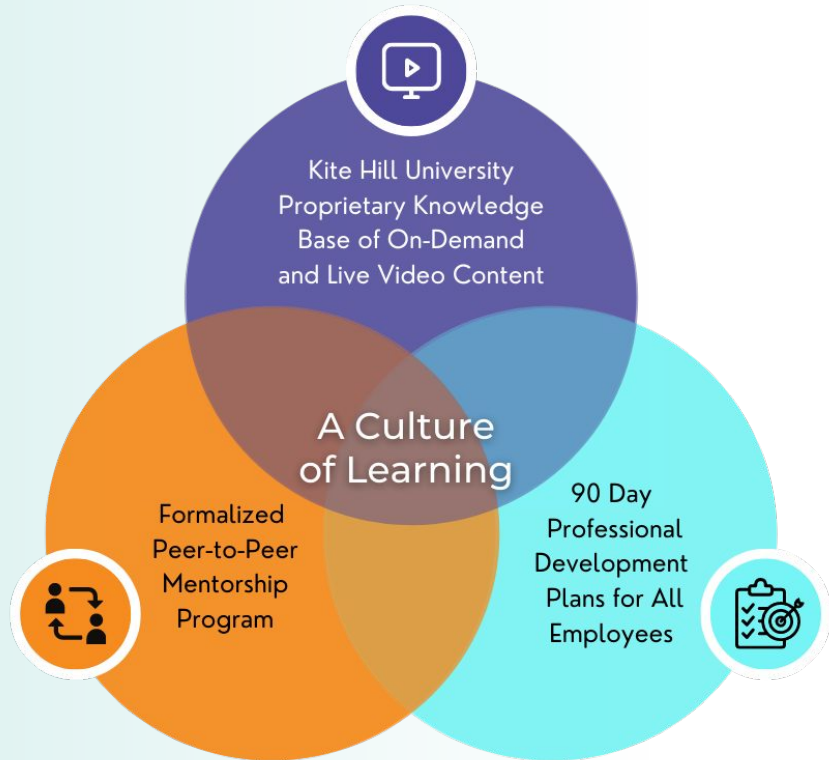


# Kite Hill PR's Unique Approach to Mentorship



# Unique Approach to Mentorship



Since its founding a decade ago, Kite Hill PR has believed in the importance of mentorship. Members of Kite Hill PR's team benefit from the multiple learning and development resources, including a peer-to-peer mentoring program, Kite Hill University, the agency's proprietary database of educational videos, one-on-one career coaching and an agency-wide rolling 90-day professional development plan program. By formalizing these structures, Kite Hill PR's culture is centered on collaboration and learning.

In addition to agency-wide programs, team members are encouraged and committed to giving each other feedback in real-time, supporting each other in their career development.



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# Mentorship Program Guidelines

## Overview

If you look up the term “mentorship” you’ll find this definition: the guidance provided by a mentor, especially an experienced person in a company or educational institution. But what does that mean? What does it mean to be a mentor? A mentee? What is the importance of mentorship? Mentorships have proven time and time again to be a crucial part of an individual’s career journey – from entry level to CEO. And mentorships are so much more than simply career advice. A mentoring relationship is built on trust, respect and communication that allows the mentor and mentee to get a different perspective and will eventually drive career growth while fostering relationships. But a mentorship relationship will only work if both the mentor and mentee are active participants.



# The Benefits of Mentorship

Mentorships provide a number of benefits to the mentee and mentors. Benefits include, but are not limited to:

- ★ An opportunity to set and achieve personal and professional goals with support at your place of work.
- ★ The ability to better understand challenges at different levels of the organization to better prepare for transitioning into new roles.
- ★ Fostering higher levels of engagement and career vision.
- ★ Creating opportunities to meet and partner with others of different job levels.
- ★ Gaining specific skills and knowledge around coaching and being an active listener.
- ★ Creating a culture that sees mentorship as an effective way of developing individuals.

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# Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

Building a relationship with your mentee takes time. Mentors become a sounding board and guiding light for their mentee by: exploring their career goals, getting a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as well as helping them determine strategies to overcome challenges and achieve their personal and professional goals. Sharing past experiences and relating to your mentee is a key part of building that mentor/mentee relationship.



# Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

A few roles and responsibilities of mentors include:

- Dedicating uninterrupted time to your mentee
- Asking thoughtful questions throughout a session with your mentee and showing that you are engaged and invested
- Creating a supporting and trusting environment
- Supporting your mentee in both their personal and professional development
- Assisting your mentee in setting goals and implementing strategies to help achieve them
- Provide relevant feedback to your mentee
- Openly and honestly share “lessons learned” from your own experience
- Respect your mentee and their privacy
- Encourage and challenge your mentee

# 3 Tips for Mentors

- 1) **Be honest.** More than anything, a mentee wants someone who will be honest with them. Provide candid feedback and share your honest thoughts and opinions on topics mentees bring to the conversation. Don't be afraid to share things about yourself that can help your mentee realize they are not the only ones that go through something.
- 2) **Be consistent.** If you and your mentee have a scheduled time to meet – meet at that time every week if possible. If there is a certain place you like to meet, continue to meet there. A key part of mentorship is putting the time and effort in. Mentees are going to know if you aren't invested. Ensure that you are engaged by making the effort.
- 3) **Be a listener.** It's easy to talk, it's harder to listen. Listening is one of the most important parts of being an effective mentor. If your only goal is to offer advice, you might miss important things your mentees say between the lines. Be a good listener. Ask thought-provoking, open-ended questions that help your mentee to get to the bottom of their challenges without you telling them.



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# Mentee Roles and Responsibilities

A mentorship relationship is a two-way street, one that should be facilitated by the mentee. While mentors benefit from mentoring, this relationship is for the mentee. Therefore, mentees have to be willing to explore their personal and professional growth with their mentor and take the first step.





# Mentee Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities include:

- Taking the first step and driving the relationship
- Commit to the relationship and your development
- Assume responsibility for your development
- Come to the meeting prepared with topics for discussion / questions
- Actively listen
- Be honest and communicate your feelings
- Solicit feedback
- Implement your mentor's advice back into your workflow
- Keep your mentor informed on progress

# 3 Tips for Mentees

- 1) **Keep an open mind.** A mentorship relationship will go nowhere if the mentee is not open and receptive to it. Go into each mentorship meeting with an open mind and a willingness to learn.
- 2) **Establish your goals and be agile.** Before beginning your mentorship relationship, establish some goals or things you'd like to accomplish as a result of these meetings. But remain agile. As you begin to get to know your mentor more, what you're able to learn from them and subsequently, what you are able to accomplish as a result of the relationship might change. Going back to having an open mind, having a willingness to change or adjust your goals is just as important.
- 3) **Be proactive.** Mentees drive mentorship relationships. You are only going to get what you give to the relationship. Ask questions. Come prepared with topics to discuss. Be open and honest with your mentor. Share your experiences and concerns. Actively seek out your mentor and set up meetings with them.



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# Mentor Meetings

Make the most of the time with your mentor and mentee. By keeping meetings focused on goals, including those that are included in an individual's 90-day professional development plan, you can maximize your time together.



# Mentor Meeting Do's and Don'ts

## For Mentors, Don't:

- ❖ Immediately jump into problem-solving mode (let the mentee try to get there on their own first).
- ❖ Go quiet on your mentee. Make yourself available (within reason) if they need you.
- ❖ Be critical of your mentee. A mentorship is built on trust and being too critical versus constructive can hurt that trust.
- ❖ Influence your mentee too much. Mentors act as a guiding light for mentees but shouldn't heavily influence a mentee's decision.
- ❖ Allow for failure in the relationship. Your mentee is going to set goals and sometimes not achieve them. Take that as an opportunity to help them navigate challenges and "right the ship". Don't make them feel worse.

## For Mentors, Do:

- ❖ Probe your mentee by asking open-ended questions.
- ❖ Focus on "how" instead of "what" for questioning.
- ❖ Let the mentee take the lead on the conversation.
- ❖ Actively listen.
- ❖ Pay attention to unspoken cues.



