



MENTORCONNECT

Goal Setting

BUILDING YOUR CAREER VISION



ABOUT MENTORCONNECT

[The MentorConnect program](#) brings together skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships. Skilled immigrants entering the program have the education, experience, and language skills to succeed in the Canadian labour market. However, they may not understand the Canadian context of their profession, workplace culture, or know how to translate their skill sets. Often what they need are the local insights and access to professional networks that a one-on-one connection with a local mentor can offer.

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GOAL SETTING

BUILDING YOUR CAREER VISION

Goal setting is essential for providing direction and clarity. It helps mentees define what they want to achieve and sets the stage for their personal and professional development. However, simply having goals is not enough.

An action plan translates these goals into specific, actionable tasks, making it easier to track progress and maintain momentum. It provides a clear path to follow, helping you stay organized and focused on your priorities.

A vision statement serves as a North Star, providing long-term direction and motivation. It helps the mentee stay aligned with their core values and keeps them inspired, even when faced with challenges. The mentee's vision statement ensures that their goals and action plans are not just tasks to complete but are steps towards fulfilling your broader life mission. Here is how they work together:

Define Vision:

- Start with vision statement. It outlines ultimate goals and the values that drive mentee.
- Mentee's Vision Example: "I aspire to be a leader in sustainable business practices, making a positive impact on the environment and society."

Set Goals:

- Based on mentee's vision, help them set *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound, emotion, re-evaluate* (SMARTER) goals (see SMARTER section below).
- Example: "Within the next five years, I will lead a team to reduce our company's carbon footprint by 50%."

Create an Action Plan:

- Help mentee break down their goals into smaller, manageable tasks. Outline the steps needed to achieve each goal, set deadlines, and identify necessary resources.
- Example: "Conduct an audit of current practices within six months, implement a recycling program within the next year, and introduce energy-efficient processes over the next two years."

In the following sections each of these phases are introduced. Subsequently, the SWOT method can help your mentee evaluate the achievements throughout the steps above.

WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT? ¹

A personal vision statement is a summary of a person's ultimate career goal and key attributes. Incorporating their strengths and values into formulating their vision, they can produce a succinct description of their vision. This is something a person can continue to improve and adapt to as the situation changes.

¹ Adapted from togetherplatform.com.



How to Develop a Vision Statement?

A vision statement guides the mentee to make choices and decisions that will inspire, motivate, and help them be clear about their purpose and direction in their life and their work. Encourage your mentee to ask these questions from themselves to guide them craft their vision statement:

- What am I passionate about?
- What do I value most?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- How do I want to make a difference?
- What are my interests?
- What are my SMARTER goals?
- What are my Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats?
- How do I refine and improve my vision statement?
- Does my vision statement align with my values, priorities, and actions?
- How do I communicate my vision statement to others that will support me, to translate it into actionable steps and strategies, and hold me accountable?
- What stories, examples, and insights can I share?

Quote:

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression.”

WHAT ARE MY MENTEE’S OBJECTIVES?

Your shared mentorship success will be determined by how clear your mentee is about what they want to achieve. Here are some of those ways:

Exploring the future:

- Have your mentee brainstorm ideas of what they want to achieve, without editing their thoughts.

Identify specific objectives for your mentee’s mentorship journey:

- Once they have their big goals in mind, narrow down what they wrote to 3-4 sentences: the things that will change over the next 3-6 months. These will be your discussion points.

Periodically review the mutual expectations for the mentorship:

- Continue to confirm your mentee’s goals and ways you can support as priorities may change.

Questions for your mentee

- What do you want to achieve?

- How will we know you are on the right track?
- What will you achieve in the next 3-6 months that you haven't yet?
- How would you like us to work together? (practical exercises & homework, sharing experiences, networking activities)?
- How do you usually enjoy learning?

WHAT IS A SMARTER GOAL?

While SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals lay the foundations for goal setting, defining SMARTER goals is an extended version that is essential for maximizing the impact of both mentee and mentor in their mentorship journey. Here is what a SMARTER goal means, with examples:

S - Specific:

- Your mentee's goal is clear and targets a specific area for improvement.

M - Measurable:

- Your mentee will know when their goal is accomplished and is able to measure progress against it.

A - Achievable:

- Your mentee is in control of the outcome of their goal.

R - Relevant:

- Your mentee's goal is meaningful and makes sense within the context of who they are or what they want to be.

T - Time-bound:

- Your mentee's goal has a time frame for accomplishment.

E - Emotion:

- This is how your mentee will feel in the pursuit of their goal.

R - Re-evaluate:

- Your mentee will consider what is going well and make any adjustments to their goal if necessary.

Reminder: As a mentor, you can use any of these tools for your own personal goal setting, in addition to guiding your mentee in their learning journey.

Example of a Mentee's SMARTER Goal:²

Main objective: 'Improve my communication skills'.

Specific: "I want to improve my communication skills in English, both written and spoken."

