



# Practical advice on mentoring

Scania (Great Britain) Limited Dealer Network

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## 1. Introduction

Most people are nervous about being a mentor for the first time. Maybe the word 'Mentor' suggests something quite different from what you are used to doing. In fact mentoring is an entirely natural process, and you may well already have acted as a mentor, or have been mentored, without realising. In this mentor guide we aim to help you over the first hurdles of mentoring. We provide a practical description of what mentoring is and the key points you need to be aware of, along with checklists that you can copy or adapt for your own use. You should find the handbook useful if you are already a mentor, or have an interest in mentoring and want to find out more.

We have used the terms 'mentor' and 'mentee' throughout. For mentee, you may prefer terms such as protégé, learner or mentoree. For mentor, you may be used to the term buddy, assessor, coach, sponsor, ally or guide.

## 2. What is mentoring?

### 2.1 WHAT DOES 'MENTORING' MEAN?

Mentoring happens when one person assists another to grow, acquire new skills and insights, and develop his or her potential. The mentoring relationship builds confidence and helps the mentee to take increasing responsibility for his/her own development. Many successful people have had mentors; usually someone they consider more experienced. Nowadays, an important challenge is to make mentoring more accessible, so that more people can take advantage of mentoring.

Mentoring is a natural process found in all cultures throughout history. In some communities in the world, mentors are proficient hunters or good mothers: they can be a 'critical friend', a role model, or initiate the young into adult and spirit world. Mentoring in our society is used for personal and professional development in education, business, the public and voluntary sectors, and community groups. Mentors do not need to be qualified trainers and do not need to be highly skilled at the job the mentee does or the area in which the mentee wants to develop. It is now common to view the mentee and mentor as equal partners in the relationship, a move away from the traditional view of the mentor as a dispenser of advice.



Mentoring is the process by which one person assists another to grow and learn in a safe and sympathetic relationship.

People embark on mentoring for many different reasons: to support them personally, to help them in their career, and/or to improve their effectiveness in their job. A mentee may want to learn to cope in times of change, overcome difficulties or grasp opportunities. Regardless of the specific aim, mentoring is fundamentally about learning and development. The essential quality of mentoring is that it helps learning and development to be a proactive, positive and generally enjoyable choice for both the mentor and mentee.

### 2.2 BENEFITS TO YOU, THE MENTOR

Being a mentor is challenging and stimulating. You can develop coaching and counselling skills, many of which are transferable to your personal and working life. You may acquire a greater understanding of issues through reflecting on them with your mentee, which can revitalise your interest in work. If you are older than your mentee, you may enjoy the contact and insights you get into the next generation and also increase your range of networks. You will probably feel considerable personal satisfaction when your mentee reports success, and from the knowledge that you are ‘putting something back’ into the system. As you are mentoring in a work-based programme, you may gain increased visibility inside your organisation. Mentoring can form part of your own career development and be relevant to your appraisal.

### 2.3 BENEFITS TO YOUR MENTEE

Many mentees find their self-confidence and motivation increase through sharing experiences and receiving one-on-one feedback. As a mentor, you act as a sounding board and a trusted ‘ally’ so your mentee can explore strengths and development areas in an encouraging environment, with the opportunity to think through his/her direction in life. You also act as a role model, consciously or not, enabling the mentee to see new ways of thinking and behaving. At times, you may provide useful contacts to your mentee and give advice and help in career progression.

### 2.4 BENEFITS TO THE ORGANISATION

The organisation benefits because people come to feel more positive and involved. Their performance, productivity and motivation increase, and they realise more of their potential. Staff retention improves, influenced by better communication within the organisation.

## 3. Roles in the mentoring process

### 3.1 WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS?

Your mentee may get support from a variety of people – such as a line manager and the Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor. All those who give support need to be clear about their roles at the outset. In an organisational programme, for instance, you would not usually mentor someone who is in your normal reporting line as you might face a conflict of interest.

### 3.2 KEY ROLES

#### 3.2.1 Your role as mentor

Your mentee's interests are paramount in your mentoring relationship. You are there to:

- Build an open and honest relationship, and create an atmosphere where your mentee feels safe to try out different ways of doing things.
- Support and encourage your mentee's personal development and learning by giving confidential feedback to reinforce what your mentee already does well, and help in areas such where he/she wants to develop.
- Help the mentee to take increasing initiative for his/her own learning and development and to take increasing responsibility for managing the mentoring relationship.

How this actually happens will depend on your mentee's needs, the context of the mentoring and your own personality. Your mentee may describe recent experiences and you could ask questions to help him/her see things from a different angle. Or you may act as a role model, describing how you handled similar situations in the past and showing what is possible to achieve.

