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About StartUp Direct

Startup Direct supports individuals based in the UK (over the age of 18) yet to launch or in the early years of growing a business by providing funding, mentoring and support. We are located in the heart of London and Birmingham (and soon Liverpool and Bristol) start up communities. Startup Direct is a founding delivery partner for the government’s Startup Loans scheme. Initially chaired by James Caan, the scheme aims to promote entrepreneurship and boost enterprise growth in all regions and industries throughout the UK. Individuals have the opportunity to access finance for a business as well as support via invaluable mentoring, training and business resources. Every Entrepreneur wants to be successful and Startup Direct provides a community with the skills, resources and tools to help them do so.

Start up Direct is a proud member of Youth Business International, helping young adults and communities take steps to self-empowerment and economic mobility.

About Youth Business International - YBI

Youth Business International is a global network of independent initiatives that help young people start and grow their own businesses by members exchanging resources and collaborating to increase the efficiency and scale of support: mentoring, business training and access to start-up capital. To date, the network comprises more than 45 members located in around 41 countries and has helped over 100,000 entrepreneurs start businesses globally. These businesses in turn provide employment for hundreds of thousands of others in countries from China to Canada and, from Scotland to Sri Lanka.
Section 1
MENTORING
Why mentoring is important

“Research has shown that 70% of small businesses that receive mentoring survive for five years or more, which is double the rate compared with non-mentored entrepreneurs.” FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

“…37% of young entrepreneurs globally consider their mentor more influential than money to the success of their business.” YOUTH BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL (YBI)

“…Mentorship that comes as a result of the loan, for me, was far more valuable than the loan itself! I can’t thank my mentor enough for sharing her time and experience with me.” Entrepreneur: PIPPA OF PIP & NUT

“If I had not been provided with a mentor, I would not have made some of the better business choices because I wouldn’t have known any better.” YBI ENTREPRENEUR
“My Mentor helped my self esteem by encouraging me to challenge my negative mind set, ‘No one will buy my services, I’m not good enough.” YBI ENTREPRENEUR

“Mentoring was a great experience. I enjoyed learning about new businesses, meeting new people and it was a great opportunity for me to give something back...” Mentor: JULIE BAKER

“Becoming involved as a Mentor has been a great way of transmitting my skills to help fledgling businesses and at the same time is fun and stimulating.” Mentor: SIMON BARKER
Mentoring can be described as a partnership between two people who have different levels of experience. A mentor provides support and confronts issues and challenges identified by the mentee. It is a positive, developmental activity, not a remedial one.

The word “Mentor” comes from Greek and is based on mythology. Before setting out on an epic voyage, Odysseus entrusted his son, Telemachus, to the care and direction of his old and trusted friend Mentor, thus creating the first mentoring partnership.

‘Mentor’ has since evolved to mean different things...
Mentoring has many definitions...

“Help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.”
MEGGINSON & CLUTTERBUCK, 1995

“A one-to-one relationship between two people, where one individual is prepared to assist in the professional and personal development of another.”
GARDNER, 1996

“A mentor serves as a guide, a supporter... and a role model.”
CHAPEL & TATUM, 2003

OUR DEFINITION
“Mentoring is a practical approach to helping entrepreneurs develop their own abilities and insights as they start and grow their business.”
YBI

“A close developmental relationship between experienced and less experienced individuals.”
COLLINS, 1979
Myth buster – what mentoring is NOT

- **Business consultancy** – a consultant advises someone on a specific task in a commercial relationship. Mentors generally work on a voluntary basis; providing new perspectives and empowering the entrepreneur to develop and grow.

- **Business coaching** – coaching has a shorter-term, task-orientated focus; mentoring has a longer-term relationship focus. The mentor seeks to improve specific skills, knowledge or behaviours and at times may use coaching techniques.

- **Getting stuck in the details** – the role of the mentor is to help the mentee look at the business from a broader perspective i.e. taking a ‘bird’s eye view’. The mentee can then view his/her options without getting weighed down by details.

- **Direct sponsorship** – a mentor should, in general, not act as a sponsor for the mentee i.e. by placing the mentee in a favourable position with a third party. This can create dependency and create a potential conflict of interest.

