

City of London Guild of Public Relations Practitioners

Mentoring Scheme

Protocol

24 March 2004

City of London Guild of Public Relations Practitioners

Objective

In support of the broad objectives of the Guild of Public Relations Practitioners, to provide a mechanism for highly experienced practitioners in membership of the Guild to offer support and guidance to other practitioners at pivotal moments during their careers.

What is Mentoring?

There is no one agreed definition of mentoring, but it is generally accepted that the relationship is characterised by a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another; the mentor can help the mentee make a significant transition in their knowledge, work or thinking. The mentor acts as a trusted and experienced friend and adviser. The mentor should support, encourage and guide.

What it is not

Mentoring is not coaching or training. It should not try to replace an individual's normal career development paths.

Who are potential mentees?

Individuals who may benefit from mentoring by Guild members are those who are facing pivotal moments in their career. At one level this could be young practitioners just embarking on their careers, at another it could be people who are considering significant changes in career direction – for example moving from agency to in-house or considering setting up on own.

To obtain the maximum benefit, the mentee must have a clear idea about what he/she wants to get out of the relationship and this must be agreed and supported by the mentor.

Rules/contract

In their first meeting a mentor and mentee should discuss and draw up a simple “contract” which will govern their future relationship. This should cover:

1. Expectations of the relationship

What the mentee wants out of the relationship and how the mentor can meet those expectations.

2. Time constraints and accessibility

How much time will the mentor devote to the relationship? This could be in the form of regular meetings (eg one hour a month), or an agreed amount of time over a six or twelve-month period. How available will the mentor be to the mentee outside these periods? The Mentor must accept that he/she has to make a clear commitment to the times agreed.

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Normally a contract between a mentor and mentee will last for one year, with the possibility of one or two periods of renewal.

3. Conflicts of interest/confidentiality

There must be an explicit statement of these issues. The mentee must have confidence that any information given to the mentor, whether personal or commercial, will be treated with absolute confidentiality; if there is any danger that there could be a conflict of interest, then the area should be avoided. The mentee must **not** see the relationship as a form of job hunting. To emphasise this point the mentee should not normally be eligible for appointment to the mentor's organisation while the relationship continues.

4. Responsibility of Mentor

The mentor owes a duty of care to the mentee. He/she must recognise that he/she will be advising an individual who is facing difficult career/life choices. They must provide the time (within the contract) to deal with issues properly. The mentor should also be prepared to refer the mentee to other sources of advice.

5. Responsibility of mentee

The mentee must set out clearly at the outset what he/she wants to get out of the mentoring process. He/she should also recognise that the purpose of mentoring is to provide broad guidance, not to resolve individual PR or business problems. He/she must let the mentor know if needs or expectations change

6. Evaluation

At the end of 12 months the mentor and mentee should jointly evaluate the progress of the relationship.

Training

The Guild will provide a short training course for potential mentors. This will last no more than half a day. There are also a number of experienced mentors who are members of the Guild; these will provide a support network for mentors.

We will aim to run two training courses for 5/6 members each by September 2004.

How do I become a mentor?

In order to be approved by the Guild as a mentor you will need to:

- Be a fully paid up member of Guild
- A member of IPR and/or confirm that in your work as a PR practitioner you comply with IPR code of conduct www.ipr.org.uk
- Demonstrate that you have been trained as a mentor or agree to undertake a short training session

If you are interested please fill in the attached form and provide a short biography/CV of no more than 300 words. This should be returned to The Clerk.

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Identifying mentees

We do not wish to raise expectations that we cannot fulfil and therefore in the initial stages of the scheme we hope that members of the Guild will be able to identify a small number of people to whom we can offer this service. If you know of a potential mentee please discuss the possibility with him/her and return details to the Clerk. As the number of mentors is limited please do not make any commitment to the potential mentee.

Database

The Clerk will keep a simple database of mentors and potential mentees. Material sent to the Clerk for inclusion on the database should be clearly identified as such and will be treated with full confidentiality.

How the scheme will work

The Clerk will provide the Education Committee with details of Mentors and Mentees held on her database. In the course of its regular meetings the Committee will identify suitable matches and the mentor and mentee will be notified. Detailed arrangements for meetings will be for the two to arrange between them.

A copy of the agreed “contract” should be sent to the Clerk.

Other Information

There are a number of websites with useful background on mentoring. Two that members may wish to look at are:

The National Mentoring Network <http://www.nmn.org.uk>

The National Mentoring Consortium <http://www.uel.ac.uk/nmc/>

The Clerk
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