MENTOR CONNECTOR

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Mentor Handbook
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Definitions

coach [noun]
One who instructs or trains in the fundamentals and directs team strategy.

mentor [noun]
A wise and trusted person whose primary purpose is to teach, guide, provide advice and support to, and watch over and foster the progress of a mentee.

mentee [noun]
An individual who is guided by a mentor. In this context, an individual who would like to have an established venue management veteran work with him or her to gain a better knowledge of the industry.

Mission

The Mentor Connector Task Force’s mission is to inspire, grow, and engage Coaches, Mentors, and Mentees in a supportive environment while providing opportunities for learning experiences, networking, professional growth, skill development and to gain peer recognition in the IAVM and the community. These skills will improve the quality of the membership and enable the association to enhance and innovate venue management.
Purpose

A mentoring relationship is designed to enable experienced professionals to share their knowledge, skills, and insights with mentees through a one-on-one relationship. Mentees benefit from gaining knowledge and support in achieving their professional development goals, while mentors sharpen their skills as they teach others and make a personal impact on the professional development of others and the strength of the industry association and its members. Coaches, by ensuring the success and integrity of the individual mentoring relationships, contribute to the success of the program and the development of both mentors and mentees.

Objectives

- To match mentors with mentees to facilitate the sharing of mutual knowledge.

- To facilitate networking among IAVM professionals through the creation of in-depth business relationships.

- To create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) goals for each partnership.

- To assess and recognize the success of each partnership relationship and the IAVM Mentoring Program.

- To increase participation in the CFE certification process by providing mentoring partnership opportunities to candidates.
The Mentor Connector Task Force’s charge is to promote IAVM’s goal of becoming more inclusive and diverse through professional development opportunities, educational offerings, increasing awareness, and creation of a mentoring program.

IAVM’s Mentor Connector was conceived and developed by the Diversification Committee and is managed by the Mentor Connector Task Force with the purpose of providing members with the opportunity to:

- Experience meaningful and ongoing interaction with a diverse group of top professionals in the industry.
- Gain real world insight from experienced and successful professionals.
- Receive an insider’s view of the association.
- Expand perspectives on a range of career opportunities.
- Establish a network of professional business contacts.
- Develop confidence through leadership and personal initiative.

IAVM’s Mentor Connector Program was developed to foster learning and engagement specifically aimed at achieving professional development and improving the quality of the venue manager workforce worldwide. By building a stronger network of talented professionals skilled in solving the issues facing our industry, our association and members will become more valuable assets to their communities, their venues, performers and guests.

By pairing venue management professionals who have identified a professional development need with a member that has demonstrated competency in that area, tailored solutions can be designed to improve the skill set of the mentee and enhance their contribution to the industry.

Mentors and mentees will be selected from applications submitted to the program. All IAVM members and student members are eligible to participate.
### MENTOR CONNECTOR Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Month 1 (April)</td>
<td>Matching &amp; Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 4 (July)</td>
<td>Progress/Informal Check-In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 8 (November)</td>
<td>Progress/Informal Check-In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 11 (February)</td>
<td>Formal Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 12 (March)</td>
<td>Conclusion of Formal Mentor Connector Partnership/Recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MENTOR CONNECTOR
Roles & Responsibilities

COACH

Reports to: Mentoring Program Chair

Term: 1 year

Qualifications:

- Must be an IAVM Member with documented experience/achievement in industry
- Must be willing to actively work toward achieving mentoring relationship goals
- Attend Orientation Session with Mentor Connector Task Force Chair
- Participate in Matching Meeting (with Mentor and Mentee)
- Meet time availability requirements listed in responsibilities section

Responsibilities:

- Act as a point of contact for mentor/mentee pairs throughout the duration of the program
- Oversee the mentoring process by reviewing SMART goals developed by mentee and mentor
- Provide ongoing coaching/counseling to mentor/mentee pairs as needed
- Listen carefully and objectively; encourage exploration and growth
- Provide appropriate information to help mentors and mentees achieve their program goals
- Document progress
- Evaluate the impact of participation on personal and professional development
- Attend recognition event at conclusion of mentoring relationship
MENTOR CONNECTOR
Roles & Responsibilities

MENTOR

Reports to: Coach

Term: 1 year

Qualifications:

