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# NBAA MENTORING NETWORK

## Guide for Mentors

Welcome to the NBAA Mentoring Network. This program is designed to help new aviation professionals grow within their careers and within the business aviation industry. While mentors will inevitably gain valuable insight and perspective through the process, the focus should remain on the needs of the mentee. The purpose of this guide is to provide tips, techniques, and guidance to help you maximize your mentee's development.

There are four stages to the mentoring process:

1. Preparation
2. Collaboration
3. Growth
4. Closure

Each stage is then further broken down into three sub-categories:

- Introduction
- Action Steps
- Outcomes and Benefits

This guide will walk you through each stage to ensure you have a successful mentoring collaboration.

## Stage 1: Preparation

### INTRODUCTION

Being a mentor is a privilege. Only those who are respected and trusted have the opportunity to shape the minds of future leaders. As such, it is important to properly prepare for the role.

The preparation stage is everything that happens before you actually meet with your mentee. This stage includes the process of signing up and being matched to a mentee. It also includes taking the time for a self-assessment to determine if you have the time to commit to mentoring, evaluating your own strengths, professional journey, biases and goals.

### ACTION STEPS

#### Application

Industry leaders and experts can sign up as a mentor through the NBAA website. Applicants will complete a mentor profile, which will be submitted to the NBAA Mentoring Steering Group.

#### What Makes a Qualified Mentor?

A good mentor isn't necessarily someone who has thirty years of experience in business aviation. The most important trait of a good mentor is understanding his or her strengths and weaknesses, and being able to apply lessons learned to help a mentee. The mentee may be:

- 1) straight out of college entering business aviation for the first time;
- 2) entering a new role such as maintenance tech to maintenance manager;
- 3) switching fleet types, like turboprop to turbojet;
- 4) transitioning across lines of business, such as aircraft sales to MRO rep; or
- 5) trying to start a new department or business.

### Selection Process

Once a future mentor submits their application, the Mentoring Steering Group will examine the list of mentors and the list of mentees to create pairs that will best help mentees learn and grow in the desired areas. After determining the best matches, each party will be independently notified about the match and provided some background on their partner. The mentor may decide that the mentee would benefit more from someone else, or that they no longer have the capacity to commit to being a good mentor, but if the mentor agrees the pairing will be a good fit to accomplish the goals of the mentee, he or she should accept the request. The mentee will have a similar opportunity to confirm the selected mentor as a good match.

### Beginning the Relationship

Once both parties have agreed that the relationship will be a good fit, a confirmation email will be sent with contact information for each party. It will be the responsibility of the mentee to reach out to the mentor to set up the first meeting.

## **OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS**

Identifying an appropriate match is the essential first step in completing this meaningful journey.

## **Stage 2: Collaboration**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Before officially beginning the mentorship, the mentor and mentee should discuss the format and purpose of their relationship. This will be an opportunity to get to know each other and discuss the mentee's goals, plan the meeting schedules and format, and establish boundaries.

### **ACTION STEPS**

#### Mentoring Contract

During the first meeting, the mentor and mentee should introduce themselves and discuss the future of their relationship. This will include identifying the mentee's goals, the duration of the mentorship relationship, their availability and each person's level of commitment, boundaries, and confidentiality. These discussions can help set expectations and ground rules for a healthy relationship. The conversation should be documented by signing the NBAA Mentoring Agreement. Signing the agreement will codify the relationship and hold both parties accountable. For further accountability, the mentee is encouraged to turn in a copy of the agreement to NBAA.

## **OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS**

Identifying specific goals for the relationship will provide a framework that will maximize positive results.

## **Stage 3: Growth**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The third stage is where the mentor and mentee exchange ideas and concepts to help the mentee reach the previously identified goals.

While the primary focus should be on meeting the mentee's goals, there may be meetings in which further discussion of the goals would not be impactful. The NBAA Mentoring Discussion Guide can be used to help promote learning beyond the goals developed in the Collaboration stage.

This is phase in which you'll spend the most time, so it is important to understand how to maximize your role to facilitate learning.

## ACTION STEPS

### Collaborative Mentoring Paradigm

A mentor's role is not an authoritative figure who dictates the way things should be to a younger or less experienced individual. Nor should the mentee be a passive receiver, even though the relationship is driven by their needs. A good mentor will guide the mentee to learn, grow, and be able to find their own answers. They work together to achieve specific, defined goals that focus on developing the mentee.

Consequently, a mentor serves multiple roles and needs to recognize when to apply them. Some roles you may fulfill include:

- **The Guide** navigating the mentee through the maze of the culture of the industry or organization and decipher the "unwritten rules" that exist. Remember, you are not expected to be the expert in everything. But you are expected to be able to fill gaps in your knowledge by directing the mentee to a knowledgeable source. While guiding them through the industry, it is important that you share your experiences – both successes and struggles – to enable them to learn.
- **The Door Opener** helping the mentee develop a network of contacts within the business aviation industry. By introducing the mentee to quality contacts and new relationships, you can help them raise their profile and develop their career path.
- **The Advisor** offering counsel to the mentee and helping them to make good development/career decisions. This may involve helping the mentee to develop new professional interests or giving them carefully selected feedback to help them develop as a professional. It may also involve offering advice and giving direction, allowing the mentee to explore new ideas in confidence or work through problems to find solutions to career issues. Unlike the line manager, a mentor can perform these roles from a completely unbiased perspective and offer impartial advice.

### Succeeding as a Mentor

Successful mentors are prepared for, and enthusiastic about, each meeting. Mentors demonstrate high standards and professionalism at all times.

