

Mentoring Done Right: Quick Tips on How to Be a Good Mentor at Work

The HR Digest | Anuradha Mukherjee | May 27, 2026

Looking for tips on mentoring so you can level up your support skills? One of the best uses of industry knowledge lies in mentoring the future generation of workers on what's to come, but it can be hard to know exactly how to be a good mentor without any guidance on training.

Not every employee in the workplace is naturally suited to the role of mentor, and yet each one has the ability to contribute something critical to the future careers of junior employees. While some employees lack the communication skills or the confidence in their abilities, they can still develop the qualities of a good mentor and effectively contribute to the onboarding and support of a new hire. Developing mentorship skills isn't something that can always be comprehensively covered with a checklist, but if you're eager to don the mentorship role and make a difference beyond your own role, these mentoring tips and best practices should help.



(Image: Pexels)

For those who are serious about guiding the workforce towards success, these tips on mentoring could come in handy.

How to Be a Good Role Model: Tips and Tricks for Getting Mentoring Right

Knowing how to be a good mentor first requires us to understand what a good mentor looks like. A mentor isn't just someone who gives employees tasks to do or occasionally answers a

question or two about how things work. The role of a mentor is considerably more expansive. It requires mentors to take an active interest in the employee and their careers to ensure that they learn, grow, and chart a career for themselves with the expertise they gain. It involves supporting employees and providing guidance that can help them make decisions and trust in their own abilities with a more comprehensive understanding of where they stand.

The qualities of a good mentor include:

- A comprehensive understanding of the industry and the trends and technologies reshaping it
- Good listening skills, alongside the patience to interpret the queries that new hires may not be able to put into words perfectly
- An empathetic nature that is willing to understand the employee's concerns
- The ability to encourage, inspire, and motivate workers
- Clear communication skills that can be channeled towards educating the employee
- Goal-setting capabilities to help with creating personal milestones for the worker
- An eye for detail to ensure that the employee's growth isn't hindered by errors and blind spots
- The ability to provide honest but constructive criticism when it's needed
- Teaching skills that come in handy when guiding employees through practical training scenarios
- A keen interest in the future of the workforce and a desire to inspire them to reach for more

Recent data has shown us that young Gen Z hires are disconnected from the workplace, their degrees and education falling short of fully preparing them for employment. A good mentor can make all the difference, helping them learn everything from navigating interpersonal communication to perfecting workplace etiquette.

What Do Mentorship Responsibilities in the Workplace Involve?

The exact role of a mentor can vary from organization to organization. Some businesses have a clear mentorship program that requires mentors to fulfil set duties on the job. In other cases, employees may reach out to leaders within the organization for guidance, which could lead to an informal mentor role. A mentor's responsibilities in the workplace depend largely on the structure and nature of the organization, extending anywhere from a one-session interaction to an elaborate program where an employee is assigned to the mentor permanently.

The content of the mentor role can similarly vary. Mentors may be assigned to help induct a new hire and aid them with settling into their role by answering questions and giving them the lay of the land. On the other hand, mentors could also be brought in to support employees in their training, progress, and career-building ambitions over the years. No matter the scope of the role, all the qualities of a good mentor remain essential during their interaction with mentees.

Some Quick Advice on Workplace Mentoring: Tips on How to Get It Right

Having understood the role of a mentor, if you're still keen on becoming a good example of a leader and pillar of support at your organization, here are some mentoring tips on how you can prepare:

- Sign up for any mentorship programs or trainings your organization offers, or seek such training externally
- Keep up with industry trends so you can share insights with the mentee to help widen their horizon
- Attend soft skills and leadership trainings to expand on your skills as a mentor
- Understand the organizational requirements from mentors, but set your own goals on how you want to get it right
- Regularly review your own capabilities to understand whether you might need to make improvements in specific areas
- Revisit your own biases and reservations to ensure you aren't holding your mentee back from opportunities
- Develop a genuine interest in employees to understand where they stand and what they need

Mentoring Best Practices to Guide You in Your Mentorship Duties:

- Listen to and understand what the employee needs from you
- Don't be dismissive of employee concerns, as they may not be as familiar and comfortable with operations as you are
- Plan out how accessible you will be to the employee, so they know how and when they can get in touch
- Set objectives for yourself and collaborate with employees to help them set their own goals
- Give and take honest feedback so both you and your employees can speak without hesitation
- Support employees, particularly during turbulent periods, so they know they are not alone at work
- Help employees build their skills and knowledge, especially in areas where they may be weaker
- Allow workers to shadow you or gain more hands-on experience so their interactions with you don't solely depend on advice
- Discuss learnings and their potential application in the real world to urge the employee to think critically
- Let employees make their decisions after discussing them, rather than forcing them to do what you would
- Review progress towards goals periodically to ensure the mentee is on the right track
- Reflect on your learnings from the employee, as reverse mentorship programs are just as beneficial

- Accept feedback on your mentoring to keep growth at the center of your own goals

Good Mentors Don't Treat Their Mentorship Duties as a Passive Responsibility

A good mentor does not have to turn into a helicopter parent in the workplace for them to be effective at guiding workers towards success. They do, however, need to be involved in the workplace experience and progress of their mentees and check in on how they are performing. Even if the mentorship program just calls for a check-in once every month, it's important to be prepared for these discussions, read the reports, and generally have insights or talking points to ensure the conversation is productive.

Much like any other role in the workplace, mentorship skills develop with practice, time, and a serious desire to play the role well. A good mentor can be transformative for an employee, and these tips on mentoring may offer a good starting point for playing this critical role well.