- Must be an IAVM Member with documented experience/achievement in industry
- Must be willing to actively work toward achieving mentoring relationship goals
- Complete Mentor Connector Online Mentor Application & submit a resume
- Attend Orientation Session with Mentor Connector Task Force Chair
- Participate in Matching Meeting (with Coach and Mentee)
- Sign a Mentoring Partnership Agreement
- Meet requirements listed in responsibilities section

Responsibilities:

- Drive the mentoring process by identifying SMART goals with mentee
- Share experience and resources with mentee
- Listen carefully and objectively; encourage exploration and growth
- Provide appropriate information to help your mentee achieve professional goals
- Share feedback on progress with your mentee
- Document progress
- When appropriate, conclude the mentorship
- Evaluate the impact of participation on personal and professional development
- Attend recognition event at conclusion of mentoring relationship
MENTOR CONNECTOR
Roles & Responsibilities

MENTEE

Reports to: Mentor
Term: 1 year

Qualifications:
- Must be an IAVM Member or Student Member
- Must be willing to actively work toward achieving mentoring relationship goals
- Complete Mentor Connector Mentee Online Application & submit resume
- Attend Orientation Session with Mentor Connector Task Force Chair
- Participate in Matching Meeting (with Coach and Mentor)
- Sign a Mentoring Partnership Agreement
- Meet requirements listed in responsibilities section

Responsibilities:
- Be ready, willing, and able to devote your time and energy
- Drive the mentoring process by identifying SMART goals
- Seek new learning and commit to take action
- Meet with your mentor at regular/agreed intervals
- Initiate meeting arrangements. Plan and present each meeting’s agenda.
- Reply to emails and phone calls within two days
- Invest time to utilize resources suggested by mentor and implement strategies
- Share experiences and progress with your mentor
- Document progress
- Apply learning to improve growth
- Evaluate the impact of participation on personal and professional development
- Fulfill your commitment to your mentor and the mentoring process
- When appropriate, conclude the mentoring relationship
- Evaluate the program and your mentor at the conclusion of your partnership
- Attend recognition event at conclusion of mentoring relationship
Each coach, mentor, and mentee will attend an IAVM Mentor Connector Orientation session prior to the commencement of the program.

PowerPoint Presentation is available on the web at Mentoring page

The Orientation Program will be offered via conference call or webinar prior to the start of the formal partnership. The session will be facilitated by one or more members of the MCTF.

**Partnership Agreement**

At the conclusion of the Orientation session, each pair along with their coach will complete the Mentor Connector Partnership Agreement form and addendum. Each completed agreement and addendum will be retained by the IAVM WHQ Director of Membership and copies will be sent to the mentor, mentee, and coach.
Planning

The Mentor Connector Program is mentee-centered, which means simply that mentees are coached to take a leadership role in the mentoring process. Once a Mentor Connector Partnership Agreement has been signed, the mentee will initiate meeting arrangements.

Initial Meeting

Each pair will conduct an initial meeting to include their coach. The meeting will cover the development of a communication plan, goal development and assessment measurements.

Tools to assist in the development of a communication plan include:

Effective Communication Plan (Appendix II)

Tools to assist in the development of partnership goals include:

S.M.A.R.T Goal Development (Appendix III)
Goal Development Worksheet (Appendix IV)
Partnership Goal Statement (Appendix V)

After the mentor and mentee develop a communication plan and goals for the partnership, copies of the forms will be retained by the mentor, mentee, and their coach.

Meetings

Again, it is the mentee’s responsibility to plan each meeting’s agenda.

Tools to assist in meeting preparation and follow-up include:

Call Prep (Appendix VI)
Meeting Record (Appendix VII)
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MENTOR CONNECTOR
Assessment

**Monitoring Progress / Assessment**

Recognizing that many barriers to success can be raised during a mentoring process due to other demands of work and personal life, each pair will be assigned a coach to monitor the progress towards achieving the mentee’s goals. Progress toward achieving the partnership goals will be monitored throughout the year by the partnership coach. It is not necessary for the coach to participate in mentoring sessions after the initial meeting to assess goals and plan communication; however, at the request of the pair, the coach may be invited. To facilitate the coach’s monitoring of the partnership, mentors and mentees will utilize Informal Check-in Assessment Forms and the Formal Assessment Form at appropriate intervals throughout the year.

Each pair will maintain a running log of the progress of the relationship using the Meeting Record form. This sheet will provide a place to capture agenda topics, progress notes, open items, and action steps. This document will be shared with the coach if the pair so desires.

