

demonstrate my passion, knowledge, and skills. This will help me grow and further develop my skills as a leader.¹⁰

HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN MENTORING PROGRAM

Mike and Calvin only had a short period of time together each week, so I created mentoring lessons that were short, focused, and customized for Calvin.

Since my experience with Mike and Calvin, I have discovered that anything more than five weeks, or once a month for five months, works well for most mentor and mentee partnerships. When you are creating your mentoring program, adapt the follow conversations based on your already existing training or leadership attributes. Doing so will enable you to scale your mentoring program.

A financial institution I consulted for cleverly used the framework of its individual program plans (IDPs) to adapt the mentoring conversations and make them relevant to the organization on a global scale. When you create a structure for mentoring, keep it simple, clear, and easy to follow.

The following four examples of mentor and mentee conversations are focused on global issues that every team member who wants to be a leader will face. I customized them using a **mentoring conversation arc**, the framework used to resolve a concern or overcome an obstacle and achieve a goal. In order to use a mentoring conversation arc to build your mentoring conversations, follow these four steps to develop a clear understanding of the organization's culture:

1. Understand the communication structure within the culture in which you will be operating (for example, consider how members email one another, or whether or not they use voice mail).



2. Design opportunities for successful collaboration and create a plan for change.
3. Leverage feedback to make improvements to your performance.
4. Put this all together to identify the structure of feedback (for example, will you communicate daily through emails or phone conversations? Do you use 360 career feedback? How are conflicts solved? What is the driving ethos of the organization?).

Please note each conversation that follows takes 20 minutes and is relatively formal. This helps prevent people from telling stories about what “used to be” and helps them focus on what is happening now.

Conversation #1: Culture, Leadership, and Collaboration

This conversation is designed as an introduction to leadership within the organization and so that the mentee will appreciate the organization’s culture. The sequence of the conversation, and the person who starts the conversation, is shown:

1. Mentor shares the guiding principles of the organization and how they align with his or her leadership practice. Mentors should feel free to give examples. (Five minutes)
2. Mentor defines the organization’s expected code of conduct. For example, how are emails best handled? Or what is the expectation to work on weekends or outside of a shift? (Five minutes)



3. Mentee outlines his or her personal commitment to work. For example, what is the mentee's commitment to his or her team, work, self, and to family? (Five minutes)
4. Mentor and Mentee share their societal commitments. For example, what will they do to make the world a better place and how will they do it? (Five minutes)

Conversation #2: Listening and Collaborating

This conversation takes culture to the next level and shows the mentee the structure of how members of the organization listen to and learn from each other. The sequence of the conversation, and the person who starts the conversation, is shown:

1. Mentor reviews why listening is critical to collaboration. (Three minutes)
2. Mentor and mentee both take the VAK test (see Chapter 2) and share with each other how they prefer to receive information. (Sixteen minutes)
3. Mentor and mentee both thank each other. (One minute)

Conversation #3: Creating a Roadmap for Collaborating Together

This conversation is designed as a teaching tool that enables mentees to “see” what a successful collaboration looks like and to identify how they can plan a successful collaboration within the parameters of the organization. The sequence of the conversation, and the person who starts the conversation, is shown:



1. Mentee creates two columns on a piece of paper, using the headings “Problem” and “Resources.” (One minute)
2. With the mentor, the mentee should define and write down his or her goal and its relationship to collaborating and succeeding in the organization. (Two minutes)
3. Using their experience in the organization, the mentor should help the mentee brainstorm in order to define any macro issues he or she might be facing when it comes to achieving his or her goal. For example, in one such conversation, a mentee learned the reason her boss thought she couldn’t prioritize: she didn’t answer emails right away. Her company had a sunset rule, which meant she had to answer all the emails she received by the end of day. (Two minutes)
4. Using their experience in the organization, the mentor should help the mentee brainstorm in order to define any micro issues he or she might be facing when it comes to achieving his or her goal. For example, in one such conversation, a mentor helped a mentee understand that her academic presentation style wasn’t working for senior leaders because they wanted quick hits of information during meetings, followed by in-depth information sent after the meetings. (Two minutes)
5. Based on experience and contacts, the mentor should identify and note the partners and resources that could be used to overcome the roadblocks identified in order for the mentee to achieve success. (Nine minutes)
6. Together, the mentor and mentee should brainstorm solutions and immediate action steps. For example, in one

conversation, one mentor taught her mentee how to apply for the corporate top-talent program. It was an online process on the company's internal website—they filled out the application together. (Four minutes)

Conversation #4: Feedback and Presentations

This conversation enables mentees to learn the value and importance of feedback when presenting to the group they are collaborating with. The sequence of the conversation, and the person who starts the conversation, is shown:

1. Prior to the mentoring session, the mentee should prepare a five-minute presentation of his or her problem and the solution he or she has developed. Remember, in a quick presentation, mentees want the audience to understand the point of their problems and the solutions. Simply put, the mentee should explain the importance of the problem identified and why it is important to solve. Mentees should remember their VAK and include language that their audience will identify with.
2. Mentee shares his or her presentation. (Five minutes)
3. Mentor offers feedback to the mentee using the following questions, in the following order:
 - a. Did the mentee offer proof that resources should be committed to solving the problem? (Four minutes)
 - b. Did the mentee demonstrate any challenges the solution presents, including opposition that might surface? (Five minutes)
 - c. Did the mentee rebut this opposition? (Three minutes)



4. Finally, the mentor and mentee should discuss how these steps could be used to increase collaboration when presenting a solution. Mentor should feel free to use personal examples. (Three minutes)



Mentoring acts as a stimulant for generations to effectively collaborate. Rather than creating collaboration overload, as we know so many professionals face today, mentoring lightens your workload because you discover how to create efficiencies in collaboration. This leads to higher productivity and mastery, which we will learn about in the next, and final, chapter.