

Getting The Most Out Of Your Rise Mentorship

A Quick Guide For Mentees

Rise mentorship is a two-way street built on trust and equality. However, a successful mentoring partnership must be driven by you, the mentee. While your mentor will be an advisor to your business, your actions and ambitions will determine the depth and pace of the partnership.

That might sound exciting—and a little intimidating. You may feel overwhelmed at the prospect of starting this critical professional relationship, but don't worry; we've got your back! While your main source of support from the Small Business Lending Program will now transition from your Business Advisor to your mentor, Rise will still be there with resources to help you make the most of your mentorship.



"My mentor is really encouraging... I've gotten so much confidence from working with them."

– Michelle, Small Business Lending client



WHAT MAKES A GREAT MENTEE?

While there is no school for how to be a great mentee, there are certain traits and skills you can develop and exercise to help make your mentoring experience positive and productive. Here are some of the characteristics that great mentees share. They:

- Listen actively** and engage with their mentor's feedback and advice.
- Communicate openly and honestly** about their needs, boundaries, and concerns.
- Take accountability** for their role in the mentoring partnership and their business.
- Prepare** adequately for meetings so they can use time with their mentor effectively.
- Respect** their mentor's time and energy, as well as their boundaries.
- Are curious** about all perspectives and evaluate advice with an open mind.
- Practice vulnerability** to build trust and strengthen the partnership



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Mentorship is not a passive experience. You can't sit back and wait for your mentor to identify your challenges, solve your problems, or make your decisions. As the partnership takes off, it will be up to you to set its tone and tempo. As a mentee, it's your responsibility to:

- Schedule regular monthly meetings with your mentor.
- Set an agenda for your meetings and come prepared to maximize your time together.
- Uphold expectations about when, how, and how frequently you will contact your mentor.
- Discuss your setbacks and challenges openly so your mentor can help you find solutions.
- Define clear objectives for your business and take responsibility for making the decisions that will help you succeed on your own terms.

Your mentor has accepted important responsibilities too. It's their job to:

- Provide you with knowledge and advice relevant to your business goals and challenges.
- Ask questions and provide insights to help you assess your situation and find answers/make decisions for yourself.
- Be a rational sounding board to help you keep both your fears and ambitions grounded.
- Support you through the good times and the bad and bring guidance and perspective to times of uncertainty.
- Be a champion of both you and your business.

While your mentor is a powerful source of learning and support, there are a few things they CANNOT do for you:

- They can't read your mind, predict the future, or give you all the answers. (It's not their job to either!)
- They are not a counsellor or therapist and cannot provide direct mental health support.
- They can't support your business financially or tactically, which means no formal work. Anything typically done by an employee or paid consultant (e.g. writing a marketing strategy, keeping the books, recruiting clients, etc.) is not permitted.
- They cannot accept payment for their services while working as a Rise volunteer. (You must report any potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest to Rise.)
- They cannot disclose any information you share with them without your explicit consent—this is a confidential, trust-based partnership, after all.

PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST MEETINGS

Once your Rise loan is disbursed, you'll want to hit the ground running. To help you prepare for your first meetings, we suggest thinking about the business goals and objectives that you'll want your mentor's support on. **Here are a few helpful tips:**

- Focus on setting SMART goals (*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-based*)
- Try to set micro-goals—those small, often daily, achievable goals that can help you build confidence by fostering a sense of progress and accomplishment.
- Not all goals need to be business deliverables; it's also essential to set goals that support your mental health and wellness.
- If you are having trouble identifying your goals, don't worry—your mentor can help! Take time in you first meetings to work on them together.
- Your goals might change and evolve during your mentorship, and that's ok. Just be sure to keep you mentor informed so you are both on the same page.

Try completing our Goal Planning & Tracking Worksheet to help you outline and prioritize your goals.

Your goals are a great way to introduce your mentor to the heart of your business and your vision for the year ahead. And your mentor can likely offer valuable insight, so take time to discuss your goals together early in the relationship.

In your first meetings, it's also important to dedicate time to simply meeting to know each other. Sharing details about your lives, motivations, values, etc., will foster respect and help to build trust. Trust is vital to setting expectations and boundaries, managing conflict or disagreements, and navigating the ups and downs of your business and your partnership.



To learn more about Rise Mentorships check out our **Toolkit for Mentees in Entrepreneurship**.



"A lot of what I work through with my mentor isn't necessarily the gritty of the business; it's more how I can remain authentic to myself and my self-care while running the business."

– Karen, Small Business Lending client