

NAVIGATING YOUR CAREER

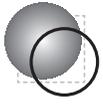
Building Working Relationships

Produced by:



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INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is an important element of a sound career development plan for all employees.

- If you are early in your career, a mentor can help focus your vision for future opportunities while providing sound advice and guidance for maximizing your impact in your current role.
- At midcareer, a mentor can help in assessing your skills acquired through varied experiences and create a meaningful plan for your next steps in the organization.
- Late in your career, a mentor can help you review your accomplishments and assess and plan the legacy you wish to leave behind.

Although “formal” mentoring programs are common in many organizations, most employees find that their opportunities for mentoring occur through a more “informal” process of selecting and engaging in a mentoring relationship outside of a formal organizational program.

This series has been designed to provide all employees, regardless of their participation in a formal program, with a framework for establishing and getting the most out of their mentoring relationships. Each module provides you with suggestions for organizing your plan for mentoring and suggestions for conversations to have with your mentor, as well as practical steps to take to develop your skill set.

Other modules in this series include:

- **Increasing Visibility**
- **Influencing Others Through Leadership**
- **Learning Partner Toolkit**
- **Sharing Organizational Knowledge**
- **Your Career Journey**

Each module provides a framework for self-paced reflection with prompts and suggestions of areas you may wish to talk over with your mentor. The prompts are designated by this symbol:





BUILDING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Successful organizations are staffed with employees who balance tasks and relationships. The dual competencies of task and relationship are influenced by personal culture, work environment, deadlines, societal influences, and collaboration between individual and teams.

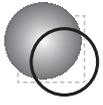
Employees who navigate successfully are those with core skills and technical expertise combined with the interpersonal skills necessary to build positive working relationships among and across teams.

**Do you need others to successfully complete projects?
Are you viewed as someone to trust?
Do you give as much as you receive?**

GOALS OF THIS MODULE

Through your dialogues with your mentor, you will explore:

- How positive working relationships contribute to your ability to succeed.
- Trust and trustworthiness.



YOUR ORGANIZATION

To build more productive working relationships, a shift must occur.

| FROM: | <u>Individual Oriented</u> | TO: | <u>Relationship Oriented</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| | stable | | growing |
| | low risk | | compare options |
| | independence | | teams |
| | conflict avoidance | | consider alternatives |
| | predictable | | uncertain |
| | directives | | choices |
| | commonalities | | diversity |
| | stable | | dynamic |
| | static | | fluid |



Talk to your mentor about your organization. How important are working relationships in navigating for success? Ask your mentor to provide a career story as an example.



TRUST

AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY

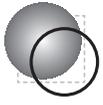
Trust *n.* Firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing.

Superficial relationships often result in superficial information being exchanged. When this happens, your ability to be successful is restricted. Meaningful working relationships are built on trust. Yet, building trusting relationships in today's competitive and changing environments can be challenging. And even more challenging if you have reason to mistrust others or the organization because of past experiences or your life lessons.



Talk to your mentor about the role of trust in the examples you discussed in the previous exercise.

What challenges/worries/realities do you have related to trust in the organization in terms of your career journey? Get your mentor's perspective on your beliefs and concerns related to trust.



BUILDING TRUST

The first step in building trust is to be viewed as trustworthy.

AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY

Trustworthy *adj.* Warranting trust; reliable.

Think of it as a bank account. Building trust is really about daily deposits in people's trust account with you. Deposits add up with the knowledge that on occasion you may make withdrawals. The key is to have ample deposits to avoid any bankrupt trust accounts with people whom you need to work with in order to succeed.



Complete these lists with your mentor. Ask him or her for examples of deposits and withdrawals.

Trust Account—Daily Deposits

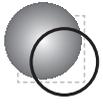
| Deposits | Withdrawals |
|-------------------------|--|
| • Keeps promises | • Forgets, ignores, or breaks promises |
| • Listens to understand | • Listens to judge |
| • Admits mistakes | • Blames others |
| • Does good work | • Has average performance |
| • Has integrity | • Lacks principle |
| • Is consistent | • Is unreliable |
| • Serves others | • Is self-serving |
| • | • |
| • | • |
| • | • |
| • | • |
| • | • |



BUILDING TRUST *(continued)*



Talk with your mentor about someone at work with whom you do not have a robust trust account. As you consider who you might select, what has happened to put your account in a deficit? Will it ever be safe to talk with this person about the situation? Talk with your mentor about how you may want to approach this situation now, or in the future. If the situation is one where you feel marginalized or harassed, be sure to include a conversation with your manager or human resources representative. They are there to help you as well.



TIPS

BUILDING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

1. Take time from your task to maintain relationships.
2. Identify new relationships that offer *mutual* benefits and begin to build trust.
3. Maintain your formal and informal networks by making deposits in others' trust accounts.
4. Demonstrate your trustworthiness broadly.
5. Seek opportunities for collaboration and sharing.
6. Take the risk to reach out to others.
7. Accept others when they reach out to you.
8. Don't take yourself too seriously. Have fun and laugh with others.



PERSONAL REFLECTION: BUILDING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Think about building working relationships within the organization.

1. What are some insights that you gained from your discussions with your mentor that you will consider as you reflect on your actions?

2. What strategies will you take to build working relationships as you navigate your career? What will you:

Change?

Modify?

Stop doing?

Start doing?

3. Identify one goal that you will work on immediately.



Be prepared to talk to your mentor about these items at your next meeting.

