

Working the Robertson Way

MENTOR'S GUIDE



Introduction

Mentoring helps us identify and nurture talent, and grow our future leaders at Team Robertson.

As a mentor you're committing to being a great role model for our mentees. By showing how to bring our five principles to life, you'll help them achieve effective individual performance and contribute to our business success.

Here you'll find ways to reflect the core behaviours outlined in Working the Robertson Way in your role as a mentor, useful conversation prompts for your mentoring meetings, and development ideas for you and your mentee.

Use the Mentor's Guide along with resources in [Working the Robertson Way](#) to support discussions around expected behaviours and identify, assess and plan how your mentee can develop skills needed for future career growth.



We listen

The listening mentor invests in building their active listening skills to work positively and collaboratively with their mentee to give them the assurance that their voice is always heard.

Core mentoring behaviours

- I treat people fairly and with respect.
- I ask open questions to fully understand what people need and expect.
- I'm polite and respectful when I speak to people, and take the time to really listen to what they're saying.

Being an active listener is key to successful mentoring discussions. You should aim to listen significantly more than you talk, not only to your mentee's words but how they deliver them. Train yourself to pay attention to your mentee's tone of voice and body language to help you really understand what they're saying.

Show that you're listening

- Your body language: ensure you look engaged, retain eye contact, and nod and smile occasionally.
- Ask open and probing questions, for example: 'tell me more about that'; 'what do you think would happen if...?'; 'what were your main thoughts at that stage?'
- Check your understanding by reflecting back what you've heard: 'It sounds to me like...'; 'What I'm hearing happened is...'; 'Let me check that I've followed you...'

Think about the right environment for your mentoring meetings. A quiet, private space away from distractions is ideal for most people. And what about you – what's the best time of day to give your mentee your full attention? Schedule meetings at times where you can fully commit to listening.

For more information on effective listening skills in mentoring, we recommend [this light reading](#).



Ask your mentee to tell you about some feedback they've received since you last met.

Encourage your mentee to reflect on your discussions and feedback, and decide any activities they can add to their personal development plan.

We are professional

The professional mentor creates a positive environment for their mentee and sets clear boundaries in the mentoring relationship.

Core mentoring behaviours

- I'm respectful of other people's opinions, backgrounds and differences, and maintain confidentiality when it's needed.
- I use positive language and never use words or actions that are or could be seen as offensive or inappropriate.
- I follow all relevant procedures and policies, and maintain expected standards and records.

When you first meet with your mentee, discuss and set expectations and agree how your mentoring relationship will work, then confirm this in a Mentoring Agreement. That way you can both be confident of a shared understanding of the mentoring process and avoid any confusion in the future.

Mentoring relationships can develop into friendships. However, it's important to have a clear mentoring relationship and not allow personal bias to influence professional actions. Stay mindful of maintaining confidentiality, objectivity and equal partnership.



Before completing a Mentoring Agreement, discuss:

1. Purpose of the mentoring relationship – confirm what you and your mentee understand as the overall intention of the mentoring relationship.
 - What do you want to achieve from the relationship?
 - What are the boundaries and how will you handle confidentiality?
 - How is mentoring support different from line management, performance development review and counselling?
 - Roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee.
2. What you'll talk about
 - What you'll focus on, including immediate and long-term goals.
 - Are there any conflicts of interest?
 - What are you comfortable discussing and is it acceptable to discuss personal issues?
3. Practical arrangements
 - How often do you want to meet?
 - Where will you meet?
 - Are you available for telephone or email conversations in between face-to-face meetings?
 - What are the limits to that contact?
 - Will you respond to queries on weekends or holidays?
 - How long do you anticipate the relationship lasting?
 - It's helpful to discuss the future of your mentoring relationship regularly and whether it's still useful.

At Robertson we promote an inclusive workplace and believe in equality of opportunity. As a mentor you should be committed to non-discriminatory practice and valuing people for who they are regardless of race, gender, class, sexuality or ability. All mentors and mentees are expected to respect each other and the people they work with, in line with equality and diversity legislation.



Make a commitment to challenge your mentee if they show behaviours or attitudes that aren't in line with Working the Robertson Way.

Use the European Mentoring and Coaching Council [Global Code of Ethics](#) to promote excellent practice in mentoring.

We take responsibility

The responsible mentor is accountable in their role as a mentor and ensures their mentee understands the importance of confidentiality and safeguarding in the mentoring relationship.

Core mentoring behaviours

- I'm committed to keeping myself and others safe by following procedures and reporting any issues.
- I take responsibility for my own wellbeing, and I care for other people's wellbeing too.
- I speak up when I see something that puts me or other people at risk.

Stay conscious of your level of mentoring competence and experience, and never overstate it. Whenever you need advice or support, get in touch with the Learning and Development Team. Keep a learning log throughout your mentoring activities – reflective practice is a great tool for personal development.

When it comes to your mentee's wellbeing, be prepared to suggest they seek appropriate guidance or support. Keep in mind that mentoring is forward-looking and solutions-focused, as opposed to counselling which supports people with problems rooted in the past. Matters outside the scope of your mentoring relationship may include:

- managing stress at work;
- physical and mental wellness issues;
- concerns relating to technical ability;
- financial concerns and issues;
- bullying/harassment issues.