- **The “secret” police or industrial espionage** – the mentor is not there to spy on the mentee or his business for the competition, the mentoring team or any financial institution. The relationship is confidential and the mentor’s duty of care is towards the mentee.
Myth buster – what mentoring IS

• **A two way relationship** – mentoring works best between two parties that are committed to the relationship for an agreed period of time

• **Developmental, building capacity and skills** – a key role for the mentor is to help the mentee reflect on his/her actions and use these experiences to make more informed decisions. The role of the mentor is to help the mentee identify strengths and weaknesses, and building the skills required by the budding entrepreneur

• **Building self-reliance** – a key role of the mentor is to help the mentee to help him/herself. This is particularly relevant for the mentee who will need to show he/she has the confidence and competence to ‘go it alone’

• **Trusting and supportive** – the mentor and mentee need to build a relationship based on trust. This happens when both parties honour their commitments, keep promises and show that they are reliable

• **A mutual learning experience** – both parties will want to benefit from the time they spend together. The mentee should benefit from the experience of the mentor, and the mentor should benefit from giving something back by learning something new or gaining inspiration from the enthusiasm and accomplishments of the mentee
Mentoring can happen in two ways:

- **Face to face** – sessions are done in person. If possible this is usually the best way to get started in a relationship and should be used as much as possible

- **Remote** – for various reasons you may not be able to meet face to face, then sessions can also be arranged by Skype or phone and in some instances emails

**Mentoring can take different forms:**

- **Formal** – sessions that are structured for a fixed time period and usually planned in advance. They form the bedrock of the relationship

- **Informal sessions** – these sessions are more spontaneous and varied in length. Informal sessions work best when they are mixed with formal sessions. They can include: face-to-face, remote, email or even messaging

- **Group mentoring** – usually involves a mentor working in a group with 2 or more mentees representing 2 or more businesses. These sessions are very collaborative as mentees learn from their fellow entrepreneurs as well
Key people in a mentoring relationship

Research suggests a mentee’s success is greatly influenced by the nature of the support he/she receives. The mentoring team, though not involved in the day to day relationship, does play a key role in ensuring that both the mentee and the mentor follow the programme’s policies and principles. The mentee will also need to know what on-going support is available during and after the mentoring relationship has come to an end. For this reason an important part of mentoring is sharing written updates with the mentoring team and letting them know how you are getting on.
Why do I need a mentor?

Being an entrepreneur is not easy. The support and guidance of a mentor can be of great value to the success of any start-up business.

Having an independent and experienced person on your side will help you to:

- bounce off and challenge ideas
- find the most appropriate solution and make important decisions
- improve your communication and networking skills
- identify areas to develop and build the business skills required to work effectively
- to stay focused, overcome obstacles and keep motivated
Section 2
THE MENTORING JOURNEY
The Mentoring Journey

1. **ESTABLISHING THE RELATIONSHIP.**
   Get to know each other and establish ground rules

2. **MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP**
   Explore goals, identify challenges & find solutions

3. **ENDING THE RELATIONSHIP**
   Establish independence and self-reliance
Establishing the relationship:

YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH YOUR MENTOR

Useful tips to get the most out of your first meeting:

Before your meeting:
Make contact with your mentor by email, phone or your preferred choice of communication to:

- exchange contact details (in case of last minute changes)
- get to know one another
- provide additional background information (e.g. business plans or professional experience)
- agree on venue and time that allows conversation with few distractions
- be aware of any special needs or circumstances
- consider if one party needs to cancel, how much notice they should give and how

During your first meeting
- Focus on getting the relationship off to a good start (build rapport)
- Acknowledge that the relationship is two-way and voluntary
- Ask and share expectations you have of the mentoring relationship and establish ground rules (see page 16)
- Decide on type and frequency of meetings and communications (in person, phone, email or online), as well as the best way to handle cancellations
- Discuss how to keep track of progress
- Discuss reporting expectations and how you will manage any admin work required by your mentoring team
In order to be in a position to review your progress and achievement of the objectives, try to establish a timetable of regularly spaced meetings.

Research suggests that meeting every 4-6 weeks is most beneficial; together you can decide what works best for the relationship.

Whatever both parties agree should fall within the guidelines provided during the matching process.
Set the ground rules

1. Professional vs personal lives – the relationship is predominantly about the mentee’s business. It is ok to talk about each other’s personal lives but it is up to the discretion of the mentor and mentee how much they wish to share

2. Level of involvement – mentor and mentee should decide on and abide by an agreed contact schedule. Be considerate of one another and avoid making excessive demands on each other’s time

3. Achieving agreed objectives – the mentor will assist the mentee in achieving the agreed objectives but will let the mentee run his/her business independently

4. Regular reviews – both parties should review their relationship and the mentee’s business progress on a regular basis, and check each other’s level of comfort at the end of each meeting

5. Mentor’s authority/name – the mentee will use the mentor’s authority/name only with the mentor’s consent

6. Confidentiality – the mentor will not communicate his/her knowledge of the mentee to other parties without the mentee’s consent
Confidentiality is King

“Anything said during the course of a mentoring meeting is confidential to the parties involved and should not be repeated without the express consent of those individuals”

YBI DEFINITION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT:

• Confidential Information – agree upfront what confidential information is and how it can be shared; remember you will need to let the mentoring team know how you are progressing

• Business information – keep all business information of each other safe and secure

• Personal information – sharing personal information is often a sign of a good relationship but as a general rule treat it like business information

• Concerns – if you have any concerns about your mentoring relationship, please reach out to your mentoring team, at any point, in confidence
Effective ways to build TRUST

Building a foundation of mutual trust and respect in your mentoring relationship will be a key success factor. Your mentor’s trust in you will depend on your ability to show that you care/ are motivated, on your competence and integrity.