# Mentor Meeting Do's and Don'ts

## For Mentees, Don't:

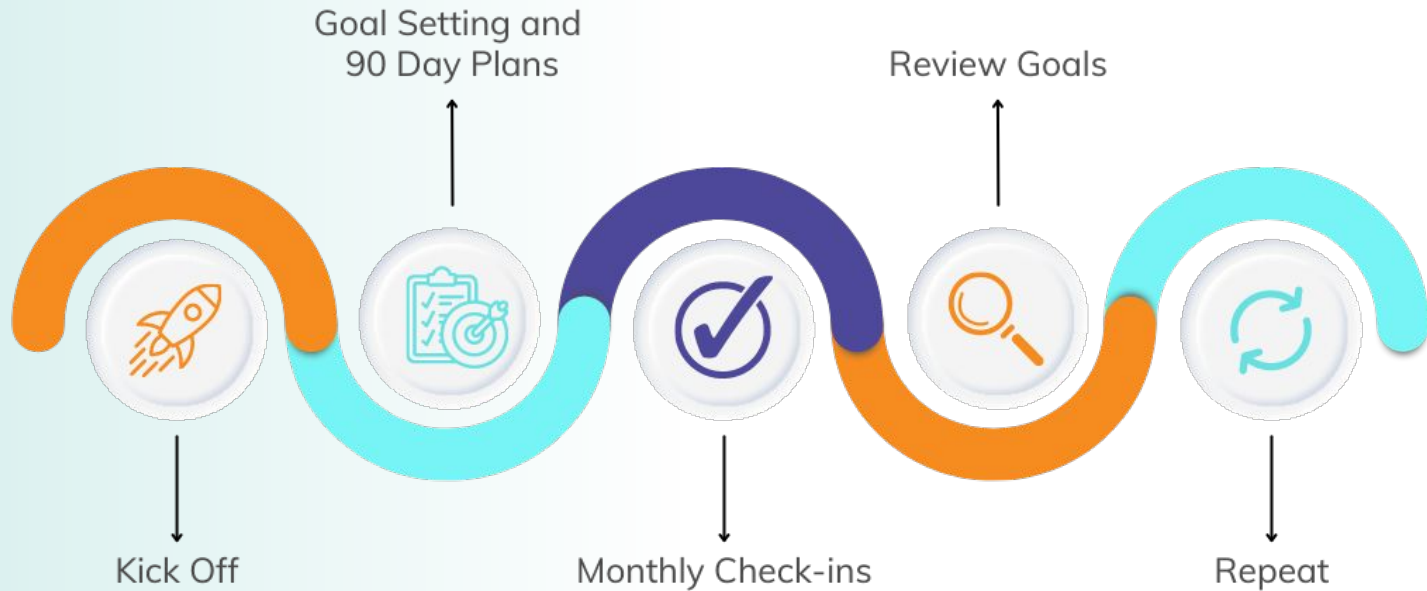
- ❖ Be afraid of asking a silly question. There are no silly questions! Your mentor is there to help you.
- ❖ Shy away from discussing harder moments or challenges you've faced. Your mentor has probably been there.
- ❖ Stay in your comfort zone. Stretch in these meetings with the help of your mentor.
- ❖ Take advantage of your mentee. Their time is valuable too. They're there to help guide you – not do everything for you.
- ❖ Neglect the relationship. Like any relationship in your life, your mentorship needs time and attention in order to be effective.

## For Mentees, Do:

- ❖ Come prepared. These meetings are about you. Come with talking points.
- ❖ Take responsibility for the relationship. Set goals and desired outcomes for the mentorship.
- ❖ Be flexible. Mentor meetings are going to ebb and flow. Be ready to be flexible in the moment.
- ❖ Take notes. Taking notes helps you stay engaged and gives you an opportunity to look back on points that were made and help shape future conversations.
- ❖ Be honest. Honesty and trust is the most important part of a mentorship relationship. Be honest with your mentor about your challenges and how you're feeling.



# Example Timeline





# Additional Resources

Email [hello@kitehillpr.com](mailto:hello@kitehillpr.com) for access to:

- Kite Hill University
- 90-Day Professional Development Plan Templates