### Developing Trust and a Cooperative Relationship

Each relationship will develop at its own pace. There is no 'magic formula' to making one work. However, the following tips will help you to build a great and mutually beneficial relationship with your mentee:

- Be predictable and consistent. A mentor should keep their promises and be reliable. For example, if you are scheduled to meet with your mentee at a certain time, it's important to be prepared and punctual. Their time is important, and should be respected. Being consistent with your attitude is also helpful.
- Establish and respect confidentiality. In a mentoring relationship, the mentee might share private thoughts and personal experiences to provide context regarding their career path. These conversations should be kept private.
- Maintain communication. Bright, successful people do not always think alike. Indeed, it is often through differences that the most useful learning can occur. During these times, it is important to keep communicating and remain non-judgmental. If you have concerns, don't understand or disagree with the mentee, it is vital to be open about this so it can be discussed.

### Communicating with the Mentee

There are multiple hats that a mentor might wear. However, the essential building block for each different role and facilitating all learning relationships is effective communication. A good mentor will become comfortable communicating in a style that suits the mentee, not the mentor.

As a mentor, it will be helpful to understand how your mentee learns best. It is commonly understood that most adults' preferred style of learning falls into one of six categories:

- **Visual learners** need to see simple, easy-to-process diagrams or the written word. PowerPoint presentations and flip chart graphics are very helpful to these learners.
- **Aural learners** need to hear something so that it can be processed. They may prefer to read aloud if presented with written material. They enjoy lecture format learning.

- **Print learners** process information by writing it down. They take a lot of notes, notes that they may never look at again.
- **Tactile learners** need to do something in order to learn it. They are likely to avoid written instructions and dive right into a hands-on attempt to work it out.
- **Interactive learners** need to discuss concepts. Breakout discussions and Q&A formats support this type of learning.
- **Kinesthetic learners** learn through movement. Training exercises and role plays help. Giving people the flexibility to stand and move about the classroom also helps these learners.

The NBAA Mentoring Network is nationwide, so it's possible your ability to meet face-to-face with your mentee may be limited. Communication may have to occur through mediums such as phone, email, video conferences or even social networking. Today, readily available video conferencing technologies such as Skype, FaceTime, or Google Hangouts may be a good alternative to face-to-face meetings for some partnerships.

In addition to using verbal and nonverbal feedback, you can take other steps to ensure that communication is being received as intended:

- Invest time and effort in setting the climate for learning, such as taking time to turn off mobile alerts and avoid other distractions
- Identify and use multiple venues for communication
- Set a regular contact schedule, but be flexible
- Make sure that connection results in meaningful learning

#### Mid-Program Review

Midway through the program an assessment will be administered to the mentor and mentee to determine how both parties feel the relationship is progressing. This information will only be visible to NBAA and the Mentoring Steering Group to assess the following:

- Overall successfulness of the mentoring relationship
- Matching success
- Best practices in the program
- Address any potential issues in the relationships

In the event it is requested, NBAA can provide feedback through observation or meeting to assist with the relationship.

#### How to Address Trouble in the Relationship

While not likely to happen, it is possible that tension or difficulties could arise. This can happen at no fault of either party.

It is important to address any concerns openly and honestly as quickly as possible. If you notice something that is not right, try to address the topic and resolve the issue amongst the two of you. If the problem persists, you can reach out to the NBAA Mentoring Network at [mentoring@nbaa.org](mailto:mentoring@nbaa.org).

It is possible that the relationship could encounter an obstacle that cannot be overcome, despite attempts to resolve the issue with mentee. In such a case, it may be necessary to terminate the relationship prematurely. To terminate the relationship, contact the NBAA staff liaison, who will document and walk both parties through the process.

## **OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS**

This stage is where the learning takes place. Both the mentor and mentee are responsible for monitoring and actively participating in the relationship to ensure the goals are being met.

## Stage 4: Closure

### INTRODUCTION

This stage is about reviewing success, evaluating the process and identifying further development needs (if any) for the mentee as the mentoring relationship period comes to a close.

### ACTION STEPS

#### Assess Learning and Outcomes

Closure is important although it can sometimes be a challenge. At the end of the relationship, meetings may become less frequent, and you may face a temptation to allow the relationship to naturally fade. However, in a mentoring relationship, a formal closure stage is critically important.

Plan the closure meeting jointly so you can revisit the agreement for the last time and identify a learning conclusion. A learning conclusion is a highly focused and reflective discussion concentrating on the specific learning you have taken away from your mentoring experience. You will want to make the most of this opportunity by thoughtfully preparing for this discussion. Answer the following questions regarding the mentoring relationship and agreement:

1. Did we meet all the goals and achieve learning objectives that we agreed to?
  - If yes, what was achieved and learned as a result?
  - If no, what got in the way? In what ways might we have contributed to the lack of progress?
2. Overall did we feel the relationship was successful?
  - If not, then why?
  - What could we have done better?
3. What are the next steps?
  - What goals does the mentee have now?
  - Do we wish to have informal mentoring with periodic unplanned meetings?

### OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

This stage allows the participants to identify an end point to the mentoring relationship along with next steps for the mentee. It is also an opportunity to inventory the successes achieved along with lessons learned.



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## **ABOUT NBAA**

Founded in 1947 and based in Washington, DC, the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) is the leading organization for companies that rely on general aviation aircraft to help make their businesses more efficient, productive and successful. Contact NBAA at 800-FYI-NBAA or [info@nbaa.org](mailto:info@nbaa.org). Not a member? Join today by visiting [www.nbaa.org/join](http://www.nbaa.org/join).