In Month 4 and Month 8, each pair will complete the Informal Check-In Assessment Form and submit it to their Coach to assist the coach in monitoring progress of the partnership.

Informal Check-in Assessment Form (Appendix VIII)

At the conclusion of the mentoring partnership, Formal Assessment Forms will be completed by mentors and mentees.

**Final Report**

At the conclusion of each year of the IAVM Mentor Connector Program, coaches, mentors, and mentees will be asked to assess success and recommend enhancements for the future of the program. By measuring the success of the program, it is hoped that the program will increase in size and scope going forward.

Final Report Form (Appendix IX)
**Policy**
Successful participation in an IAVM Mentor Connector Program Partnership for the period of one year will yield the following points in the “Teaching/Program Participation” area:

**Coach:**
2 points per partnership per year with a limit of 3 partnerships per coach per year; Maximum 6 points per year. Limit in Teaching Category = 50

**Mentor:**
5 points per partnership per year; Maximum 1 partnership per year. Limit in Teaching Category = 50

**Mentee:**
2 points per partnership per year; Maximum 1 partnership per year. Limit in Participation Category = 20

*“Successful participation” is determined in the Formal Assessment Process.*
Certificate
All coaches, mentors, and mentees successfully completing a Mentor Connector Program Partnership will be awarded a certificate at Annual Conference - VenueConnect.

Alumni
Once mentees complete the mentoring cycle, they will be considered alumni of the program and eligible to attend future Mentoring Recognition events. Mentors and coaches will also be welcome to attend.

Facility Manager Magazine Profile
The Mentor Connector Task Force Chair will coordinate Mentor Connector Partnership profiles monthly in the Facility Manager Magazine.
The final meeting between mentor and mentee should focus on bringing issues to a close. It is a good time to reflect on the mentorship and talk about the positive changes that occurred for each person. In no way does this mean that the professional relationship must end. Many mentoring relationships will continue on an informal basis for years to come.

In the final month, each Mentor and Mentee will complete the Formal Assessment Form and submit it to their coach. The coach will forward the assessment to the IAVM Director of Membership. The coach will use the informal and formal assessment forms to determine the success of the partnership and make a recommendation on points for the mentor and mentee.

**After the Partnership Relationship Ends**

After the conclusion of the formal year-long partnership relationship, many of the relationships will continue on an informal basis and some goals will be in progress at that time.
MENTOR CONNECTOR PROGRAM

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Appendix
Benefits:
This is a strategic moment to invest in the future of a mentee. With the ever-increasing competition in the hospitality industry, IAVM is poised to play a major role in shaping the character of our association and the venue management industry for decades to come.

As a mentor, you can:

- Positively influence another individual by making productive use of your knowledge, skills, values and experiences.
- Gain tremendous satisfaction from contributing to the development of capable individuals and enjoy the satisfaction of seeing them succeed.
- Increase communication, leadership, and development/training skills for the association.
- Expand professional contacts through interaction with other mentors.
- Revitalize interest in your own work through connection to your mentee and their energy.
- Boost self-esteem through recognition from your mentee, peers and the association community.
- Invest in the future by giving back to the association.
- Earn CFE points for certification or recertification.

Expectations:
To become a mentor, you must

- Complete the Mentor Connector Program online application.
- Provide a personal profile or resume.
- Complete an Orientation with the Mentor Connector Task Force Chair.
- Sign a Mentor Connector Partnership Agreement.
- Agree to fulfill the Mentor Connector Expectations and Commitments (below).

Mentors are influential people who significantly affect the lives of new and existing IAVM members through the people and things that they know. Successful mentors are those who embrace the art of give and take as John F. Kennedy said: “Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” This means that mentors plan to learn from others in the industry and show leadership by sharing examples of lifelong applied and hands on experience.

As a mentor you are expected to:
• Invest time in yourself and your mentee.
• Discuss with the mentee, any expectations you have regarding levels of contact or content of exchanges.
• Communicate respectfully and responsibly with your mentee, fostering a relationship based on mutual trust and support.
• Value the member’s time as if it were your own.
• Be available, meeting with your mentee within respectful time intervals.
• Reply to email messages and phone calls from your student within 2 business days.
• Fulfill your commitment to your mentee and the mentoring process.
• Evaluate the relationship and the program at the conclusion of the mentorship.
• Contact your partnership coach with any concerns regarding your mentoring relationship or the overall program.

