

National Mentoring Month

January 1st to January 31st

What is national mentoring month?

Mentoring can make a huge and long-lasting impact on a person's skills and growth. January is named National Mentoring Month. It aims to promote the idea of becoming a mentor to more people, as well as encouraging more organisations to run mentoring programs and initiatives.

Why be a mentor?

Growth and development – both in one's personal life and career – is always ongoing. People look to those with the skills they want to develop as guides. They are more likely to take their advice to improve in that area. The majority of the benefits are for the person who is being mentored. Having a mentor can increase confidence and skills levels, as well as help them understand what they want out of their work. It can also keep employees with a company longer when given a mentor. According to LinkedIn, 94% of employees would choose to stay with a company for a longer period if they were offered more opportunities to increase their skillset. However, the mentors themselves also benefit from this relationship. It can be very fulfilling to offer your skills to someone else. It can also help you develop your communication and group work skills.

What makes a great mentor?

While anyone can try their hand at mentoring, the best mentors have the skills to teach, advise, and direct mentees towards their goals. Some examples of mentors are highly skilled professionals with years of industry experience. And they understand what new mentees need to grow in their position within an organisation or within their career and personal development.

Here are some examples of what makes a great mentor:

- They are willing to work closely with mentees to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and goals.
- They've been in the industry for many years.
- They provide direction, advice, and resources, not just orders.
- They offer new challenges and help mentees develop problem-solving skills.
- They provide support, perspective, and encouragement.
- And they make new opportunities available to mentees.

A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.

Every mentor has a different mentoring style based on their own strengths. When you identify what each mentor does best, you can leverage and give mentees what they need most from the mentorship program.

Here are a few different types of mentors and their responsibilities to consider:

- **The advisor.** These mentors use their experience and expertise to help their mentees find the right course of action by offering advice. Advisor mentors are ideal for mentees looking to follow a similar career path as them.
- **The coach.** This type of mentor listens, identifies challenges, celebrates achievements, and helps mentees hone specific skills.
- **The challenger.** These mentors challenge their mentees by focusing on developing their problem-solving skills and other essential skills. High achievers will benefit from having such a mentor.
- **The clarifier.** These mentors use their experience and knowledge to assist mentees in learning more about the organisation and their role. Since they work more like a companion, they are best suited for independent mentees who don't require much direction.
- **The sponsor.** Mentees looking to grow upwards and network within an organisation will benefit from having a sponsor-type mentor. These mentors advocate for their mentees and help them connect with others within the company.
- **The connection broker.** This type of mentor provides their mentee with multiple growth opportunities – from networking to skill-development – as per the mentee's career goals.



- **The protector.** These mentors are supportive, encouraging, and approachable. They attempt to create a safe space for their mentee so they can grow or transition in a less stressful and overwhelming way.
- **The affirmer.** Similar to the protector, this type of protector is also a good listener and supports mentees through tough situations.

Examples of famous mentoring relationships to learn from

One of the best ways to determine how to set up your mentorship program is to see how others have done it successfully. Over the course of history, there have been many notable mentorships. And successful people involved in these mentoring relationships have highlighted how mentoring helped them achieve their personal and career goals.

Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg:

Steve Jobs, a genius who helped start Apple Inc., was a big help to Mark Zuckerberg, who helped start Facebook. Jobs gave Zuckerberg good tips and ideas in the early days of Facebook. He helped him with things like product design, user experience, and leadership. Zuckerberg has been very open about how much he looks up to Jobs and how his advice has changed the way he thinks about creation and making new products.



Richard Branson:

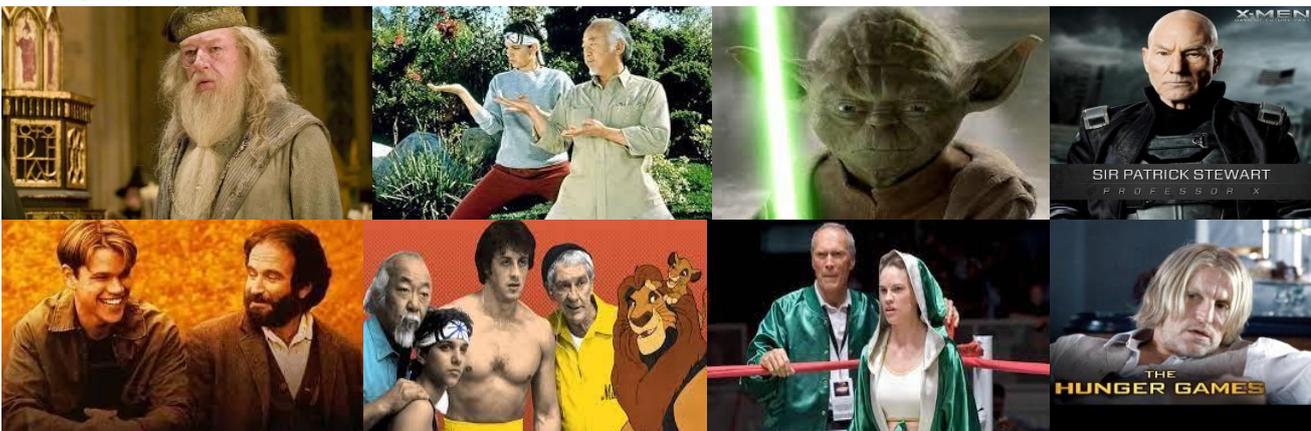


Sir Freddie Laker when he launched Laker Airways and later enjoying a laugh with Sir Richard Branson.

Founder of Virgin Group and now one of the most successful businessmen of all time, Richard Branson, openly speaks of his views on the importance of mentorship. His most influential mentor, Sir Freddie Laker, was instrumental in helping Branson’s airline company reach new heights in its earlier years. Branson happily admits, “It’s always good to have a helping hand at the start. I wouldn’t have got anywhere in the airline industry without the mentorship of Sir Freddie Laker.”

Famous mentoring roles within movies

No hero’s journey is complete without a mentor to guide them (partially) along the way. With some of the most quotable lines in cinema, mentors span a wide range of grumpiness, wisdom, oddity, and sincerity. Most mentors live only long enough to pass the torch of responsibility onto their successors that either begin their quest or serve as an emotional gut-punch in the hero’s darkest hour.



Can you think of any films, TV series or any mentors in your career goals that have been successful?

How to develop a mentoring programme

To set up a mentoring program, the first thing you need to do is establish what you want to solve with the program. What do you want to get out of it? This will influence the design of your program. For different companies, some projects will work better than others. A smaller, tight-knit company may benefit from a more casual mentoring system, whereas a larger company may do better with a more formalised and structured approach.

An important part of developing a mentoring program is deciding how you want to pair the mentors and mentees. Do you want to handpick them, allowing for a more diverse selection or do you want people to be able to choose their own pair, possibly allowing for combinations where there is already an established relationship, but also allowing for bias in choices? You can also use a digital mentor matching software to remove the human element entirely and rely on an algorithmic choice – or even just match completely at random.

Finally, it's important to keep the mentoring program going by regularly checking in with mentors and mentees to see how they're doing and how the experience is working for them. Is there anything you need to change about the program to improve its effectiveness in the future?

Become a mentor

Helping somebody, either within your company or in the world, can be very fulfilling.

You can reach out and ask if your company offers a mentoring program and if not, you can contact a senior staff member and request one be created. Alternatively, you can offer to mentor young people by reaching out to schools and universities.

Peer mentoring can be effective at college and within the workplace. Peer mentoring is a relationship between people who are at the same career stage or age, in which one person has more experience than the other in a particular domain and can provide support as well as knowledge and skills transfer. Peer mentoring may be a one-on-one relationship or experienced in a group.

For National Mentoring Month this January, it's a great opportunity to consider offering your skills and information to somebody who's developing theirs.

Motivational Quotes

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn. - **Benjamin Franklin**

"I have always been a huge believer in the inestimable value good mentoring can contribute to any nascent business." - **Richard Branson**

Relevant Hashtags

When sharing your National Mentoring Month activities and experiences in 2024, consider using these relevant hashtags:

- #MentoringMonth
- #BeAMentor
- #MentorshipMatters
- #MentorshipGoals
- #MentoringImpact

Using these hashtags can help you connect with others who are passionate about mentoring and raise awareness about the positive influence of mentorship in all areas of life.

For more information on mentoring visit:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/getting-the-most-out-of-mentoring>

