

Why Create a Mentoring Agreement?

To prevent problems and increase commitment in a mentoring relationship, partners use our **Guide for Agreeing on Expectations, Concerns and Desired Benefits**. They discuss their answers to 22 questions that more than 20 clients helped us to field-test, so they are especially relevant. Such as:

- #4. Who will initiate meetings and interactions?
- #11. Are you concerned about not having enough time to get together regularly? Yes or No If a problem, how will you resolve it?

Partners agree on an answer to each question [agreement fosters commitment to abide by the answer]. The protege (mentee) writes the agreed-upon answers down in the Guide [we've found that if mentors record the answers, they often take over and dominate this collaborative process]. Recorded answers are automatically copied onto an underlying page via NCR's carbonless scoring process, so that each partner gets a copy of them for future reference.

Partners use this Guide to do several other activities together. They read a **common scenario** in which the mentoring partners are having various problems because they don't know each other's expectations, concerns or desired benefits. Then, they discuss and agree on the cause of these problems, including how they will prevent similar problems in their own relationships. Partners also discuss **General Mentoring Program Guidelines and Expectations** [10 for mentors, 10 for proteges, 3 for protege's boss] and agree on which ones are relevant to their mentoring program. Partners discuss **What a Typical Mentoring Program IS and ISN'T** [12 statements for each category] and agree on which statements are relevant to their mentoring program.

Benefits of using this Guide:

1. Produce multiple benefits. Doing the various activities in this Guide ensures that partners (a) communicate and (b) agree on what is important to them personally, to their partnership, and to the overall success of the mentoring program. The basis for all successful relationships is communication and agreement, so each person is listened to and both persons understand each other's expectations, concerns and desired benefits in that relationship.
2. Each activity has been field-tested with over 20 major clients (e.g., Kodak, Hewlett Packard, Shell Oil, Exxon, Kaiser Permanente, CSX Transportation) to ensure that activity's relevance to the mentoring partners and to the overall mentoring program.
3. Each activity takes only 10-25 minutes to do. All activities can be completed in about 60 minutes.
4. Carbonless copying of the agreed-upon answers enables each partner to immediately get a copy of them for future reference, so they can abide by their answers. This increases commitment and prevents problems.
5. During our planning of 150 mentoring programs, most have used our General Mentoring Program Guidelines and Expectations and our What a Typical Mentoring Program IS and ISN'T statements – sometimes as-is, sometimes slightly modified – in the **publicity** about the program. This has saved untold hours discovering what needs to be publicized to would-be participants so they understand what the program expects of them, and IS and ISN'T. Mentoring program coordinators especially like the fact that participants stop making this request: "Remove me from the program. It's not what I expected it would be."