**Components of Effective Mentoring**

**Guidance:**
Mentors are guides through the learning process, helping mentees understand and integrate into their own life knowledge, skills, character and relational abilities – qualities that are essential for success in the meetings industry and within IAVM.

**Vulnerability:**
A mentors are selected because of their expertise and character. Therefore, sharing your own development and experience is essential, as is fostering a relationship based on mutual trust and support. Be willing to have your mentee observe your life and career, and allow the mentee to benefit from the fruit of your failures as well as successes.

**Discussion:**
Stories, dialogue, questions and even role play can be vital components in the learning process. Listen to and learn from mentees and discern ways to provoke and encourage their growth. Learning to ask the right questions is as basic to growth as discovering answers. Pose questions and challenge mentees to help them make their own decisions. Act as a sounding board or coach.

**Affirmation:**
We learn best in contexts of support and encouragement. As a mentor, seek to enable the professional development by encouraging the progress of the mentee.

**Application:**
The best mentoring enables specific application in small steps. Mentees need to be given the opportunity to put immediately into practice what they are learning from a mentor.
**Guidelines for Effective Meetings**

One of the most difficult tasks a mentor must prepare for is to let the mentee take the initiative and practice leading. That role reversal may feel somewhat awkward at first. Two ways to feel more comfortable about this role reversal are to

- Acknowledge that you are spending time helping to shape the future, of the association and
- Reflect on a past mentor of your own, remembering what worked best when you spent time together.

These thoughts may set the tone for a potentially dynamic outcome.

**Discuss topics on business and career.** Mentees are responsible for being prepared to cover these areas:

- Career changes
- Educational path
- Continuing education
- Leadership Role in IAVM
- Challenging events, pivotal or peak experiences
- Future plans, role models

**Respond directly to questions.** When someone asks a question that seems too personal or out of context with the professional conversation, simply say, “I would rather not discuss it.” Some people prefer to take a passive approach or adopt an avoidance method. In general, however, everyone benefits from genuine, direct and honest answers, especially when practicing how to say “no.”

**Probe to find common interests.** Some mentees may be shy and uncertain about themselves while talking with seasoned leaders in the industry. If a conversation, particularly in the first or second meeting, feels stilted and uncomfortable, then it is most appropriate to veer away from the prepared agenda and probe for more common interests. Sometimes, just finding out that both people share a mutual delight in golf or reading eases tension. Once that sense of shared interest exists, a real exchange of ideas can result.

**Establishing Trust**

Mentees look for concrete examples of integrity when they meet with mentors, from the first phone call to the last handshake. When we follow through on what we commit to do, regardless of the task’s importance in our lives, we send a clear message: We can be counted on.

Expectations, when clearly delineated, help establish trust. When first meeting, via telephone, in person, or over the internet, it is important to talk about what each wants out of the mentor/mentee relationship.
Effective Communication Plan

1. Find out what time of day works best for both of you and schedule accordingly.

2. Try to set a regular day and time in advance. Avoid rescheduling as much as possible.

3. Use all forms of communication as much as possible, e.g. phone, face-to-face, email, Facebook, etc.

4. Focus on the quality of your meeting rather than the quantity. However, don’t let more than two weeks go by without any contact.

5. If feasible, try to schedule periodic face-to-face meetings at least 1-2 times during the program.

6. Always set an agenda for the meeting and end each meeting with a review of Action Items & Responsibilities due for the next meeting.

7. As much as possible, make yourselves available for phone and email contact between regular meetings.

8. Remember that both mentoring partners are responsible for making time to meet.

9. Work to make sure the time you spend with your partner is productive and moves the relationship towards the partnership goals.
SMART GOALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurable</strong></td>
<td>Concrete criteria to measure progress and success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attainable</strong></td>
<td>Plan steps to develop the attitude, ability, skills, and financial capacity to achieve the goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Realistic</strong></td>
<td>Any objective you are both willing and able to work toward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timely/Tangible</strong></td>
<td>No time frame/No Urgency. Someday won’t do. Should be experienced with the senses (taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of a SMART Goal:

*To increase exposure for the IAVM Mentor Connector Program, I want to write an article for Facility Manager Magazine about Mentoring Partnerships that is 2000 words in length and have it done by July 1. I'll commit to writing two hours each week until I reach completion.*
These questions are designed to assist you in “fine tuning” your goals, aspirations, objectives in an effort to develop a clear path to success. Think “outside the box” and think big!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you could achieve anything you desire, what would it be?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you want MORE of in your career?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you want LESS of in your career?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes would you make?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What areas of your job or career would you want to improve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you want to learn to improve your skills (think Core Competencies)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can you convert these items into SMART goals?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the first step toward achieving each goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the action items you can do to help advance toward this goal?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Partnership Goal Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentee:</th>
<th>Mentor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Communication:</td>
<td>Preferred Communication:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Phone #:</td>
<td>Preferred Phone #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
<td>Email Address:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Establish 1-5 SMART Goals to be achieved through the Mentoring Partnership.

**Specific • Measurable • Attainable • Realistic • Timely**

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5.
Mentee Name:
Mentor Name:
Date:

Progress since last meeting:

Outstanding Items/Intended to Accomplish:

Current Challenges:

Current Opportunities:

Direction for Next Session:

Action Items (to be completed before next session):
## Meeting Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Name</th>
<th>Mentee Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Goal(s)
1.
2.
3.

### MEETING RECORD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Phone / Face to Face / Conference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discussion Topics / Action Items

Results from Prior Action Items

Open Items/Action Items/Topics for Next Meeting

### CHALLENGES / ASSISTANCE NEEDED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Meeting Date</th>
<th>Phone / Face to Face / Conference</th>
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</table>
To ensure the Mentor Connector Partnership is successfully advancing each partner towards their goals, it is important to establish checkpoints along the way to share feedback and assess progress. This informal assessment tool is designed to assess how the mentoring relationship is meeting its key goals based on the perspective of the mentor and the mentee. Each should complete the form separately and share their notes.

Mentee or Mentor:

Mentee or Mentor (completing assessment):

Date:

We have been meeting for (insert amount of time):

I believe we have made solid progress toward achieving the following goals:

I value the following things that are working well in our partnership:

The one thing my partner could do that would help to enhance our working relationship would be to:

Other ways to enhance our partnership might include:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Name</th>
<th>Mentee Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These tips can help you and your partner start out on the right foot as well as continue to keep the relationship running smoothly. You can use these in preparation for, as well as during your first meeting together. You also should revisit them regularly to ensure that you are fully benefiting from your mentor-mentee relationship throughout the program.

**Setting and Managing Expectations**

Be open and honest about your expectations from the very beginning. For example:

- How do you want to communicate, e.g. meetings, phone, email, or a combination.
- What do you expect to be responsible for bringing to each meeting and what do you expect your partner will be responsible for in return?
- How will you know that you’re making progress together?
- Ask yourselves these questions regularly – make this kind of a check-in a part of each agenda.

Mentors: Ask your mentee to outline personal and professional goals for the year-long period of the program. Work together with your mentee to create program goals and how you plan to achieve these together.

Mentees: Identify the issues/goals you want to address during the program. Come to meetings prepared with questions. Share your successes and freely discuss any less than satisfactory results. Ask your mentor “What do you know now that you wish you’d know “then”?”

Together: At every meeting review your goals and progress against your action plan. Discuss how the mentoring program has helped (or not) you achieve your goals. Use the coach to identify other resources if needed. Let the coach know if the program isn’t working for you.

Don’t cancel or put off a meeting just because there is no urgent to-do list. Use the time to address bigger questions about professional development/career paths rather than focusing on the day-to-day issues. Take advantage of each other’s backgrounds and experiences.

Plan effective communication.
General Tips

1. By making yourself available and sticking to your scheduled meetings you demonstrate that you value each other’s time and commitment to each other and to the mentoring program.

2. Take the time and energy to establish trust. Recognize that this doesn’t happen overnight and takes effort on both parts. Remember that you are sharing vulnerabilities at times.

3. Share work samples with each other as appropriate while maintaining necessary confidentiality.

4. If feasible, make an effort to visit each other’s work site and/or attend an event at each other’s venue.

5. Maintain your curiosity. Ask questions of each other.

6. Remember that this is a two-way street – you both have the opportunity to learn from each other.

7. Don’t lose sight of the big picture – it’s all about developing a quality workforce for venue management industry, staffed by the best professionals.

