



Six tips for mentoring aspiring event planners

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1. Get involved – Your first step is to be open to mentoring and to let your industry colleagues know that you are. Reach out to a college/university that offers event planning programs and ask if you could help with any of their classes.

You may already be a member of a group such as MPI (Meeting Professionals International), which has aspiring event planners looking for mentors to meet and from whom to learn.

If a student reaches out to you on a social networking site such as LinkedIn, you may wish to respond with an offer to speak with them at a time that works for you and that fits into your work schedule.

2. Spend time with your mentee – Take an hour of your time to meet with your mentee for a coffee, or to have a phone conversation.

Before you meet, ask your mentee if they have a social media presence. For example, are they on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn? Do they use those sites for their personal use? Review their social media posts and offer advice on content. Potential employers frequently look to social media to investigate their possible candidate. This is something to raise with your mentee.

Ask to see your mentee's resume so that you can assess where they are in their career. Talk to them about their goals and their work history. Encourage them to be honest about their career goals. Based on your conversation and on their resume, tell them where you think they are on their career path. Be honest and open in your discussions with them.

3. Listen – Listen to your mentee about their vision for themselves, what they learned in school or through their previous work experience. Are they computer savvy? Are they in tune with social media? What are they doing to get to where they want to be? Ask them to talk about their strengths and weaknesses.

4. Offer advice – Provide your mentee with suggestions as to where to start looking for work. Encourage them to go back to school for course(s) in event planning to increase their knowledge, experience and marketability in their chosen field.

You may wish to suggest that your mentee volunteer for an organization. Advise them that if they do volunteer, they should commit for a good period of time, such as six months or a year. Continuous volunteer experience is a valuable asset as they develop their career.

Do they understand industry trends? Have they been reading event related articles? Guide them to possible websites that list opportunities in their desired field.

Let them know that sending a personalized thank-you card after an interview is not a thing of the past. People still like to receive cards; it is a nice touch to send a thank-you card to a potential employer or to someone who has offered assistance.

5. Set up action items - Encourage your mentee to set up a three- to five-year plan for themselves. The plan should include their goals and how they will achieve them. Suggest ideas as to where and how they could start.

Encourage them to ask questions – a lot of questions – along the path to their dream career. They may discover that their career path changes as they grow within their field.

Let them know that their action items are important in achieving their next steps and for their next meeting with you. You want to make this a win-win situation for both you and your mentee. Let your mentee know that it is up to them to do the work; you are there to guide them, but you cannot do the work for them.

6. Schedule a follow-up meeting – Let your mentee know that you would be happy to meet again in six months or a year. Tell them that it is up to them to reach out to you. At that follow-up meeting, you could review their progress towards their overall goals. If you wish, tell your mentee that you are available to them to answer questions and offer guidance over the phone and via email.

Mentoring a young professional is a pleasure and an honour. Make sure you enjoy doing it and that you will feel fulfilled before you make the commitment!

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