**KEY PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING TRUST:**

- **Get to know your mentor** – talk about their work and their life outside it (as much as is acceptable). Try to understand what they think and why. Value their viewpoint.

- **Do what you say you’re going to do** – agree what you are aiming to achieve through your mentoring sessions. Be reliable and always do what you say you are going to do.

- **Communicate openly and honestly** – discuss issues as soon as they arise. Ask for and give feedback regularly.

- **Don’t be afraid to challenge** – your open, honest relationship will allow you to challenge your mentor constructively to explore a wider viewpoint.

- **Let your mentor know** – if you are not sure how to proceed or get the most out of the mentoring relationship. Alternatively, speak with your mentoring team.
COMPETENCE
Learning, skills, and experience

TRUST

INTEGRITY
Values, trust, and accountability

JOURNEY
Structuring your subsequent sessions

Based on Clutterbuck ‘Everyone needs a Mentor’ 2001
What skills does the ideal mentee have?

- **Listening skills** – (more information on page 29)

- **Ability to explain** – to the mentor key challenges or issues faced by you

- **Be open to questions** – to explore solutions and consequences

- **Readiness to act** – on what has been agreed

- **Willingness to be proactive and flexible** – in communication and action
5 pitfalls in the mentoring relationship and how to resolve them

1. **Inadequate definition of roles and ground rules** – lack of clarity of ground rules will make it difficult for the relationship to develop and trust to build. It may also lead to false expectations and unreasonable demands by one party on the other. Set the ground rules and revisit them regularly.

2. **Conflict of interest** – expanding the mentoring partnership into other areas like becoming a shareholder, a non-executive director, or engaging in a business partnership may create a conflict of interest. This will impede the independence of the mentoring relationship and potentially void your mentorship agreement.

3. **When you hit a wall** - after the initial drive of launching, it is not untypical that an entrepreneur will face difficult challenges as the business progresses. When this happens, the mentor can make a difference by helping the mentee through the uncertainty and giving them the drive to face and overcome challenges.

4. **Conflicting values** – the mentor and mentee may have different ethical values on how to conduct business. Be open about your personal standards; if the gap is too wide the relationship may suffer. If this happens reach out to your mentoring team to discuss how to move forward.

5. **No time for mentoring** – mentors typically volunteer their time and provide invaluable support to mentees. Like all professional relationships, both parties should promptly respond to calls, emails and attempts to set up meetings. If mentees have genuine reasons preventing them from engaging, talk to the mentor or reach out to the mentoring team. Don’t just ignore the mentor.
How do I really know the mentoring relationship is working properly?

You might wonder over time whether your mentoring relationship is working. Unfortunately there is no test that can tell you if you are getting it right (apart from you telling each other).

You are probably getting things right if:

- You have regular meetings
- You are developing a good rapport
- You feel like your mentor has developed an understanding of your business and goals
- Your mentor challenges you about your goals
- You feel that you are developing both personal and business skills
- You are not afraid to ask questions or question your mentor in discussions
6 habits a mentee should avoid

- Bringing to the first meeting a long shopping list of things you want the mentor to do
- Expecting the mentor to always have the answer
- Expecting the mentor to decide when to meet and what to talk about
- Never challenging what the mentor says – he/she knows best
- Treating the mentor sessions as mobile – the easiest thing to move in the diary
- Never committing to doing anything as a result of the mentoring session

Source: Adapted from David Clutterbuck’s 12 habits of a toxic mentee
Where are you?

Stuck in traffic
Ending the relationship

There will be a time when the relationship will begin to draw to an end. At this point you must both ‘let go’ so that the mentee can maintain their independence. It is the responsibility of the mentee to build on and put what they have learnt into practice.

Although the two of you will probably continue to have some form of interaction, it should be on a more informal basis. Let your mentoring team know when you’ve arranged your last session so that they can arrange a final review for both parties.
TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY ENDING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Fixing a date for your last meeting – It not always easy but the formal relationship does come to an end, have a chat with your mentor beforehand and decide on a date so that you can prepare for it. In fact scheduling the last few meetings ahead of time is good practice and gives both parties a firm date to work towards.

Other ways to support – Ongoing support is invaluable for all entrepreneurs. Talk with your mentor (and mentoring team) about other forms of support and how to access these during and after the relationship has come to an end.

Celebrating your success – have a look back at the goals you set during the relationship (both big and small for your development and the business remember success is measured in different ways.