Measurable: "I will track my progress by taking online tests, recording myself, and getting feedback from my mentor and others."

² ADAPTED from quantumworkplace.com

Achievable: *“I will practice English every day for at least 30 minutes, using various resources such as books, podcasts, videos, and online courses.”*

Relevant: *“Improving my communication skills will help me express myself better, understand others better, and integrate into the Canadian society.”*

Time-bound: *“I will achieve this goal in six months.”*

Emotional: *“I will feel more confident, comfortable, and connected when I improve my communication skills.”*

Re-evaluate: *“I will review my goal every month and adjust my plan if needed.”*

Example of a Mentor’s SMARTER Goals for Self Development:

Main objective: ‘Improve my mentoring skills’.

Specific: *“I want to improve my mentoring skills in listening, questioning, feedback-giving, and goal setting.”*

Measurable: *“I will track my progress by attending workshops, reading books, watching videos, and getting feedback from my mentee and other mentors.”*

Achievable: *“I will spend at least two hours per week learning about mentoring skills, using various resources such as professional associations, online courses, peer groups, and conferences.”*

Relevant: *“Improving my mentoring skills will help me provide better guidance to my mentee, enhance my professional development, and contribute to the community.”*

Time-bound: *“I will achieve this goal in six months.”*

Emotional: *“I will feel more competent, confident, and fulfilled when I improve my mentoring skills.”*

Re-evaluate: *“I will review my goal every month and adjust my plan if needed.”*



How to Guide Setting your Mentee’s SMARTER Goals?

Let’s practice defining your mentee’s SMARTER goals by guiding them in answering these questions:

Specific

- What is your specific goal that is tailored to your unique needs and circumstances?

Measurable

- How will you track your progress to ensure you reach your goals?

Achievable

- Is your goal something you can reach given your current situation?

Relevant

- Does your goal make sense and is it important to progress your long-term aspiration?

Time-Bound

- What is the timeframe that will reach your goals?

Emotion

- What is the driving feeling that motivates you to reach your goals?

Re-evaluate

- How is the progress towards reaching your goals going? What is working well? What can be even better?

HELPING YOUR MENTEE SET A CLEAR ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE GOALS

MentorConnect believes that goal setting is central to the success of the mentorship. The mentee is responsible for their own goal setting, but you as the mentor will support the mentee in achieving clarity on these goals.

A clear action plan is essential for turning goals into reality. By breaking your mentee's goals into actionable steps, you can systematically work towards achieving them. This plan will serve as a roadmap, guiding your mentee through the process and helping your mentee stay focused and motivated. Goal setting provides the direction you need, while a clear action plan outlines the steps to reach those goals. To determine your action plan, use the following tips:

Five in 5:

- Mentees take 5 minutes to brainstorm five top goals.
- Evaluate each goal's feasibility within the mentorship timeframe. Ask: Is this goal too ambitious for the time we have together? Is this goal not ambitious enough for the time we have together?

Self-Understanding:

- Identify passions, beliefs, and attitudes.

Articulate Vision:

- Reflect on current circumstances, ideal future state, and define values and beliefs.

Visualize Success:

- Discuss what achieving goals looks and feels like.

Break Down Goals:

- Prioritize goals into achievable components.

Assess Skills:

- Identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Practical Planning:

- Set a baseline for professional and leadership skills.

Additional Tips:

- Provide exercises, activities, and tools for the right mindset.
- Develop a system to track progress, like checklists, timelines, or project management apps.
- Address resistance by finding and resolving root causes.
- Identify barriers and strategies to overcome them.
- Define benchmarks to achieve success.
- Reflect on self-determination, abilities, attitudes, and persistence.
- Guide the mentee's development journey by sharing success and setback stories.
- Encourage, empathize, and celebrate wins together.

WHAT IS A SWOT ANALYSIS FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?³

A SWOT analysis is a tool that helps to evaluate a person's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to their personal and professional goals. You will help your mentee develop their SWOT and can develop your own if you choose to.

Strengths:

- These are the positive qualities and skills that a person has or can develop. These strengths help the person achieve their goals and overcome challenges. Examples of strengths are a person's unique cultural background and perspective, resilience and adaptability, strong work ethic, multilingual skills, technical skills, etc.

Weaknesses:

- These are the areas for improvement that a person can work on. The weaknesses can hinder their progress and create obstacles for them. Examples of weaknesses are language barriers, lack of professional network, limited knowledge of the local job market, limited knowledge of local customs and culture, etc.

Opportunities:

- These are the external factors and situations that can benefit a person and help them grow. These opportunities can open new doors for them and create possibilities for success. Examples of opportunities are access to mentorship programs, language classes, growing demand for diverse perspectives in the workplace, etc.

³ Adapted from mindtools.com.

Threats:

- These are the external factors and situations that can harm a person and limit their potential. These threats can close doors for them and create risks for failure. Examples of threats are discrimination and prejudice, economic instability, changes in immigration policies, economic downturns, etc.

