



How to Develop an Internal Mentorship Program

Here are seven steps to create an in-house mentorship program:

Define your goal.

- Is your goal to welcome and integrate new hires, foster a culture of inclusion, and provide a leadership path for immigrant employees, or have them develop particular skills?

Share your goals with your team.

- Mentors may be concerned about taking time out of their busy day to mentor others. Stress that the goals are a priority and that you will support mentors with the time and resources they need.

Choose your mentors.

- Mentors should reflect the specific goal of the program. For example, if your goal is to make new hires feel welcome, appropriate mentors would be knowledgeable about the company and its culture as well as have good interpersonal skills.

Choose your mentees.

- Be intentional. Consider who would benefit most from mentorship, such as someone in their first Canadian job who could use help practicing language skills; or someone who works independently and may not have much contact with other colleagues. Once potential participants are identified, it's important to gauge their interest in the process.

Pair mentors and mentees.

- There are many ways to do this, such as pairing employees who are in the same department, or reaching across department lines. The person to be mentored should never be set up with a direct supervisor because of the inherent power dynamic. Allow those being mentored to have a say in the pairing.

Set expectations.

- Provide clear direction to your mentor-protégé pairs. Set expectations for the format, such as how often they are to meet, to foster meaningful discussion between your pairs.

Evaluate performance over time.

- After your mentorship program has been running for three months, collect data — both objective, such as an employee satisfaction survey; and subjective, such as feelings of inclusion by mentees. Review and make adjustments as needed.