



Ready...Set...MENTOR! A Speed Mentoring Toolkit

Introduction: Mentoring describes a developmental relationship between a mentor, who is a person with experience, skills and knowledge, and a protégé, who is less experienced or skilled in handling professional situations. This relationship may take the form of non-threatening training, coaching, modeling, supporting, discussing, and/or counseling, across time and work contexts. Informal mentoring may emerge between partners who spontaneously discover each other in unplanned and sometimes unexpected ways usually in casual settings. Formal mentoring happens by design – an individual is assigned protégés or it is part of the supervisor/supervisee job responsibilities. Highly organized formal mentoring programs have program goals, schedules, training and evaluation.

There are obvious advantages and disadvantages to both informal and formal mentoring, such as the effectiveness of matching mentors and protégés, or in some cases in finding a sufficient number of mentors to match the number of protégés, and the success of being non-threatening within the context of the organization's evaluation of the mentoring program or of the employee. Women, in particular, may experience difficulties with mentorship due to time constraints, finding an appropriate mentor in a male-dominated career field, and experiencing gender-based professional challenges due to sex role differences.

Modeled after speed dating, speed mentoring is a relatively new concept that focuses on quick-hit information, time-efficient networking and the methodical pursuit of a mentor. It addresses many of the disadvantages of both informal and formal mentoring for women. By simply providing a venue and structured method for participants to seek out their own mentoring relationships during a fast-paced event, speed mentoring addresses [or solves] many disadvantages of formal mentoring programs.. These disadvantages include high costs of program management and evaluation, and the potential lack of successfully matching mentor to protégé, due to a lack of natural affinity. Speed mentoring also addresses a challenge for women to establish informal relationships by cutting through the initial stages of developing a professional relationship and jumping right into the crux of the issue at hand – is it a good match?

A web-based search yields that there are businesses that market toolkits for implementing such a program, but more often various professional organizations have offered speed mentoring sessions at their regional and national conferences. The President's Commission on Women and the Women's Forum at the University of

Kentucky have developed a toolkit to facilitate the planning and implementation of speed mentoring events.

HOSTING A SPEED MENTORING EVENT

STEP 1: Select a target audience:

- a. recruit appropriate mentors
- b. enlist potential protégés.

STEP 2: Plan event:

- a. set time and date
- b. establish a venue; characteristics of the location should include a room large enough to accommodate the interaction of mentor/protégé dyads that have been selected
- c. arrange for refreshments
- d. solicit sponsors or set registration fees
- e. manage personnel; it is helpful to have more than one person available to moderate event so that a last minute absence will not leave an uneven number of mentors and protégés.

STEP 3: Invite the mentors and protégés:

- a. From your target audience create an email that invites these individuals at least 6 weeks before the event is to take place
- b. First email should include general information about program and specifics to the event, i.e., date, time, location
- c. Make sure to include an RSVP and give around 2 weeks to return
- d. If you want individuals to invite a guest, have them include the guest's contact information in their RSVP
- e. Track RSVPs in a database or spreadsheet
- f. 5 days before event, send out email to participants asking for ONE professional strength and weakness. This information will be included on their name badges and will serve as a conversation starter in the mentoring session. This will also ensure adequate time before the event to create name badges. Have a back up plan ready in the case that not everyone returns the email with their information in a timely manner
- g. 3 days before deadline of RSVP send out a reminder email to target list, including a suggestion that attendees bring plenty of business cards, reflect on what they hope to achieve during the event and determine their strategy for making the most out of each short interaction

STEP 4: Event preparation

- a. Print name badges including participant's
 1. Mentoring strengths
 2. Professional challenges
- b. Get a stop watch and an auditory signal (a loud bell or buzzer)
- c. Bring a camera to document the event if you plan to publicize it later

STEP 5: Script an agenda for the event, including:

- a. an introduction
 1. Welcome and a discussion on the consequences of first impressions
 2. Purpose
 - Quick-hit information
 - Time-efficient networking
 - Methodical pursuit of mentor
 3. Importance of time limits
- b. an explanation of the process
 1. start signal
 2. talk for fixed number of minutes
 3. warning signal
 4. signal for protégés to move to next seat
 5. start signal
- c. a wrap-up
 1. congratulations on having met and exchanged contact information – encourage them to continue mentoring process
 2. thank you for participating
 3. expect an evaluation of event to improve future events
- d. allow time at the end for informal mentoring and networking to continue

STEP 6: Evaluate the event

- a. determine how to best administer the survey tool (online, paper, etc.)
- b. establish what outcomes you desire to measure which may include both short-term feedback administered 1-3 days after the event and long-term feedback administered 90-120 days after the event.
- c. script survey questions
- d. administer survey and analyze results
- e. use results to modify future speed mentoring events

Appendices:

Sample Invitations
Sample Agenda/Script
Sample Evaluation

SAMPLE INVITATIONS:

Initial Email

*****RSVP*****

Great News! You have been invited to the President's Commission on Women and Women's Forum **Inaugural Speed Mentoring Event** on **April 3rd, 2008, from 4-6 p.m. in the Lexmark Room, 2nd floor of the Main Building, University of Kentucky.**

So what is speed mentoring?

If you've heard of speed dating—dozens of people looking for the right match, cycling through fixed three-minute conversations to quickly sort out prospective future romantic interests from potential romantic “duds”—you're on the right track. Now think rather than meeting a potential future spouse, you are meeting future potential mentors and protégées, allies and sources of information to help you make the most of your career at the University.

So who else is invited? The President's Commission on Women, the Women's Forum and the President's Commission on Women have invited Circles of Power Leadership training program graduates, rising faculty members and well-respected senior faculty women to participate in the event. And, we are asking you to extend this invitation to another **female faculty member** who you think would be interested in a fun, fast-paced opportunity to make a connection with other faculty members from across the University.

How will it work? A brief overview on how speed mentoring works will be given by Dr. Mitzi Schumacher, Chair of the President's Commission on Women. After the talk, we will split into two groups and start the speed mentoring. You will meet on-on-one with another participant for 3 minutes, getting to know each other and discussing your professional strengths and challenges. Bring your business cards so that you can make them available to other participants, as you can exchange these cards before moving on to your next participant.

If you would like to join us for this exciting event, please **RSVP** to (contact name) at (email address) indicating:

1. Yes I am interested in attending!
2. Yes I am interested and I am bringing another faculty member (Please include their contact information as well)
3. No, unfortunately I cannot participate

Please send your RSVPs to me by **March 20th, 2008**. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone:

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP EMAIL:

Thank you all for being willing participants in our first ever Speed Mentoring Event this Thursday!

I have one task for you to complete before your arrival on Thursday. Please send me by _____:

1 Professional Strength and 1 Professional Weakness

This information will be added to your name badge and help in conversation during the event.

As a reminder, here are the details for the event on Thursday:

Name: Speed Mentoring for Female Faculty
Location: Lexmark Room, 2nd Floor of the Main Building
Time: 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Best place to park: The Parking structure on the corner of Limestone and Avenue of Champions next to Kennedy Bookstore. There is a pedestrian walk way on the 3rd floor of the parking structure. You will see the Main Building right in front of you as you come off the walkway.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

SAMPLE AGENDA/SCRIPT:

