

# Make your Mentor

## A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO FINDING YOUR OWN MENTOR

### This guide is for you if :

- You tried a mentoring scheme before, but it didn't quite work for you.
- Want to choose a mentor based on personal characteristics or career alignment.
- Want a mentor but don't have time for a formal scheme. Aren't eligible for the mentoring scheme you were interested in.
- Want to benefit from several mentor perspectives at once.

If you said yes to any of the above—or are just curious about a different approach to mentoring—read on!

This guide is designed to give you the tools to approach industry professionals for useful advice that could propel their careers forward.

The process is simple:

- Identify a career goal
- Approach several individuals
- Learn from each one to help you on your journey



### Mentoring throughout your career

Mentoring can happen at any stage of your career. It's a powerful way to broaden your worldview, gain insight into yourself, and chart your career trajectory.

Mentoring often happens within structured programs. However, that model doesn't work for everyone. If it doesn't suit you, you can still benefit from mentorship by taking an independent approach.

Mentorship on your own terms can take many forms: a single email exchange, one conversation, a portfolio review, or a weekly chat over a month or months. You can find your own mentor and set up a structure and pace which works mutually. This is your schedule, your contacts, and your network—and ultimately, your career.



# Your 3-step Make-Your-Mentor Plan

## Step 1 - Identify what you want to gain

- Take some time to clearly outline your goals.
- For instance:
  - Understanding the landscape of an industry
  - Gaining industry contacts
  - Getting portfolio feedback
  - Strategizing your next career move
  - Learning how someone else got started
  - Anything else related to career development

**Tip-** When reaching out state your goal!



## Step 2 - Research potential mentors

Look for individuals whose experiences align with your goals. These could be anyone you find valuable.

Where you can Look for Mentors:

- Networking events
- Social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, The Dots)
- Your existing circle

**Tip** - Consider their career journey—what can you learn from their field, expertise or background. Consider if a different perspective could help broaden your view?



## Step 3 - Reach out

- Contact more people than you think you'll need —many won't respond, and that's okay! People are busy and may not have time to engage. This is why casting a wide net is key.
- Try and find a wide variety of people, check if they've mentored before!

**Tip-** There's some useful templates on the next page to help you get started!



# MESSAGE TEMPLATES

**Tip** -Always remember to greet everyone you message warmly and to sign off in a respectful and friendly manner.

## INTRO MESSAGE

"I came across your LinkedIn profile, and your career path is so inspiring—especially as it's similar to the one I hope to take.

At the moment I'm looking for a mentor, to offer me feedback on where my portfolio could be strengthened. Do you know anyone who offers this kind of short-term support?"

## REACHING OUT TO A RECOMMENDED CONTACT

"I recently graduated from UAL and started working at [Company] as a [Role]. I received your contact information from [Mutual Contact], who mentioned your expertise in [Area of Expertise].

I'd love to speak with you about [Specific Topic] to get your insights. If you're available, a coffee or quick phone call would be amazing."

## FOLLOW UP AFTER NETWORKING EVENT

"It was great meeting you at [Networking Event]! I really enjoyed our conversation about [Topic] and would love to continue it.

Would you be available for a coffee or call in the coming weeks?"

## REACHING OUT TO A SPEAKER

"I attended your talk at [Event] and thoroughly enjoyed it. Your insights on [Topic] were incredibly valuable.

I had a few follow-up questions about your career journey. Would it be possible to schedule a call?"

Take control of your mentorship journey. You don't need a formal program to build meaningful connections—just curiosity, initiative, and persistence.