There are many ways in which you and your mentee can work together, and your style will probably develop over time.

#### 3.2.2 Your mentee's role

Your mentee is there to seek development opportunities, self-learning, support and encouragement at a pace which suits him/her. Initially, your mentee may not feel very clear about what he/she wants from mentoring, and so your role as mentor is to help define these – although they may change as the mentoring process develops. Your mentee brings issues to the sessions and hopefully, in the time will experiment with new approaches, behaviours and techniques.

#### 3.2.3 Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor

You are part of a mentoring programme; the Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor will be a contact point for queries and will hopefully support you and your mentee if you have difficulties that you cannot resolve. The Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor maintains overall responsibility for the apprentice's progression during their time on the Scania Apprenticeship Programme. He/she plans and manages mentoring arrangements, provides any administrative backup, briefing, training, and reviews the progress of the programme.

## 4. Mentoring skills and responsibilities

You bring your own unique experience of life and work, combined with a friendly interest in your mentee's development. You don't need to be 'perfect'. Indeed, your mentee may find you very supportive if you are open about your own development needs as well as strengths. Some skills and qualities you will find useful are outlined below. How do you know how effectively you use your mentoring skills? You may not be the best judge of your own performance. You may want to ask your mentee for feedback (see section 7.2 giving and receiving feedback) or ask colleagues who know you well and ask them what you could improve on.

### 4.1 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

You will need a range of interpersonal skills including:

- Listening attentively and non-judgementally.
- Giving and receiving feedback.
- Questioning skills to encourage your mentee to talk and think through issues.
- The ability to challenge constructively.

### 4.2 NETWORKING SKILLS

By knowing how to get things done within the organisational system or social setting in which your mentee functions, you can help sign-post him/her to additional sources of help and advice. Build up your own references file of people with particular subject expertise, or the address and phone numbers of useful contacts.

### 4.3 PERSONAL ORGANISATION

Before you start mentoring, consider the amount of time you are willing to give. Is it the level of commitment that your mentee expects? When are you available for mentoring – during work or afterwards? Does your time come in one-hour slots or half-day periods? Can you give time on the phone?

### 4.4 FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE

Being flexible means that you respond appropriately to your mentee's changing needs, and is open to new ideas and different ways of doing things. Flexibility comes with increased awareness of your own behaviour and attitudes and those of others.

### 4.5 EXPECTATIONS

All the key people involved with the learning and development of your mentee will benefit from openly discussing their expectations of mentoring at the outset so that you all work to the same agenda. If you are part of a mentoring programme, the organisation(s) involved will probably have aims and expectations of the process. The Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor should brief you on these. If not, then ask.

### 4.6 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone involved in mentoring shares the responsibility for maintaining an ethical approach. This covers confidentiality to protect sensitive and personal information, and a belief in both the right and ability of mentees to make their own decisions. Other basic values that underpin mentoring include treating people with respect and honesty, and the importance of being non-judgemental. Mentoring can sometimes evoke strong feelings, such as anger. Clearly violence or harmful behaviour against the mentee or mentor is not appropriate, and you will need to discuss at the outset a framework for dealing with any strong feelings.



## 5. Review Process

### 5.1 REVIEWS

#### 5.1.1 Reviewing the relationship

- You should arrange regular reviews with your mentee to check that you are both finding the relationship useful, and learn from your shared experience. Reviews can be formal or informal. Aim to create an atmosphere where your mentee feels comfortable expressing views on all aspects of the mentoring. This will follow the Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor schedule.
- Ask your mentee whether he/she is feeling sufficiently challenged, getting into issues sufficiently deeply and meeting frequently enough. If you agreed stages of achievement or targets at the outset, you will both know whether you have made progress.
- At the end of the relationship, you and your mentee will benefit from reviewing your original expectations and aims against actual outcomes. As you are part of the Scania Apprenticeship Programme your Scania Assessor will ask you for a review statement at each meeting.

#### 5.1.2 Checking you are doing OK

Does your mentee seem engaged, responsive and spontaneous? Does he/she turn up regularly and promptly to the sessions and seem keen to set the next date, or do they frequently postpone or forget sessions? If you feel concerned, discuss this with your mentee. You both may feel relieved to have any problems out in the open so that you can deal with them together.

### 5.2 IF THE MENTORING IS NOT WORKING OUT

If you and your mentee have not been able to work together effectively, you may decide to suggest ending the relationship early. If this is the case you need to agree with the Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor the next stage of the process. It is important not to assign fault to either side. Use this as an opportunity to help the mentee be clear about the type of mentor they would like to work with.

## 6. Challenges and pitfalls

All mentors and mentees can experience difficulties, particularly in the early stages; we are here to help you resolve them.