Introduction

- ✓ **Welcome** to the first SPEED MENTORING event sponsored by the President's Commission on Women and the Women's Forum. This is an inaugural event in that we've never tried this before either! Many of us haven't even tried speed dating.
- ✓ As you all know, first impressions have important consequences. Some psychological research even shows that marriage counselors observing just a 2 to 3 minute video taped sequence can predict whether couples stay together. Other research shows that first impressions are made within the first three seconds – that's why speed mentoring should work to match mentors with protégés!
- ✓ The **purpose** of speed mentoring is to provide a quick hit of information in the form of a discussion or your mentoring strengths and professional challenges (and we all have both!), an efficient way to rapidly build your campus network, and a methodical way to “try-on” a number of mentoring relationships to see which one you might want to pursue later.
- ✓ The **time limits are important**. We have schedule the speed mentoring to give you 3 minutes with each mentor and allowed 2 minutes to make sure everyone moves on for a total of 50 minutes. So everyone must keep moving so that we all can meet at least 10 people. You notice that we have scheduled the event for an hour and a half...that is to provide an extra half hour to enjoy the refreshments and to informally allow you to go back to talk more with the people you have met. You can always return to the conversations that were interrupted by the 3 minute signal!

Explanation of the process

- ✓ First, it doesn't matter where you sit...the way we look at it, we can all use some mentoring. We all have strengths and challenges.
- ✓ Second, the signal will sound like this (sound the signal)
- ✓ Third, we will signal to start, move, and start again. Notice there are 3 minutes to talk and we've allowed for a very generous 2 minutes to move – this should allow plenty of time for you to close the conversation and switch chairs.

READY...SET...MENTOR!

Wrap Up

Congratulations on having met and exchanged contact information. We encourage you to continue mentoring process.

Thank-you for participating

Expect an evaluation of event to improve future events, in a few days we will be emailing a few questions so that if you consider this to be valuable...we will do it again...and if so, you can tell us how to improve it. In a few months we may email you again to see if the connections you've made today have been helpful for you. Please return these evaluations to us so that we know what to do to continue to provide these types of events to you in the most valuable way.

SAMPLE EVALUATION:

Administer survey within three days of the event.
Call for completion within one week of the event.
Distribute via HR Zoomerang online survey tool.

Survey Questions:

1. How did you hear about the speed-mentoring event?
 - a. Invited by a peer
 - b. Invited by President's Commission on Women/UK Women's Forum
 - c. Other
2. Which of the following options best describes your current position at the University?
 - a. Tenure track faculty
 - b. Other faculty
 - c. Professional staff grade level 45 and higher
 - d. Professional staff grade level 42 to 45
 - e. Professional staff grade level 37 to 41
3. How long have you been employed at the University?
 - a. Less than one year
 - b. More than one year, less than three years
 - c. More than three years, less than five years
 - d. More than five years, less than ten years
 - e. More than ten years
4. On a scale of 1-5, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree, please indicate your expectations of the event prior to attending:
 - a. I would be able to meet a variety of women working at the University in positions similar to mine
 - b. I would develop relationships as a mentor to someone more junior
 - c. I would develop relationships as a protégé with someone more senior
 - d. I would be able to meet women working at the University whom I would not have an opportunity to meet otherwise
 - e. I would be able to make connections with women to expand my professional network at the University
 - f. I would want to follow up with the contacts I made at the event on my own afterwards
5. Please indicate any other expectations you had of the event prior to attending (long answer)
6. On a scale of 1-5, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree, please indicate your expectations of the event after attending:
 - a. I was able to meet a variety of women working at the University in positions similar to mine
 - b. I was able to meet women working at the University whom I would not have an opportunity to meet otherwise
 - c. I was able to make connections with women to expand my professional network at the University
 - d. I will follow up with the contacts I made at the event on my own afterwards
7. Please indicate the number of new contacts you made at the speed mentoring event:
 - a. None
 - b. One
 - c. Two to three
 - d. Three to five
 - e. Five to ten

- f. More than ten
- 8. Please indicate any barriers you encountered at the event to making meaningful contacts to enhance your network at the University (long answer)
- 9. On a scale of 1-5, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
 - a. I would attend another speed mentoring event
 - b. I would recommend this kind of event to my peers
 - c. I would recommend this kind of event to new employees at the University
 - d. I would encourage the President's Commission on Women and UK Women's Forum to continue sponsoring this event
- 10. Please include any additional feedback here: (long text)