In these instances, guide your mentee to our counselling service at [AXA BeSupported](#) or to [Human Resources](#). Although as a mentor you don't have a responsibility to fix these types of issues, you do have a responsibility to signpost support and guidance.



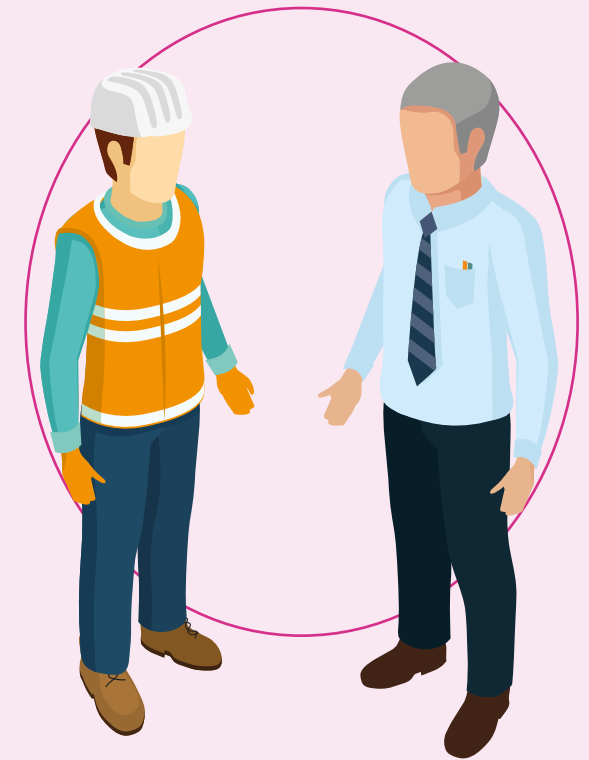
Encourage your mentee to be accountable by asking questions like “what are you doing right now that’s impacting on this situation?”

If you feel overwhelmed, contact Learning and Development who can support you in your mentoring role.

Robertson has a duty of care to safeguard all young people and to anyone mentoring them, so you'll be offered additional training around safe practices and your responsibilities. More information is available in our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

Maintaining trust and confidentiality is key to your mentoring relationship, and it's your responsibility to discuss and agree what these mean:

- the terms of confidentiality;
- inform your mentee that while you'll endeavour to put their best interests first, if you believe the content of a discussion could be detrimental to their health and wellbeing or public safety, you have a responsibility to take appropriate action;
- if you think it necessary to breach confidentiality, you'll contact the relevant member of the Learning and Development Team for advice;
- decide how you'll update others on progress of mentoring objectives, including your mentee's People Leader and the Learning and Development Team.



We are determined to succeed

The determined mentor works collaboratively with their mentee to ensure the mentoring relationship provides positive, lasting benefits.

Core mentoring behaviours

- I identify opportunities for self-development and commit to improving.
- I search for realistic solutions instead of focusing on the problem.
- I consistently deliver on agreed responsibilities and objectives, even in challenging circumstances.

In initial meetings, help your mentee define their career ambitions and focus on identifying personal development goals.

Goal setting can be a great way to keep the mentoring relationship moving in the right direction, with your mentee working towards objectives between meetings. The key is making sure these are sensible, either task-related (e.g. update my CV) or developmental (e.g. improve my assertiveness skills).

We recommend helping your mentee set SMART goals to support their development. Access guidance at [Great Performance Development Conversations learning guide](#) (p. 8-9).

As a mentor it's important you have personal and professional credibility which includes commitment to your own continual development and, in some cases, membership of a professional body. For more on professional development opportunities, browse the [Learning Library](#). For ideas on developing specific behaviours, refer to [Working the Robertson Way](#).

We recommend all mentors attend the Mentoring Skills training delivered by the Robertson Academy.



Ensure you're on track and working towards agreed objectives – get regular feedback from your mentee.

Design a specific PDP for developing your mentoring skills.

We are one team

The Team Robertson mentor works in partnership with their mentee, respecting the mentoring relationship and valuing their mentee's contribution.

Core mentoring behaviours

- I commit to building a positive relationship with my mentee.
- I put the achievement of shared objectives before my own goals.
- I acknowledge and celebrate other people's success.

Establishing a rapport is the first stage of mentoring – there needs to be sufficient willingness, respect and trust to want to work together. Show you're a good communicator, maintain confidentiality and actively build trust. Keep in mind that some mentees may be nervous about working with a mentor so put them at ease – empathise with their challenges, share your knowledge and remain non-judgmental.

Accept and commit to helping your mentee achieve their goals – mentoring is about building their skills and confidence.

Steps to building rapport

- Identify at least one clear developmental goal for your mentee to work on – this gives your relationship a clear purpose and structure.
- Be open about your own experience early on to ensure you and your mentee are a good fit. Sometimes mentoring relationships don't 'click' – if that's the case, the Learning and Development team can support you in next steps.
- Start each mentoring session by re-establishing rapport – have a brief social chat to help you both relax.
- Acknowledge your mentee's strengths and accomplishments from the outset of the mentoring process.
- Ask for and be open to receiving feedback from your mentee; apply constructive feedback to improve your mentoring skills.



Acknowledge and celebrate your mentee's progress, and provide positive feedback on their development.

Encourage your mentee to collaborate with others where possible to help them achieve their goals.