

What is reverse mentoring?

Reverse mentoring flips traditional mentoring on its head; this type of mentoring is when a less experienced team member exchanges their skills, knowledge and understanding to mentor someone more experienced in role than them.

This concept is based on the idea that less experienced members of staff who are just entering the workplace often have new skills

and expertise so can provide new perspectives, ideas and ways of working that can benefit their more experienced colleagues.

This type of mentoring can also encourage sharing and learning between job levels and bridge the gap between the different generations currently in the workforce today: Maturists (Pre-1945), Baby Boomers (1945–1960), Generation X (1961–1980), Generation Y (1981–1995) and Generation Z often referred to as Millennials (After 1995).

How to become a reverse mentor:

Many of these relationships evolve naturally, e.g. someone in the organisation or network that the less experienced member often helps? However mentors can also be proactive about finding a mentee.

A reverse mentee will need to...

Be open to receiving feedback from people with less experience.

Believe that their mentors have valuable knowledge to share.

> Be committed to applying the knowledge gained.

Dedicate their time to the relationship.

Be respectful of the relationship and position of the mentor.

A reverse mentor will need to...

Feel confident enough to share their opinions, perceptions and ideas.

Not be afraid of giving feedback to more experienced colleagues.

See it as a development opportunity for both parties.

Be respectful of the relationship and position of the mentee.

Unlike traditional structured mentormentee relationships, reverse mentoring works most effectively when it grows organically

Q: How does this tool help me achieve diverse thinking in my organisation?

This tool is particularly useful in bringing diverse thinking in to a multigenerational workplace. New skills are cultivated and shared between colleagues, encouraging people to value thoughts and ideas different from their own that they may not otherwise be exposed to.

The mentor shouldn't be afraid to request something that might help them, whether it's insights into how more experienced people work or their career advice (time with someone more experienced is valuable).

Whether mentoring a colleague internally or someone outside the organisation, the mentor should keep their line manager informed about how it contributes to their development.