**Personal SWOT Analysis - Practice**

A personal SWOT analysis can help guide you and your mentee to evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is a simple yet effective way to assess your current position and plan for future growth.

Strengths: Identify and list skills, knowledge, and experience that makes you or your mentee stand apart and that you are proud of.

- What do I do well and sets me apart from others?

Weaknesses: Identify and list areas for improvement.

- What do I need to work on to achieve my goals?

Opportunities: Identify and list any opportunities that will advance you or your mentee further to where you want to be/go.

- What resources are available that I can take advantage of to help me succeed?

Threats: Identify and list the obstacles or personal traits that prevent you or your mentee from achieving your targets and/or hurting your career advancement.

- What factors do I need to be aware of and plan for that could prevent me from achieving my goals?

SAMPLE AGENDAS FOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS ⁴

The aim of a meeting agenda is to identify which topics and goals to address during their partnership. You can use these examples below as inspiration for your meetings with your mentee. The focus of your meetings will depend on the goals that you set together during your first meeting.

⁴ Adapted from TRIEC TMP <https://mentoringpartnership.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Sample-Agendas-for-Partnership-Meetings.pdf>

★ Goals: Getting to Know One Another and Goal Setting

Your First Meeting

- Mentor and mentee share some details about their professional work history.
- Together, go through each other's goals. Mentee, talk with your mentor about the key areas, you would like to focus on during your partnership.
- Based on each other's goals, decide together on the areas to focus on for the next few meetings. Set realistic goals for each week.
- Set/confirm the next meeting date and location.
- Mention your preferred way of staying in touch.
- Agree on how to communicate with each other to change meeting times and set response time expectations.

★ Goals: Applying for Jobs

Applying for Jobs

- Together, review and discuss a few of the most promising recent job postings that the mentee has found. Talk about the requirements that the employer likely sees as must-haves and those that are likely nice-to-haves. Are there certain kinds of expertise or experiences that one should be sure to highlight in an application for these positions? Are there any profession or industry-specific terms or acronyms that should be used when applying for these jobs?
- Together, review the mentee's LinkedIn profile and see how it might be enhanced to attract potential employers. Also discuss which additional profession-specific LinkedIn groups would be good to join.
- Set/confirm the next meeting date and location.

★ Goals: Hiring Processes

Interview Practice

- Conduct a mock interview session. You can use the Interview Questions Practice in the Progress Check Resource from the MentorConnect Program Resources. Afterwards, discuss. Mentee, how did that go for you? What went well? What would you like to improve on? Mentor, what did your mentee do well? What could they work on for the future?
- Set/confirm the next meeting date and location.

Telephone Interview

- Conduct a mock telephone interview. Afterwards, discuss. Mentee, how did that experience go for you? What went well? What would you like to improve on? Mentor, what did the mentee do well? Is there something they could work on for the future?
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.



Goals: Networking

Practice Information Interview (Optional)

- Mentor, contact a colleague or another mentor to meet with the mentee.
- Mentee, if they have never conducted an information interview before and would like some support, they could ask their mentor to help them to facilitate the interview. Or they could ask their mentor to help you to prepare for the interview beforehand.
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.

Networking

- Talk about typical professional networking opportunities in Canada. Mentor, share information about professional organizations and events that they think would be useful to the mentee.
- Together, discuss what networking is typically like in Canada in comparison to different places in the world (e.g., how people meet new people in their field, what they might talk about, the role networking can play in one's professional life and career development, etc.).
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.

Workplace Culture and Communication

- Every organization has its own unwritten rules for how things are done. This can also vary from profession to profession, sector to sector, and country to country. Use the Unwritten Rules of the Workplace in the Progress Check Resource from the MentorConnect Resources to discuss with your mentee or mentor some of the unwritten workplace rules you've experienced in places you have worked. What is similar? What is different? Based on this discussion, what kinds of things could be useful for the mentee to find out when they start a new job and how could they do this?
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.



Goals: After the Job Search

Performance Reviews

- Securing a new position is just the start of one's professional life in Canada. Typically, a new hire must also go through a probationary period, so understanding performance reviews can be a key factor in a new hire's success. Mentors and mentees, discuss typical performance review processes you've both experienced in previous jobs and what is typical in Canada. This includes how feedback is typically given (e.g., how direct, or indirect a manager or director would be) and how staff are expected to respond.
- Discuss some of the things a new hire can do during their probationary period to demonstrate to their employer their value to the organization.
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.

Final Meeting

- Discuss ongoing career and professional development plans. Set/confirm next meeting date and location.
- Develop an action plan for the coming months (e.g., for job search activities, networking, preparing for job onboarding for a new position) and discuss relationship in the future (if any).

- Review your goals to see how much you were both able to accomplish during your partnership and celebrate successes! Were there any topics you didn't get a chance to cover? If so, what are some ways the mentee can find out more about these topics once the partnership has ended?