



# **Mentorship Program**

# **Mentor Handbook**

## **1. What Is 'Mentoring'?**

Mentoring at the Burlington Chamber of Commerce draws upon mentoring and coaching principles. The Chamber assigns a successful professional/entrepreneur to act as an advisor, guide, and coach to another individual often from the same industry or profession. This approach is characterized by listening, identifying development opportunities for the mentee, stimulating his/her learning, and providing for constructive feedback through reflection. This method includes sharing information and knowledge gained through the mentor's personal professional experiences.

The primary goal is to support the personal and professional development of the mentees. The mentees will have the chance to discuss about their goals, challenges, and to develop relationships with key industry contacts.

This mentoring approach is a formalized relationship between professionals and entrepreneurs who have expressed a desire to guide and support other Chamber members.

### **Types of mentor support:**

- Listening when the mentee has a question, concern, or subject to discuss.
- Identifying the mentee's feelings and verifying them.
- Providing appropriate information and support.
- Helping the mentee to think more positively and proactively.
- Encouraging the mentee's involvement in Chamber activities.
- Sharing relevant experiences, knowledge, and skills (e.g., juggling work and networking, time management, and integrating into the workplace as an entrepreneur).

## **2. Anticipated Benefits**

As an experienced professional and mentor, you will have the opportunity to:

- Give something back and make a difference in a Chamber member's career;
- Network and exchange ideas with fellow member;
- Develop your leadership skills by supporting other members;
- Receive a certificate from the Burlington Chamber of Commerce;
- Add valuable skills and experience to your resume;
- Participate in mentor training at no cost for your own.

### 3. Characteristics of a Good Mentor

A mentor is:

- **A Guide** - who drives the mentoring process by helping the mentee to make up his/her own mind without imposing solutions.
- **An Advisor** - who gives peer advice, shares his/her experiences, provides information about policies and procedures, and refers the mentee to support services.
- **A Role Model** - who demonstrates strong leadership skills and encourages the mentee to participate in all Chamber activities.
- **A Confidant** - who respects the confidential nature of the mentoring relationship.
- **A Friend** — who is a caring and open individual.

### 4. Participants' Roles and Responsibilities

#### 4.1. Mentor

##### 4.1.1. Objectives

- To assist the mentee to identify personal and professional skills to be successful
- To refer the mentee to appropriate resources within the Chamber or outside.
- To develop one's own leadership.

##### 4.1.2. Responsibilities

- Initiate the contact with the mentee upon receiving his or her coordinates within a week and set up a first meeting in person.
- Communicate with the mentee in person, on the phone, via e-mail or instant messenger for approximately 4 hours per month.
- Participate in the training sessions when and if offered by the Chamber.
- Participate in the feedback sessions and other related events.
- Submit progress reports every week.
- Submit a final program evaluation.

Note: Suggested places for in-person meetings are public spaces.

#### Expectations

- Meet the program objectives.
- Meet your mentee at least once in person within the first week of the program.
- Report any problems immediately to the mentorship program team.
- Provide additional information to your mentee, based on your experience, but you are NOT replacing the program administrator (i.e., not dealing with actual issues regarding the Chamber – please let us know if there are any concerns/issues)
- Provide relevant feedback to the Mentorship Program Team for the improvement of the program.

#### **4.2. Mentee**

- Identifies a preferred method of communication and the goals to be achieved from the mentoring relationship.
- Communicates with the mentor approximately 4 hours per month via the preferred method of communication.
- Provides updates to the mentorship team on the mentoring relationship through weekly progress reports.
- Explores opportunities for personal and professional growth.

#### **4.3. Mentorship Program Team**

- Monitors the mentoring relationship throughout the duration of the program and makes sure that the program goals are met.
- Provides support to the mentors and mentees.
- Conducts information sessions for mentors and mentees.
- Maintains an OPEN DOOR policy — you are encouraged to contact the team with any issues or questions at any time.

### **5. What to Expect as a Mentor?**

#### **5.1. Things to keep in mind**

- Developing a mentoring relationship is like creating a valued partnership. Similar to other valued partnerships, you should have a genuine desire to understand the expectations and values of your mentee.
- A mentoring relationship is formal and professional in nature. Thus, you are responsible for applying and upholding the standards (i.e., Mentoring Code of Conduct) in mentoring.

#### **5.2. Consider a mentee as someone who**

- Is more or less new to the entrepreneurship world and wants to be successful.
- Is exploring opportunities for self-enhancement.
- Is interested in learning and advancing beyond the present position.
- Needs a social network.
- Has valuable experience that you can also learn from.

#### **5.3. A mentee is NOT**

- Without weaknesses or failings.
- A person who needs overall changes in habit, behavior and thinking.
- Unable to withstand constructive feedback.
- Someone who shares all your values and your way of thinking.
- A person who will ask for help all the time.

