creative (Morning? Afternoon? Evening?). Spend 15 minutes each day for 21 days "thinking outside the box." Reward yourself for each non-traditional solution you come up with.
- ◆ When faced with an obstacle, look for creative ways to turn the obstacle into a solution. Share success stories with your mentor.
- ◆ Benchmark an organization that is using a new technology or process to increase their efficiency. Prepare a "white paper" that highlights the pros and cons and present it to your supervisor.

Technical Knowledge

Mentoring Goals:

Demonstrate a mastery of the functional requirements of the job.

Learn the computer skills appropriate for the job.

Understand the legal and safety requirements of the job.

Understand the rules, regulations, and departmental procedures.

Apply new technologies that improve performance.

Possess the skills to make group presentations.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ See one, do one and teach one. Observe a seasoned expert performing a task, perform the same task in front of a coach or mentor and ask for feedback, then teach someone else how to perform the same task (Adapted from Deep Smarts, pg 207-208).
- ◆ Shadow an expert (situational mentor) for a day. Prepare a paper on what you learned from observing him/her that day.
- ◆ Volunteer to take on a project (maybe one outside of your normal realm of work) that will stretch you outside your comfort zone.
- ◆ Study a master. Create a list of the experts in your field. Interview them. What do they read? What conferences do they go to? How do they keep on top of their game and up to date?
- ◆ Foster a network of situational “technical” mentors. Spend at least one hour a month fostering relationships with them.
- ◆ Attend a least one professional conference per year. Set a goal to strengthen technical skills in at least one area as a result of the professional development conference. Write a briefing on any lessons that you learned and commit to transferring your knowledge to at least one other person.
- ◆ Join a professional association. If you already belong to one, take on a leadership role or give a presentation at the next annual conference.

Time Management

Mentoring Goals:

Prioritize work effectively.

Arrange schedule or workload to meet deadlines.

Demonstrate the ability to “timeline” a project from beginning to end.

Easily find important information.

Set up systems to do work faster.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Discuss the top ten priorities of your team’s work with a senior manager.
- ◆ Maintain a work journal chronicling deadlines and daily work goals. What are greatest time wasters? When are you the most productive? What do you have control over?
- ◆ Interview three key executives who you find are able to balance their time with ease. Discuss their techniques for staying focused and on time.
- ◆ Take a look at your office from “fresh” eyes. Is it efficient? Can you find important information? Create a personalized list of ways you can make your office more efficient. Commit to implementing one new idea each month and ask your mentor or supervisor for feedback.
- ◆ Ask someone to visit your office and give you constructive feedback on its efficiency.
- ◆ Seek feedback from three key stakeholders. On a scale of 1 to 10 how would they rate your ability to prioritize your work effectively? Discuss insights gained with your mentor.
- ◆ Investigate the use of automated tools for managing your time and/or complex projects. What would be the advantages or disadvantages of using automation to manage your time better?

Adapts to Change

Mentoring Goals:

Realize that change and even “chaos” is now “normal.”

Do not allow stress to detract from performance.

Show flexibility in meeting customer needs.

Support, rather than complain, about new approaches.

Deal well with personal and professional challenges and setbacks.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ When a new change effort is being launched, investigate why the change is occurring and what skills will be necessary for you to adapt to the new changes. Create an action plan for aligning yourself with the new skills.
- ◆ Look for opportunities to become a visible advocate of a new change or process.
- ◆ Employ stress management techniques during times of change and transition (i.e. relaxation techniques, exercise program, nutrition, etc.).
- ◆ When you are faced with a personal and/or professional setback, keep a journal of what you are feeling and going through. Find a trusted friend (or mentor) to openly discuss how you are feeling and any lessons that you learned.
- ◆ Create a journal of how often you are sick. Pay careful attention to the stressors in your personal and professional life. Are there any themes or patterns? In other words, pay attention to whether or not you get sick before or after a big project is complete.
- ◆ Look for opportunities to show flexibility in meeting a customer’s needs. Document every time your customer(s) has changed his/her expectations and carefully notice how you react. Identify what you did to demonstrate flexibility and how you could improve in the future.

Diversity

Mentoring Goals:

Seek input from a variety of sources.

Respect views that differ from my own.

Work toward making cultural differences strengths, not barriers.

Capitalize on the uniqueness of individuals.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Plan a “Mini-Conference” within the mentoring group. Have each member give a live presentation of their division’s mission and how their job impacts that mission. This activity has a dual purpose—it gives the mentoring group a new perspective on the diversity of its members and is a great way to practice presentation skills.
- ◆ Take a very junior professional under your wing, particularly someone who is quite different than you. Become a mentor and share *your* special skills and perspectives.
- ◆ Create a small project that requires a diversity of opinions. Be willing to respect and value the contributions different than your own.
- ◆ Use a different brainstorming technique at your next team meeting to seek input from a variety of sources.
- ◆ Create a list of people in your network. Explore his/her background, generation, race, education, career path, gender. Do you tend to network with people who are similar or different than you? If similar, commit to expanding your network to include more diversity.
- ◆ Interview three situational mentors who solve problems differently than you do. What insights can you gain from their approaches?
- ◆ Identify a senior manager who is very good at managing a diverse workforce. Set up a meeting to observe them in action. What do they do well? How do they do it? Give them productive feedback on how they seem to capitalize on the uniqueness of each individual on his/her team.

