

The dos and don'ts of asking someone to be your mentor:

Ready to find your Mentor?

You have the opportunity to learn from your industry's best and advance your own leadership skills. All you need to do is ask.

But before you jump head first into asking for that MENTOR, it's important that you've chosen the perfect leader to provide the right coaching for your goals, and have mastered effective communication to sell your request for mentorship.

01

The right person, in the right place



DO:

Choose someone who has the title, position or experience you're hoping to achieve in the next few years. If you're a junior in the sales department, chances are the company CEO is not going to provide you much value in terms of the leadership skills you'll need immediately.

Select a mentor that values honesty above all else. Effective communication is one of the key elements of your growth. If your mentor can't be brutally honest with you, you could miss out on vital learning and growth opportunities.



DON'T:

Ask someone who lives far away. If the person lives in another country, finding time to meet or talk is going to be near impossible.

Ask someone who you've never had a conversation with. Mentorship relies heavily on a connection between two people. If you're chasing someone who doesn't know your name, there's a chance that their advice may not be sufficient, or your personalities won't align.

02

There's a right (and wrong) way to ask



DO:

Always ask someone to be your mentor in person. Email may feel like an easy out, but if you can't ask the person to be your mentor they won't feel open to giving you honest and straightforward feedback. Likewise, you'll need to be prepared to lead the conversation as you outline your aims for these mentoring sessions.

Tell them what you need from them as a mentor. If you can tell them what your expectations are from the get-go, your new mentor will feel more comfortable agreeing to help and you will ensure effective communication.



DON'T:

Go in unprepared. If you're asking questions that are easy to Google, chances are your new mentor will see right through you and decline your offer. Be specific about areas you need advice in and what you'd like from them. Practicing an elevator pitch to this end will allow you to clearly communicate your desires and strategy.

Take without offering anything up. Mentorship should be a two-way street. Tell them you're there to help them with anything they might need, and express your gratitude for their time.

03

Get the most out of your mentorship



DO:

Take the advice you get. Your mentor has been there before. Learn from their lessons about leadership skills and implement the advice they give you.

Pay it forward. Your professional life will be greatly enriched by mentorship and, when the time comes, you'll have the opportunity to do the same for someone else – take it.



DON'T:

Be afraid to ask questions when you don't understand. You might not always know where you're going wrong – ask your mentor what you should be asking and where they think you need to improve.

Make it difficult to meet up. Your mentor is there for your benefit, so make sure you're available when it suits them.

Focus on these points when asking the big question:



Tell them you've really enjoyed the conversations you've had with them in the past.



Mention how often you'd like to meet and for how long.



Explain that you'll be putting together agendas to ensure your meetings have direction and focus.



Most importantly, frame the mentorship as something you'd like them to *consider*. You don't want anyone taking on the role out of a sense of obligation.