## **6. Challenges in Mentoring**

- Establishing the initial contact.
- Defining times for meetings or activities.
- Developing mutual trust and respect.
- Feeling rejected: you offer your help and your mentee is not ready to accept it.
- Having a mentee who eventually drops out of the program.

## **7. A Guide to Building a Successful Mentoring Relationship**

(Adapted from Dench, Hutchinson & Levine, 1993)

### **7.1. Starting-out discovery phase**

- Get to know your mentee — his/her personality, beliefs, values, and culture.
- Establish a method and a frequency of communication throughout the mentoring relationship.
- Become a resource person for the mentee.

#### **7.1.1. Things to keep in mind**

- Be aware of the fact that the mentoring relationship takes time and commitment to develop.
- Take time to get to know each other's personalities, interests, and needs.
- Taking things slowly can help increase the comfort level.
- Take it easy! It is like "cold calling" in a sales environment as two new people are getting to know each other.
- Avoid assumptions; do not judge mentee's personality based on a phone conversation.
- Take initiative in communication (i.e., scheduling meetings, making phone calls, and other forms of communication) and maintain on-going dialogues.
- Be sensitive to cross-cultural similarities and differences and how they may influence your interactions.

#### **7.1.2. What do mentors do in this phase?**

- Introduce yourself to the mentee and explain how you received his/her information.
- Find out what the mentee has done in terms of previous professional/educational experience.
- Talk about why you are interested in mentoring and inquire about how the mentee found out about the mentorship program and other resources.
- Inform your mentee about upcoming Chamber events that might be of interest.

- Set up the methods and frequency of communication and role expectations (e.g., providing referrals to other resources, socializing).
- Provide the mentee with your contact information and availability and later follow up with an email.

## **7.2. Follow-up exploration phase**

- Further explore goals and expectations, and the areas in which the mentee may need further support.
- Informally clarify your common interests, values, and objectives at the Chamber.
- Set up routine meetings and activities.
- Initiate joint activities if needed.

### **7.2.1. Things to keep in mind**

- Your mentee's needs determine the nature of your relationship. Mentee's trust and comfort does not happen right away; it takes time, commitment, and sensitivity to develop.
- In the beginning, your mentee might view you as 'Superman' — somebody who has all the answers and experience. This will decrease gradually.
- Do not decide on what your mentee needs.
- You will do more "listening" as your mentee gets to know you better and feel more comfortable and less intimidated.
- Adjust your communication style to accommodate that of your mentee (e.g., directness/indirectness; outspoken manner vs. reticence; outgoing vs. reserved). This will help your mentee feel more comfortable.
- Be sensitive and attend to mentee's verbal and nonverbal clues.

### **7.2.2. What do mentors do in this phase?**

As a mentor, you provide guidance and support through sharing experiences and communicating support:

- Sharing personal and professional experiences
- Communicating support:
  - Support and reassure your mentee during difficulties
  - Help the mentee to build confidence, to make independent decisions and to be responsible for his/her own success.
  - Point out his/her strengths and weaknesses.

### **7.3. Stabilization continuation phase**

- Needs, values, and beliefs of the mentee will be clarified and be made more visible.
- The Mentee is more familiar with the environment, better understands how to deal with the program, and is more involved in social life.
- Personality of the mentee will be evident (e.g., gregarious, animated, spontaneous vs. low-key, retiring, reflective).

Note: This stabilization phase can last for weeks.

#### **7.3.1. Things to keep in mind**

- Do not expect your mentee to always follow your advice.
- Put yourself in the mentee's position; see the issue from his/her point of view.
- Find out the mentee's feelings and concerns.
- Respond to the mentee's need properly.

#### **7.3.2. What do mentors do in this phase?**

- Follow up on weekly progress reports.
- Make sure your mentee is getting what he/she needs.
- Recommend Chamber activities or other professional events to join.

### **7.4. Closure wrap-up phase**

- Less frequent contact as the mentee becomes self-sufficient. The mentee acquires problem-solving skills.
- The mentee becomes a leader and no longer depends on you.
- An equal learning partnership is developed (i.e., the mentor and the mentee learn from each other's similarities and differences).
- The closure of the relationship indicates you have fulfilled your job as a mentor.

#### **7.4.1. Things to keep in mind**

- When your mentee stops calling you all the time, it means he/she has learned the necessary skills and you have done your job as a mentor. Celebrate your success!

#### **7.4.2. What do mentors do in this phase?**

- Recall the progress, lessons learned, and strengths of the mentee.
- Discuss some positive actions and directions for the future.
- Re-define your partnership; ensure that trust and mutual respect is intact.
- Mutually agree upon how, when, or if you will stay in touch.

**References:**

Ryerson University, <http://www.ryerson.ca/lt/resources>, 05/10/2008

Be A Mentor, Inc., <http://www.beamentor.org>, 05/10/2008

Concordia University, <http://www.concordia.ca/>, 02/12/2018