



Mentoring of (starting) female entrepreneurs by experienced female entrepreneurs

Mentoring stimulates young women in their personal and professional development. It offers role models to young women.

Mentoring of female students during the transition from education to entrepreneurship is a good way of guiding starting entrepreneurs in all kinds of practical matters facing them during this crucial period in their lives. Mentoring of young entrepreneurs yields interesting information and give insight into career bottle necks, as experienced by other female entrepreneurs (in SET). The mentors can fulfil a supportive role as inspiring models, skilled experts and sounding boards for their mentees. The mentees feel highly supported and as a result, their confidence increases.

The Role of the Mentor

Being a mentor is an enriching experience for you and your own business. Often, when sharing our own experiences, we realize that we have a tremendous amount of insight to offer. The feeling of being needed and able to help in the life of a less-senior entrepreneur increases can enhance your own job satisfaction.

- You will share your own experiences, insights, and advice with a less-senior female entrepreneur. These women will be interested in such things as how you started your business or attained your current position; what factors/events formed your managerial style and your beliefs; how your own style impacts the organization in which you have a leadership role. You can provide a powerful role model to help these women who are just starting out on their own. This experience can be shared via email or phone, although a face to face meeting twice a year is suggested.
- You will become familiar with your mentee's aspirations and should be willing to advise them as appropriate. We do not expect you to be their personal business coach, but certainly your input will be quite valuable when your mentee is facing a difficult business situation. We hope that the relationship will develop such that you will be open to offering advice.

The Role of the Mentee

Being a mentee can increase the likelihood of success within your own organization as a result of the focused support that you receive in your developmental activities. You can improve your skills and knowledge and increase your understanding of the challenges faced by other entrepreneurs and business people. You can also gain access to a new network of contacts to draw upon in the future. To enhance the mentoring relationship, you should:

- Prepare, and share with the Institute and the mentor, a set of goals and objectives of what they want to gain from this program.
- Prepare for their meetings by learning about the mentor and his/her organization.
- Prepare an end-of-year evaluation stating what they learned and suggesting improvements to the program.
- Approach the mentoring relationship in a professional manner.
- Respect the limits of their mentor's time and attention.

(from: Rothman Institute, Mentoring Program, Female Entrepreneurs' Alliance, website text 2005)

Most networks for female entrepreneurs also give the opportunity to find a mentor from a network. But there are special mentoring programs or organisations that provide mentors for starting (female) entrepreneurs in SET. In the schedule below you can find this organisations per Preface country

'Free' mentors can often be found by a network organisation for female entrepreneurs. When you are a member of a network, it is possible to find a mentor that matches your demand (profession/branch/district/experience)
For more information look at: Networks for female entrepreneurs in your specific country