PITFALLS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Roles and responsibilities are unclear.	Spend some time in a session clarifying roles (see section 3 Roles in the mentoring process).
You feel vague about what you are meant to be achieving.	Have you established with your mentee a clear, realistic purpose for the mentoring as a whole? Do you agree an agenda for each session? Although the mentee's aims take priority, if you are in a programme you and your mentee should also keep in mind the aims of the programme. If you are not sure what these are, the Scania Assessor can brief you.
Your mentee is not contributing much to the sessions and expects you to come up with all the suggestions.	You may be using a very directive style, in which case you will need to re-evaluate your approach as a mentor or receive more training. A rule of thumb is to listen more than you talk. If you are putting more energy into the relationship than the mentee, consider sitting back more. Mentees learn most effectively by setting their agenda, finding their own pace and making their own mistakes.
You experience a lack of 'chemistry' between you and your mentee.	Can you and your mentee find ways to improve communication and find areas of common interest? As a last resort, you could suggest the mentee seeks another mentor. No one is to blame if a relationship does not work, and your mentee can use the experience to identify more clearly what he or she wants in a mentor.
Your mentee implies that you are uninterested in the process although you do not feel this way. You just never seem to have the time to meet. However, you notice that other mentors and mentees seem to build rapport more quickly.	<p>Maybe you are appearing to make the mentoring a low priority by cancelling sessions at the last moment, finding difficulty in scheduling appointments or cutting sessions short. If time management is a general problem, you might consider some specific skills training or ask other mentors for tips about how they manage.</p> <p>Your mentoring agreement should include the minimum time assigned to mentoring. Never underestimate the time to unwind, relax and discuss safe areas before moving in to more difficult issues.</p>

PITFALLS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
<p>Your mentee appears dependant on you.</p>	<p>At the start you may need to give a lot of guidance and support, but aim to reduce this as the mentoring relationship grows and the mentee's confidence increases.</p> <p>Turn back mentee's questions and make clear that you are not a subject expert (unless you are).</p> <p>Encourage them to keep a learning diary to reflect on what they have learnt. Support them to set the agenda and decide their own targets. As your relationship develops, increase the time-span between sessions and encourage them to use resources other than yourself.</p>
<p>You feel uncomfortable challenging your mentee.</p>	<p>Ideally your mentor's training should include a reminder of basic feedback to specific observed behaviour and balance positive with negative.</p> <p>If you find your particular limitations interfere with the mentoring process then you should strongly consider suspending work with the mentee and providing support from another source.</p>
<p>You feel uncomfortable when your mentee talks about emotional matters or is franker than is usual in other work relationships.</p>	<p>Everyone has their own level of comfort when dealing with emotions. Discuss this with your mentee, keeping the focus on him/her. If emotional issues are important for the mentee, they may need to find another mentor. Are these issues that present you with problems in your work or home life? You might want to find yourself a mentor to explore them further.</p>
<p>Your mentee tells you something that you believe has serious implications outside of the mentoring relationship.</p>	<p>Discuss with your support person. In some cases you are bound by law to take appropriate action.</p> <p>This in itself need not be a problem if both parties have agreed boundaries to cover such situations at the start of the relationship.</p>

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## 7. Supporting learning and development

### 7.1 DIFFERENCES IN STYLE

Over the years you have probably developed preferences for the way you learn. You may learn best from 'hands-on' experiences, preferring to act first and think afterwards. Or you may prefer to watch an expert, or read a book on the subject, or work out a theory of what is happening before you launch in. You may like to have precise instructions, or you may find these get in the way.

There is no one right way to learn and you may find that your own style is different from your mentee's. Try and adapt your usual approach to suit your mentee, while paying attention to your own level of comfort.

Regularly reviewing your relationship will indicate if you are being successful.

### 7.2 GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Remember to give positive feedback on areas where your mentee did well.

All of us have blind spots – aspects of ourselves that others see but we cannot. We become more self-aware when someone else alerts us to these and gives us feedback about what we do or how we do it. How do you tend to react to feedback? Do you take it on board totally without discriminating or do you reject it straight-away? Or do you think about it, explore it and make sense of it in a way that is right for you? Your reaction may be affected by the manner in which the feedback is given.

Your feedback to others will be more effective if you describe specific behaviour that you have observed.

Focus on aspects of performance that your mentee can improve on. Ask questions rather than make statements so that your mentee can reach his/her own understanding of the situation.