Saying goodbye – imagine how you can end the session on a celebratory note. You could have a chat about what you enjoyed most, the most important things you’ve learned. Or if and how you would stay in contact informally.

Evaluating & Administration – It really important to let the mentoring team know when you are concluding the relationship. You may be asked to complete a Mentoring Relationship Outcome (MRO) form. It doesn’t take long and it helps ensure the transition is managed properly and you have ongoing support. It also helps us to identify any improvements they can make to the mentoring journey.
Section 3
MENTORING TOOLKIT AND SKILLS
**Communication Skills**

Professor Albert Mehrabian’s communication theory relates to communications where the need to understand is great. This is also applicable in mentoring. He states that:

“55% is BODY language, 38% TONE of voice and 7% Words”

**LISTENING SKILLS**

Active listening is more than just hearing what the other person has said. It is a critical tool for effective Communication!

**OUR TIPS ON BECOMING A GREAT LISTENER:**

- **Look interested** - quality listening starts with both parties paying attention to each other, e.g. eye contact, open expression and managing potential interruptions
- **Inquire with questions** – use open-ended questions to inquire deeper: What, why, when, where, who and how?
- **Stay alert** - communication is not just about words; listen also to the tone of voice and watch the body language as well
- **Test your understanding** - repeat back the information you have heard for clarification and to avoid making unintended assumptions
- **Empathise** - everyone has “tough days” and often we communicate differently. Showing empathy (awareness of other perspectives in conversation can make it easier for the others to express themselves and for you to relate to what they are trying to say
- **Neutralise your feelings** - everyone has biased views or prejudices. Try to put these aside, or it will risk impeding your ability to listen and to give or receive guidance
Clarify & Question with the 5C’s

This is a model best used with your Mentor to focus on Challenges, Choices, Consequences, Creative Solutions and Conclusions. It provides a ‘journey map’ for facilitating a structured session about a specific challenging situation. The 5C’s will help to explore and identify the best ways to move forward:

- **Challenges** – understand the situation and the specific challenges involved
- **Choices** – explore the possible options available to tackle the challenges, as well as the pros and cons of each
- **Consequences** – identify the consequences of each option; positives and negatives, like a mini SWOT analysis (discussed further on page 33)
- **Creative solutions** – with the understanding of the above, take a step back and think about potential creative ways of addressing the challenge differently; this is where you can use / ask a mentor to share their experiences
- **Conclusions** – choose the most appropriate path based on the analysis and take action

**TIP:** The model is explained in a structured sequential process for explanatory purposes. In practice, you may end up interchanging between the stages and moving through the process a couple of times. Don’t let the structure impede your communication and flow – just keep track of the main points to be able to draw a conclusion at the end.
Source: Mike Pegg “Art of Mentoring”
GROW an alternative to 5C’s

The GROW model is another simple method your mentor can help you use for goal setting and problem solving. It can be used as an alternative approach to the 5C’s model, and is particularly useful for less structured discussions.

**G**
Goal – Where do you want to get to? What is your goal?

**R**
Reality – Where are you right now?

**O**
Options & Obstacles – What options do you have and what obstacles do you need to overcome?

**W**
Way Forward – What do you need to do to implement the most appropriate option?
The SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is a useful tool to analyse people, businesses, products, or situations. By looking at the 4 aspects listed below it will help you identify and develop a strong strategy. It is a good ‘check in’ tool for both mentees and mentors.

**STRENGTHS**

What is your competitive advantage?
Things to think about:
- Unique selling points
- Experience, knowledge, data
- Price, value, quality

**WEAKNESSES**

Where is your Achilles’ heel?
Things to think about:
- Lack of funding
- Lack of reputation, presence, reach (early start up)
- Morale, commitment, leadership

**OPPORTUNITIES**

What opportunities will this lead to?
Things to think about:
- Timing of launch
- Product development
- Partnerships, agencies, distributors

**THREATS**

What challenges lie ahead?
Things to think about:
- Environmental aspects, legal aspects
- Running out of funding/money
- Competitors opening a shop nearby
Insightful questions to ask

MENTEE

Here are examples of questions that you may want to think about or your mentor may ask you:

- What will give you the most value from each session?
- What do you want to focus on at this point in time?
- What is keeping you awake at night?
- How do you feel about the present situation and what are the facts?
- What is happening now that is working well?
- What do you feel YOU have control over?

NOTE: Asking yourself questions that begin with ‘how’ rather than ‘why’ helps to move things forward by focusing on solutions rather than brood on what went ‘wrong’ or things that are beyond your control.
Additional sources of information

The Mentor’s Book

Everyone Needs a Mentor

Coaching and Mentoring: Theory and Practice
by Bob Garvey, Paul Stokes and David Megginson

A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Coaching and Mentoring.
Bob Garvey

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