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14 Ways To Become A Lifelong Mentor To Interns And Apprentices



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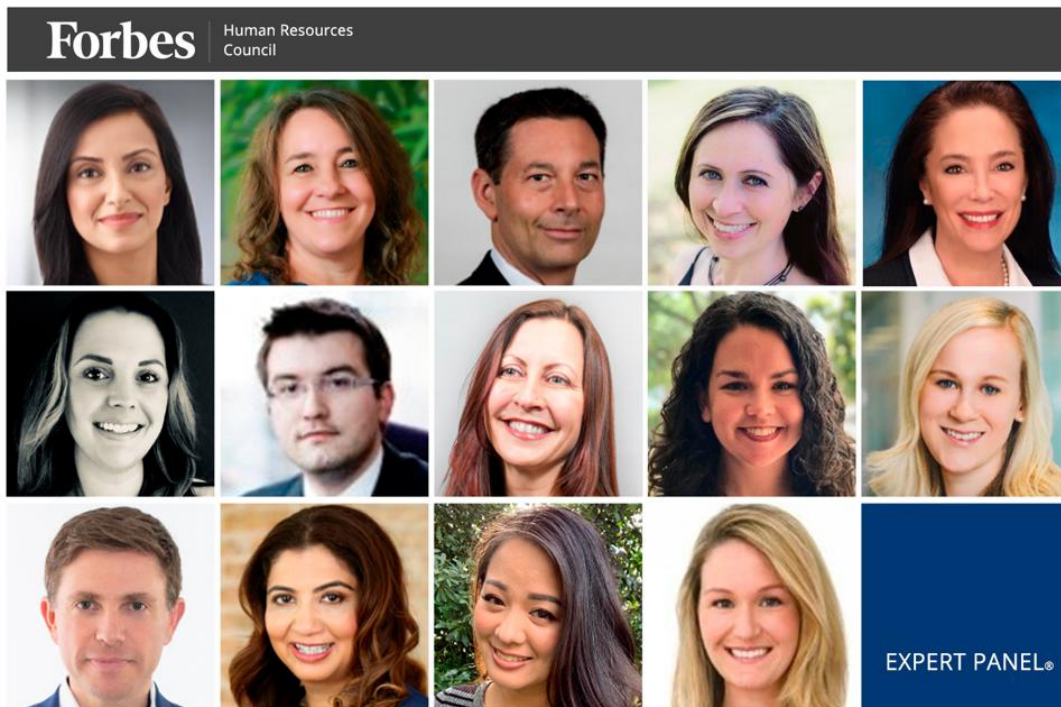
Forbes Human Resources Council

COUNCIL POST | Membership (Fee-Based)

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An internship or apprenticeship can help professionals who are new to an industry learn important things about their potential field of work, build key relationships and develop their skills. In some cases, a lifelong mentoring relationship can blossom from a connection established during an internship or apprenticeship.

When a leader brings on a new intern or apprentice they see great potential in and want to mentor, they need to connect with them on a deeper level and grow that relationship. Here, 14 members of [Forbes Human Resources Council](#) each share one thing leaders can do to facilitate the creation of invaluable mentor-mentee relationships between themselves and talented interns and apprentices.



Forbes Human Resources Council members share ways for leaders to build mentoring relationships with talented interns and apprentices. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

1. See The Opportunity For Learning

Approach the relationship as an opportunity for two-way learning and genuine connection. That's what takes a relationship from transactional to authentic and transformative for both parties. It also sets up the relationship on a more even footing, which means that it can be truly win-win for both parties. - [Nicole Fernandes, Blu Ivy Group](#)

2. Partner Around Common Interests

If you only meet when you "have" to, it takes much longer to develop trust. Find common interests and ways to partner around those. They can be social but should include some humanitarian opportunities for and growth and development. Respect is key as well. If you don't keep your word, follow through and have your mentee's back, you will not be the person they turn to for guidance.

