

TITLE: Lifecycle of a mentoring relationship

1. Introduction

In this guideline, the typical five phases in the lifecycle of a mentoring process are presented and explained so that future mentors can gain a good insight into the mentoring process.

2. Key elements

2.1. The Lifecycle Model¹ - Phases

The lifecycle model describes the typical five phases in a mentoring process. The progress goes from (1) *Building rapport*, (2) *Setting a goal or direction*, (3) *Progression towards the goal*, (4) *Winding up* to (5) *Moving on*.

Preparation Phase

The lifecycle model begins with the start of the relationship. For a successful mentoring relationship a preparation phase should be planned. It is important to know what your expectations are for providing or receiving mentoring. Some self-reflection on your areas of strengths/ weaknesses is recommended for both, mentor and mentee. For the mentor, it is beneficial to gather as much information as possible about the mentee, the business sector, the business etc. before the first meeting.

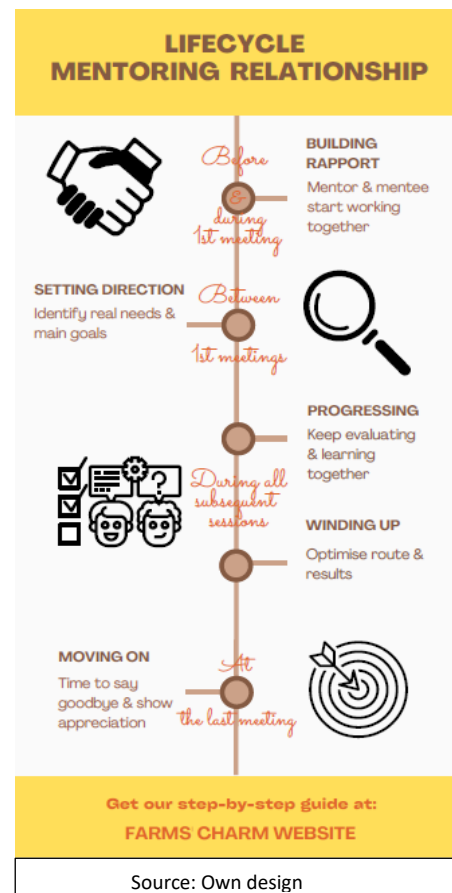
Phase 1: Building Rapport

In this phase, it is important to look at what values the mentor and mentee share and how they are going to work together. The first meetings are good to build trust, identify the business needs and define goals. The five key components – trust, focus, empathy, congruence and empowerment - are essential for rapport. Good rapport is an important factor throughout the mentoring journey. It should be reflected upon and evaluated by both, the mentor and mentee, on a regular basis.

It is crucial for the success of the partnership that for personal rapport building mentor and mentee be prepared to talk about their expectations and hopes for the relationship during the first meeting, and to share some personal interests and stories which can help establish common ground. The ground rules for the relationship should be discussed and agreed up front. A formal contract or agreement can help in doing this.

Phase 2: Setting Direction

Having clear aims and objectives is important in creating a sense of purpose and in some respect urgency. The mentee needs to articulate with the help of the mentor if required, what kind of transition s/he wants to achieve.



¹ by Clutterbuck and Lane, 2004

Phase 3: Progression

In the mature and most productive stage of the mentoring relationship, the mentee will start to show more independence as his/ her confidence grows. S/he will be in less need of support/ advice from the mentor. It is a very good time to look at whether or not best use is being made of the learning opportunity.

Phase 4: Winding Up

In this phase, the relationship becomes more mutual in terms of learning/ support. The mentee gradually becomes more and more self-reliant. By now, the mentee should be in charge of the mentoring process, so that the mentor's role is much more reactive. It is appropriate during this stage for the mentor to review frequently with the mentee what both parties are getting out of the relationship and let matters take their course. The objectives defined at the beginning of the relationship will gradually be realised by this time.

Phase 5: Moving On

There comes a time in the relationship when it is appropriate to move on. This could be defined by the specifics of the mentoring scheme or when the mentee has achieved most/ all of his/ her goals. This could also happen when discussions lack freshness and either the mentor or the mentee begins to feel constrained by the relationship.

3. Example

After Mrs. Diana had explained the basic ideas of her project at the first meeting and defined concrete objectives and implementation strategies together with her mentor, Mrs. Sophie. Mrs. Diana began with the first implementation steps. At each subsequent meeting, the respective status quo was discussed, questions and further procedure were concretised, so that Mrs. Diana was able to work increasingly independently on the implementation of her project. The support from the mentor has been very helpful and the mentoring could soon be completed. Mrs. Diana and Mrs. Sophie are very satisfied with the progress and the mentoring process.



4. Benefits and potential impact

The benefits and impact you might have from the guideline implementation are:

For the mentor	For the mentee
✓ To know the steps of the mentoring process	✓ To know the steps of the mentoring process
✓ To know what support to provide at each stage	✓ To know what forms of support are offered
✓ Know that the support is becoming less and less needed	✓ To know that s/he can increasingly act independently