

NEW YORK WOMEN IN COMMUNICATIONS MENTORING PROGRAM

Guidelines for Mentees

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a powerful personal development and empowerment tool through which one person facilitates the development of another by sharing known resources, expertise, values, skills, perspectives, attitudes and proficiencies. It allows the mentee to build skills and knowledge while working toward attaining career goals. At the same time, it provides an opportunity for the mentor to further enhance their skills and knowledge areas through exposure to fresh perspectives.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING

Mentoring brings value to everyone involved in its practice: mentees, mentors and in our case, New York Women in Communications (NYWICI), the sponsoring organization. Mentees have an opportunity to gain wisdom from an experienced professional. Mentors have an opportunity to invest in someone who can benefit from their skilled guidance. Both mentors and mentees can learn from one another. There is much potential to transform lives. NYWICI has the opportunity to share and spread this acquired learning and know-how throughout its membership.

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Great relationships can empower great careers at all levels. Wherever you are in your career, mentoring can provide an opportunity to learn and grow, whether you are a mentor or a mentee. There needs to be a collaborative effort and joint accountability about what is being learned, how learning can be best communicated and evaluated to create a successful learning outcome.

Development in a mentoring relationship means identifying and encouraging growth. As you move forward with your mentor, please remember to keep your professional and personal development goals at the center of your conversations and shared activities.

During the course of the year, we hope to facilitate a mentoring program gathering, which you will be encouraged to attend together. It would also be beneficial for you to arrange to meet your mentor at other, regularly scheduled NYWICI events or industry programs outside of the organization.

INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP MENTORING

You can ask to work with a mentor one-on one or ask to join a small group of mentees, hosted by one mentor. You can tell us your preference for mentoring in the application.

WORKING WITH YOUR MENTOR

- Communicate consistently with your mentor. Encourage the importance of maintaining the schedule, you agree to. Communicate immediately if there is a change in the schedule.
- You may choose to have a working agenda for the topics during your meetings, phone calls or emails.
- Please remember that the relationship between you and your mentor is professional and that communications should remain confidential.
- Please use your discretion regarding sharing personal contact information with your mentor.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUR MENTOR

- Ask for advice and welcome constructive criticism. Often people are hesitant to offer advice when they do not know you very well. Be as specific as possible when asking for advice. A good mentor will offer both constructive criticism and suggestions for your work, so be open to both.
- Be considerate of your mentor's time. You can expect quality time from them, but, in return, you need to be considerate. Return e-mails, texts, phone calls promptly and be on time if you schedule meetings. If you have agreed to meet at a specific date and time, or have planned to attend a particular organization event, and find that you can't attend, be sure to let your mentor know with plenty of notice.
- Listen to what your mentor has to say. Mentors, having "been there," have valuable insight into what you may face in your future career. You will discover that your mentor's information is beneficial for the present and in the future. Absorb the advice your mentor has to offer on all aspects of your career.
- Seriously consider the advice given to you by your mentor, even if your immediate reaction is not positive. A mentor seldom offers advice or criticism lightly. They've been in your shoes. It's very reasonable to ask for time to consider their advice and then get back to them with your response. While you certainly don't have to follow their advice, remember that they do have experience and skills that you haven't

mastered yet. A mentor has your best interest in mind. They are there to champion you.

- Show appreciation for the time and assistance given to you by your mentor. Mentors need encouragement too, and constructive feedback will help your mentor guide you in the most effective way. Let them know how their advice worked in your situation.
- Make only positive or neutral comments about your mentor to others.
If, after a period of time, you don't believe that either you or your mentor are able to participate in an effective mentoring relationship, then don't be averse to discussing this with your mentor and possibly ending the relationship. If this occurs, NYWICI can assist in placing you in a relationship with a different mentor who may be a better match. If the relationship does end, if at all possible, try to end it on professional terms. It is no reflection on either of you if a particular pair isn't suitable.
- Keep the door open with your mentor. You never know when you may need their advice or assistance at some point in the future. And later, when the formal mentoring relationship is no longer active, consider staying in touch to provide "progress" reports. You never know when a situation will come up in which you could use some good advice.

POINTERS FOR MENTEES

Be observant

- Always be observing others. Ask yourself, "Will their style work for me? Do I want to do this?"
- Ask your mentor how they have handled certain situations in their career and if appropriate, use their responses as a guide if you are faced with similar issues.
- Be willing to depart from your comfort zone and be open to learning new things.
- Recognize that bringing out different behaviors leads to greater self-discovery and understanding of what works for various people.
- Be open to getting feedback from your mentor.
- Feedback helps us learn and grow. Do not be afraid to initiate conversations that will give you this much needed information.
- Make the most of your mentoring time together.

Set goals, desired outcomes, and prepare

- Ask yourself key questions before each interaction in preparation:
 - "What are my goals?"

- “What have I learned from a recent situation?”
- “What situations are coming up that might be challenging and why?”
- “What good/interesting news do I have to share?”
- Listen actively. Take notes.
- Go out of your way to schedule time to meet with your mentor –be mindful of where and when it is most convenient for them. NYWICI will offer a number of opportunities to attend events with your mentor. You may also suggest industry functions you can attend together.

Follow-up with your mentor on results

- Try some of your mentor’s suggestions and share the results. Identify something in particular that was significant to you, how you tried the suggestion and share the result of your action.
- Let your mentor know you appreciate their time and the ways in which their advice is helpful to you.
- Share career-related information with your mentor.
- Share interesting articles, sites and books you’re reading with your mentor. Be sure to make your mentor aware if you are involved in a new technology or industry news you think would be of interest. Let your mentor know of industry functions you might want to plan to attend together.

BRINGING THE RELATIONSHIP TO A CLOSE

- Your role as a mentee is voluntary. The NYWICI program is an annual one.
- If the mentorship is ending, bring it to closure. Thank your mentor for the chance to participate, and for their time and energy. Perhaps discuss with your mentor what you have gained.

If for any reason you feel you need to discuss your mentoring relationship or the mentoring program, please contact Donna-Jean Plante (donna-jean.plante@nywici.org). NYWICI is here to help enhance your mentor-mentee relationship experience. Please note, it is imperative that you communicate to us if you do not hear from your mentor after two attempts of reaching out.