## 8. Developing yourself as a mentor

### 8.1 ASSESSING YOUR OWN EFFECTIVENESS

Expect to learn and develop from being a mentor. To get the most benefit, you can ask for feedback on your performance from colleagues as well as your mentee. Exchange experiences with other mentors, within the bounds set by confidentiality. You will need to allocate time, however brief, to assessing the impact of your own behaviour, values and beliefs on your mentoring relationship. What are the mentor skills and qualities that you would like to develop in yourself (see section 4 mentoring skills and responsibilities). Think also about how effectively you manage your time. What coping strategies do you use when you are under stress?

How much do you actually practise an ethical way of working, equality of opportunity or non-discrimination?

### 8.2 SUPPORT

You will need at least one person to whom you can trust for advice and support, regardless of how long you have been a mentor. It also helps to have procedures for different contingencies, such as suddenly discovering that your mentee has problems with alcohol or drugs. Networking with other mentors will give you ideas. Contact your Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor to provide details of access to other mentors.

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## 9. Aide-mémoire

### 9.1 AIMS AT THE START OF MENTORING

You could write your mentee's aims in the table below at the start of mentoring and refer back to them regularly to check you are on track.

What are my mentee's aims for learning and development?
What can you, as the mentor, do to help them reach these aims?

### 9.2 REVIEW OF AIMS (EVERY 6 WEEKS WITH YOUR SCANIA ASSESSOR)

It is worth reviewing progress together at regular intervals to make sure your mentee is getting what he/ she needs from mentoring. You might consider reviewing the following:

- These sessions could be up to 3 hours in duration.
- Aims your mentee has not achieved.
- Are any of these aims now irrelevant or unrealistic?
- Does your mentee have any additional aims for mentoring?
- How often will you meet? If necessary this could be once a month with phone contact in between, once you have established a working relationship.
- How long are the sessions likely to be?
- Where will you meet – in work or out?
- Will you go to your mentee, or vice versa?
- Who will arrange room bookings?
- Who takes responsibility for ensuring meetings are private and uninterrupted?
- What are the arrangements for cancellations?

### 9.3 MENTORING AGREEMENT

- What outcomes are you aiming for? What targets might you set?
- What are your responsibilities, and what are your mentee's?
- What limits are you setting for confidentiality?
- What involvement or expectations (if any) do any third parties have of the mentoring relationship? (Third parties may be governmental, professional or trade bodies, your organisation, your mentee's line manager, personal assessor or a parent or guardian).
- Professional issues
- Can your mentee contact you between sessions and vice versa?
- Will there be limits to the scope of mentoring?
- Are there areas of development that you do not feel equipped to address where your mentee may need to look elsewhere for help?
- Do you intend to keep records? If so what will you record, so you have the mentee's agreement and where will you store the information?

### 9.4 PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE FIRST SESSION

- Ask other mentors or mentees about their experiences.

In a mentoring scheme

- What is the Scania Apprenticeship Programme's scope and aims? The Scania Apprenticeship Programme Assessor should provide briefing documents or guidelines.
- Before starting mentoring, find out at least your mentee's name and role. A CV can be useful.
- Did he/she choose you as a mentor? If not, is your mentee OK about this choice?

- Is the mentee's line manager or other key person supportive of mentoring? Do they anticipate any problems or need any more (non-confidential) information? Do you need a three-way meeting between mentor, mentee and key person to discuss issues?

### 9.5 IF YOUR MENTEE HAS APPROACHED YOU DIRECTLY

- What does your mentee want to get from mentoring? If he/she does not have any clear objectives, this should become part of the discussion in your first session.
- What background information does your mentee want you to know at the outset?

### 9.6 ASSESSOR/LEARNER REVIEW MEETING

- Introduction.
- Agree in advance how long the first session will be and check this with your mentee in the session.
- Any previous experience of mentoring or of being mentored?
- If required, be the mentee, briefly describe what mentoring is, and what it is not.
- Discuss your mentee's circumstances, aims and expectations. Complete your mentoring agreement if you have not already done this.
- Clarify what you both have agreed to do before the next meeting.
- Review first impressions.
- Agree date and place of next meeting, and any outline 'agenda' you want to set.



### 9.7 ARE YOU AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR?

You are probably working effectively when:

- Your mentee achieves his/her aims.
- Your mentee thanks you.
- The colleague of an ex-mentee asks your mentor them too.
- Your mentee wants to proceed to a new stage of development with you as a mentor.
- You are asked to support other mentors.
- Management consults you about the future developments in the mentoring scheme.
- Your mentee admits that you were a help even though he/she did not appreciate it at the time.

### 9.8 FINAL THOUGHT

Most of us can look back and identify certain special people who have been there for us at critical stages of our lives, helping us to acquire new skills and make the most of the opportunities and challenges. This handbook will help you to consider all aspects and facets of the relationship you have with your mentee – what we cannot describe is the joy of watching another person truly become empowered.







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