8. Don’t lose sight of individual achievements as you work towards your goals.

9. CELEBRATE EACH SUCCESS NO MATTER THE SIZE!
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MENTOR CONNECTOR
Appendix XI
Tips for Mentors

Be fully present. Mentoring requires excellent listening and your full attention. Set aside your daily challenges and pressures during a mentor session so that you can devote your full attention to your mentee. Whether the mentoring session is in person, by telephone, or via email, this means making yourself unavailable to others during the mentoring conversation. By not allowing interruptions, the quality of your mentoring will be significantly more effective and productive for both of you.

Take time to make a personal connection at the start of the session. One of the pleasures of a mentoring relationship is the sense of connection between two people. Before launching into the focus area for the day, spend a few minutes to build your relationship with your mentee. “Small talk” often helps both people to relax and get ready for a deeper conversation.

Ask open-ended questions. In order to provide relevant perspective, the mentor must understand the mentee’s situation and concerns at a deep level. Rather than asking questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no,” practice asking questions that call for a reflective response. Remember to ask early on why the mentee has sought a mentor and the intended gain from the experience. It is better to know some of the right questions than to have all of the answers. High-gain questions are open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions that typically start with “Who, What, When, How, Tell me more about…Give me an example of…” You will find a list of open-ended questions for mentors in our resources section.

Listen with curiosity, not judgment. Be conscious of your own listening and strive for deep listening coming from your own curiosity rather than problem solving. You will find that your mentee faces issues that you have also faced. However, each person is unique and comes to their present moment from a different path. Listen with the goal to learn more about the person. Catch yourself before judging and simply “follow curiosity” to learn more.

Try not to interrupt, unless there is a need to manage time or focus the dialogue. Paraphrase or “feedback” what the mentee says to confirm that your understanding is accurate.

Ask direct questions to focus the session. Mentoring sessions often go all too quickly. To focus the session, ask simple and straightforward questions at the beginning of the session to ensure that the conversation is focused on the topics that are “top of mind” for your mentee today. For example, you could ask, “What would you like to talk about today?” or “I’d love a quick update and then let’s choose a topic for today’s session.” Ask early on in the session: What help do you need from me?
• **Notice what has “heart and meaning” for your mentee.** A good mentoring conversation involves much more than trading information and knowledge. By paying attention to the emotion and energy of your mentee, you will be able to observe what matters most to your mentee, as well as where he or she may feel discouraged or overwhelmed. Notice your mentee’s enthusiasms and areas of confidence and point them out to your mentee to help build confidence and connection.

• **Tell your story.** People often learn best through storytelling. If you have experiences related to the challenges faced by your mentee, check to see whether your mentee wishes to hear the story of your experience. Make sure to focus on the aspects of your experience that are most pertinent. Telling your story should take no more than 10 minutes of a mentoring session, though it may lead to a rich discussion that links directly to the mentee’s situation. Try not to preach!

• **Share the conversation rather than doing all the talking.** Sometimes, mentors mistakenly believe that their job is mainly to impart wisdom and expertise. If you find yourself talking at length, with little interruption or dialogue with your mentee, stop yourself and reorganize the conversation by asking questions about your mentee. Watch out for the tendency to “download” when someone asks the question you’ve been waiting all your life to answer!

• **Set and honor boundaries.** Mentoring relationships work best when each person knows what to expect – and what not to expect. During the first session, establish the way in which the mentoring relationship will be set up. How frequently will you meet? Decide on the best form of communication (email, phone, Instant Messenger, etc.). How long will the conversations last? May the mentee contact you by email or telephone in between mentoring sessions? Be clear about how you would like it to work. Attention here early on prevents misunderstandings later on.

• **Follow through on your commitments.** Inevitably, you will find yourself volunteering the title of a book, a referral to one of your contacts, to review or pass on a resume or some other small service to your mentee. Make note of your promise and make it a priority to follow through. Dropping the ball can lead to confusion and mistrust in the relationship. Make commitments carefully, being realistic about what you can offer and by when you can deliver it.

• **Be encouraging and action-oriented.** Recognize that the problem isn’t figuring out what to do – the problem is doing it!

• **Give helpful feedback.** Provide constructive feedback that is specific, descriptive and non-judgmental.