Organizational Savvy

Mentoring Goals:

Understand and observes the “unwritten” rules.

Know how to “get things done around here.”

Dress and present myself consistent with organizational expectations.

Understand where the organizational power is (and isn't).

Cultivate a strong network of professional contacts.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Assess your organizational savvy over the past year. How well have you navigated the unwritten rules? When have you “stepped in it” politically? What were the political ramifications?
- ◆ Create a list of the “unwritten rules” from your perspective. Share them with your mentor. How much does s/he agree or disagree.
- ◆ Interview three key executives. Ask them to describe the culture of the organization.
- ◆ Create a list of “go to” people in your personal and professional network. List names, phone numbers, email address, etc. Keep this list updated. Get feedback from your mentor.
- ◆ Ask three trusted friends and/or colleagues about your professional image. Are you sending the right message?
- ◆ Spend a few lunch hours at the local cafeteria. Pay careful attention to professional dress. Carefully critique their attire.
- ◆ Create a list of people you would like to get to know better. Commit to building better relationships with the key people on your list.

Self Direction

Mentoring Goals:

Understand self: both strengths and weaknesses.

Accept feedback well.

Display a positive "can do" attitude.

Continuously make efforts to improve.

Get things done without constant supervision.

Live up to commitments.

Set goals and work to achieve them.

Sample Learning Activities:

- ◆ Seek 360 feedback (self, boss, and peers). Look for patterns and themes.
- ◆ Review and update your Mentoring Action Plan on a quarterly basis.
- ◆ At the end of each day, honestly evaluate your attitude. Did you maintain a positive attitude all day? Or did stressors get in the way?
- ◆ Create a journal of how often you ask your supervisor for help. Do you find yourself asking the same questions? Brainstorm an action plan with your mentor to become more self sufficient.
- ◆ Review your system for daily goal setting and meeting deadlines and projects. On a scale of 1 to 10, is your system effective? If your supervisor would rate you what would s/he give you? How can you improve your process?
- ◆ What are your three greatest strengths? What are your greatest areas needing improvement? Seek feedback from your peers and colleagues. Do they agree with your self assessment?
- ◆ Create a list of commitments (personal and professional). On one side of the page, list all the things that you completed. On the other side of the page list the items that are still pending. Discuss insights gained with your mentor.

Sample Mentoring Action Plan (MAP)

Mentoree		Mentor	
Name:	Thelma Jones	Name:	Louise Smith
Title/Series:	Employee Development Specialist	Title/Series:	Supervisory Economist
Grade:	GS-11	Grade:	GS-15
Phone Number:	202-555-1212	Phone Number:	202-307-0167
Last Updated on:	Sept. 17		

For an overview of the structure of a Mentoring Action Plan, [click here](#).

Vision:

My personal vision is to be recognized as an expert in economics and known for getting things done while maintaining positive relationships with peers and managers.

Mentoring Goals and Objectives:

1. Sustain and maintain a successful mentoring partnership.
2. Increase technical knowledge in the field of Economics.
3. Improve presentation skills.
4. Improve time management skills.

Mentoring Goal 1.

Sustain and maintain a successful mentoring partnership.

Primary Support Person: Mentor

Learning Activity	Competency	Beginning Date	Ending Date	Funding	Status
Engage in mentoring meetings twice a month for one year. Create an agenda and forward to my prior to our meeting.	Communication	Jan. 9	Jan. 9	\$0.00	Created
Notes:	Jan. 17: My mentor and I have come up with a meeting schedule.				
Facilitate a mid-point review with my mentor to review learning goals and accomplishments. Also, give my supervisor an update on the program.	Communication	July 3	July 20	\$0.00	--
Facilitate an end of program review and wrap up. Share with my mentor specific successes and gains that I have made and how I plan to leverage any lessons learned.	Communication	Dec. 1	Dec. 15	\$0.00	Created

Mentoring Goal 2.

Increase technical knowledge in the field of Economics.

Primary Support Person: Supervisor

Learning Activity	Competency	Beginning Date	Ending Date	Funding	Status
Review past research on my account.	Technical Knowledge	March 17	March 30	\$0.00	Approved
Complete a research paper concerning new developments in my account.	Technical Knowledge	April 1	April 30	\$0.00	Approved
Take CSSD course on writing Macros in Quattro Pro.	Technical Knowledge	Aug. 4	Aug. 9	\$500.00	Approved

Mentoring Goal 3.

Improve presentation skills.

Primary Support Person: Supervisor and Mentor

Learning Activity	Competency	Beginning Date	Ending Date	Funding	Status
Join toastmasters.	Time Management	Feb. 15	Dec. 15	\$0.00	Finished
Prepare and present the quarterly briefing for the department.	Time Management	Feb. 30	March 30	\$0.00	Finished

Mentoring Goal 4.

Improve time management skills.

Primary Support Person: Mentor

Learning Activity	Competency	Beginning Date	Ending Date	Funding	Status
Go to a Franklin Covey workshop.	Adapts to Change	April 1	April 5	\$0.00	Created
Conduct a calendar audit – look at the daily tasks that waste time at work. Ask mentor for feedback.	Time Management	March 1	March 15	\$0.00	Created
Notes:	March 29: After conducting the calendar audit, I'm going to only check email 3 times a day.				

Program Accomplishments:

Presented my quarterly program brief without getting sweaty palms or heart palpitations.