Respect is a precursor to trust. - [Samantha Calhoun, Energy Worldnet, Inc.](#)

3. Enable Your Mentee's Growth

Unfortunately, mentoring is an underutilized tool for personal and professional development. Working with a mentor can be a powerful resource to boost your career. The most valuable thing a mentor can do is enable the growth of the mentee by listening, being encouraging, providing insight, offering constructive feedback, sharing experience and expertise and opening doors. - [John Morgan, LHH](#)

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4. Envision A Lifelong Relationship

Expect the relationship to be a lifelong one before you commit to being a mentor. Short-term “engagements” may not allow enough

time for trust to be built between a mentor and a mentee to make the relationship truly valuable and helpful for the mentee. - [Rachel Lyubovitzky, EverythingBenefits](#)

5. Create A Safe Space For Conversation

Create a safe space for authentic conversations to happen and a “trampoline of trust” to give the mentee the ability to bounce back even after difficulty. Encourage a “do, learn, grow” mindset and “fail fast, fail forward” courage. - [Britton Bloch, Navy Federal](#)

6. Share Failures, Lessons And Challenges

Share your failures. Share your past lessons, challenges and the difficult personalities that you’ve worked with. Being a mentor is a privilege. Mentors should give their mentees all the insights they wish they had earlier in their careers. - [Dominique Farnan, DotConnect](#)

7. Meet In Distraction-Free, Face-To-Face Settings

Choosing the proper setting, free from distractions, and ensuring face-to-face communication are key. As an increasing number of workplaces go digital, relationships tend to develop superficially. Face-to-face discussions of challenges and successes not only help build relationships, but they also provide more genuine conversation and enable the sharing of more sensitive issues. - [Erald Minga, Elgin Community College](#)

8. Be Available And Approachable

If your mentee feels like they can talk to you about pretty much anything at pretty much any time, they will. This may mean occasionally “talking” on the channels your mentee uses—and let’s

face it, they're probably not email. By communicating in a way that is accessible to them, you'll develop a meaningful relationship that will benefit you as well as your mentee. - [Tracy Cote, StockX](#)

9. Show Respect For Their Potential

Tell the mentee what they need to know, even if it might hurt their feelings. The truth is, the best investment you can make is in their professional development, and it shows respect for them and their potential. Be positive and affirming, but say what needs to be said so that your mentee can be appropriately confident, knowing that you have their back. - [Courtney Pace, FedEx Employees Credit Assoc.](#)

10. Provide Stretch Opportunities

Provide stretch opportunities for your mentee to allow them to grow as a professional in their field of work. These opportunities can be job-specific or just general and growth-oriented to ensure that the mentee is being challenged regularly and guided through new experiences in the workplace. - [Caroline Faulds, Canada Pooch](#)

11. Build A Foundation Of Trust

Establish trust. The mentor-mentee relationship is a sensitive one, like most relationships, and must have a foundation of trust to provide maximum value. Without the mentee's trust, a mentor is unlikely to have the fullest opportunity to understand the mentee's mindset and challenges. Trust can be built by respecting confidentiality and being responsive, attentive and open to improving. - [Bryan Passman, Hunter + Esquire](#)

12. Make Sure Each Conversation Is Meaningful

Giving candid feedback requires the mentor to invest time in building trust, listening intently and providing additional perspective and guidance to help their mentee grow. The mentor should lean into their courage, making sure each conversation is meaningful and that both mentor and mentee can be authentic, vulnerable and trusting so that the mentee can grow significantly from that experience. - [Rohini Shankar, CIOX Health](#)

13. Bring The Mentee Into Your World

Let them meet your colleagues, friends and family and take them along with you to specific functions to increase their knowledge or just to bond with them. Being able to teach them verbally is one thing, but allowing them to see how you interact with the world gives them a clearer reference point. They'll learn better when they do as you do, not just do as you say. - [Angela Nguyen, Good Gummy](#)

14. Be Enthusiastic About Your Role

Embrace the responsibility of being their mentor. Foster trust in the relationship and make time for your mentee by scheduling regular meetings and staying available to answer questions or give advice. - [Leigh Yanocha, Knopman Marks Financial Training](#)
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