• **Honor confidentiality.** Conversations between mentor and mentee must be considered private. It is a violation of trust to talk about the mentee’s life and issues outside of the mentoring conversation without the permission of the mentee. Be careful about honoring you mentee’s trust. Hold mentoring conversations in places where details shared in confidence will not be overheard by other stakeholders or interested parties.
Have you ever felt judged by someone whom you thought was listening with the intention to help you? When mentoring others, you can avoid giving this impression by avoiding the language of judgment. Here are some examples of what NOT to say:

- “You should....”
- “Yes, but....”
- “Either/or”
- “There’s only one way to do it....”
- “What you need to do is....”
- “What I always do is....”
- “Your problem is....”
- “Actually what needs to be done is....”
- “If you don’t...... you aren’t going to....”
- “I wouldn’t think about it that way.”

**For Mentors: Language that Encourages**
- “You could...”
- “Have you considered....?”
- “What would happen if you...?”
- “What might be the consequences of not acting on this?”
- “Yes/and” rather than “Either/or”
- “There are many approaches that might work...”
- “One idea is...what do you think?”
- “What do you think needs to be done?”
- “How else could you think about this?”
- “What resources are available to you right now to support progress?”
- “When has this happened to you before? What did you do?”

**Basic Beliefs of Good Mentors**
- The mentee is naturally creative, resourceful, and able. Nothing is wrong or broken – no need to “fix” the mentee. Mentees are capable of finding and acting on the answers.
- The agenda comes from the mentee not from the mentor.
- The relationship is a designed alliance, not a top-down directed conversation.
**Listening: The Hallmark of a Great Mentor**
Good mentors are empathetic listeners. They understand the benefit for the mentee of speaking aloud what is on his/her mind. The seasoned mentor does not focus on interpreting the mentee’s story for problem solving. Instead, mentors seek to help mentees define the real issues. Mentors listen for the word choices, intentions, emotions, and nuances of the story. The mentor uses active listening and encouragement to connect with the mentee, while focusing on asking powerful, open-ended questions.

**Mentors listen for:**
- *Goals and intentions*
- *The meaning behind the story*
- *Themes and recurrent words*
- *Resistance, fear, anxiety, hesitation, “BS”*
- *Progress*
- *Tone, mood*
- *Commitment and passion*
These tips will help create a successful beginning.

**For Mentors:**

- Review your mentee’s bio and resume prior to the first meeting.
- Consider your own experiences and background in light of your mentee’s career and life and reflect on areas of common interest and experience.
- After reading your mentee’s communications, jot down a few curious questions that you can use as conversation starters in the first session.
- Review IAVM’s Mentor Connector Program Handbook.
- Identify options in your calendar for regular mentor meetings so you can offer dates and times for future sessions at your first meeting.
- Suggest a time for the first meeting, specifying both the starting and ending time for the conversation.
- Start and end your first session on time to establish a good boundary with your Mentee.
- Convey your enthusiasm and make a personal connection via the tone of your email or phone communication. This will help relieve the mentee’s fears of inconveniencing you.
- Follow up after the first session with a warm note of encouragement.
- Follow up immediately after the mentoring session with any actions to which you have agreed. Don’t delay, as it is more likely to slip your mind as days pass.
- Confirm the date and time of next mentoring conversation.

**For Mentees:**

- Send your resume and a few brief paragraphs that describe your work and personal history to your mentor, along with a word of thanks for volunteering to be your mentor. (Electronically or via hard copy).
• Request your Mentor’s contact information, including the contact information for his or her assistant. Enter it into your cell phone and other contact databases for easy access later on.

• Read up on your Mentor. Google your Mentor to read any news, published work, or announcements that are publicly available.

• Review IAVM’s Mentor Connector Program Handbook.

• Get a journal or notebook which can be used exclusively for taking notes during your mentoring sessions and containing any related materials and bring it with you to the first session.

• Be ready at least 5-10 minutes early for the session and remember to plan adequate time to prepare for the session.

• Pay attention to time and bring the conversation to a close when you reach the time limit indicated by the Mentor.

• Follow up immediately after the first session with a note of thanks.

• Follow up immediately after the mentoring session with any actions to which you have agreed. Don’t delay, as it is more likely to slip your mind as days pass.

• Confirm the date and time of your next mentoring session.

• Send an email one to two days prior to confirm that the Mentor is still “on” for the next session.

• Give advance notice to the Mentor if you are running late or must cancel or postpone a session