



2021

**WICT Greater Ohio
Mentor Program
Guide/Toolkit
for Mentors**

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Introduction

Women are seriously under-represented in cable telecommunications companies' leadership roles. Recent studies show that a diverse leadership structure – one that includes women and minorities – translates to bottom-line profits. WICT's programs and initiatives are designed to offer leadership programs and services that provide leadership opportunities for women while advancing the industry overall. A successful mentoring program includes both national and local support to provide the greatest possible benefits for WICT members and the industry.

WICT's Mission

WICT's mission is to develop women leaders who transform our industry. As the oldest and largest organization serving women professionals in cable and telecommunications, WICT is at the forefront of an industry undergoing constant change. Since its founding in 1979, WICT has remained steadfast in its resolve to advance the position and influence of women through proven leadership programs and services at both the national and local levels.

WICT chapters are an integral part of Women in Cable Telecommunications. Twenty-two chapters across the U.S. provide highly rated programs and networking events. Each chapter has its own distinct style and governing board. Chapter members help shape the goals and direction of their local chapters within the umbrella provided by the national organization.

Women in Cable Telecommunications embraces a spirit of collaboration. WICT partners with leaders of the cable telecommunications industry to provide leadership programs and services. In addition, WICT challenges companies to create professional advancement opportunities for the women they employ.

WICT's programs benefit the entire industry. Support for its programs and initiatives helps foster environments that provide leadership and development opportunities for women, while advancing the industry as a whole. Studies by the American Management Association and by the Society of Human Resources Management demonstrate the bottom-line benefits of diversity in the workplace. In addition, the findings of the WICT Foundation's 2006 *PAR Initiative* report further attest to the market advantages of senior management diversity in the cable telecommunications industry.

Value of Mentoring to Program Participants

A good mentor can act as the protégé's advocate and introduce the protégé to key industry players. Mentors say that the mentoring experience enhanced their skills in working with different types of people, allowed them to learn more about their personal leadership style, and gave them the opportunity to connect with the next generation of leaders.

In the business world, mentors are typically more experienced executives who provide support and feedback to less-experienced executives in their industry. These executives tap their personal experience to pass along insights and advice.

Why should I be a Mentor?

Mentoring offers many important benefits to the mentor. Through the WICT Chapter Mentoring Program, you will have the opportunity to:

Build Your Mentoring Skills

As a part of the WICT Chapter Mentoring Program, mentors will receive information on effective mentoring styles, active listening techniques, setting mentoring objectives, giving and receiving feedback and avoiding typical mentoring pitfalls. You will be able to utilize these skill sets back in your office.

Build Your Leadership Skills

In addition, mentors will also participate in discussions with key executives in other companies about effective and ineffective mentoring experiences and techniques. They will build stronger communication skills and obtain fresh perspectives others outside of their organizations – individuals who can more effectively communicate their insights, issues and concerns because they are outside the mentor's organization.

Expand Your Network

Protégé's may be able to refer qualified job candidates, introduce the mentor to other professionals in the field, provide access to key leaders in other companies and expand the mentor's sphere of influence.

Build Your Communication Skills

As a mentor, you'll gain experience listening, offering feedback and providing constructive criticism in a safe, risk-free environment. Although you already have these skills, it is beneficial to continuously improve them.

Obtain a Fresh Perspective

You may find your protégé's offer a fresh perspective on issues affecting your industry and your workplace. They can provide insight into how people at a lower level in the organization are feeling and the types of challenges they face. Awareness in this area can make you a more effective leader.

Feel Good About Yourself

Being asked to assume a mentoring role is a powerful compliment. It means other people admire your knowledge, expertise, talent and professionalism. You can take pride in this and gain personal satisfaction in helping your protégé's further his or her professional career.

Influence Others

Mentors are in an extremely influential position. Your protégé's success, in many ways, will be a direct result of the tutelage you provide. They will seek out your advice in difficult situations. You will provide constructive criticism, encouragement, a sympathetic ear, handholding, and lots of options. You will draw on your past experiences and remember what it was like to be in similar situations. More effective female leaders will result from your guidance and wisdom.

Good Faith Efforts

If your company is a government contractor or sub-contractor with an Affirmative Action Plan, you must undertake and report on good faith efforts on an annual basis (please talk to your Human Resources department for details). Good faith efforts are activities undertaken by a covered employer to overcome its under-utilization of females or minorities in certain job classifications. It is very likely that the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs may view participation in this program as a good faith effort.

Defining the Mentor

A mentor is someone who supports another individual and is concerned with his/her growth. A mentor is concerned for the individual as a person, not just as an employee. A mentor is concerned for their protégé's development as a whole.

A mentor has an independent relationship with his or her protégé, not one based on authority or power. He/she will listen, question and only then advise. His/her advice will be given without judgment or criticism of the person as an individual.

A mentor is above all, person-focused. A mentor will have no stake in the relationship, other than wanting to see the development of the individual.

A mentor is a trusted friend, a teacher, a guide and a role model. He or she has knowledge that he or she is prepared to transfer to others, is expert or at least has advanced status in a specific field and is acknowledged as such by his or her peers.

A mentor is nurturing by nature, non-competitive and supportive. He or she is patient but prepared to challenge the protégé, show enthusiasm while maintaining perspective and stay focused while being inspirational.

A mentor upholds the virtues of his or her chosen employment, trade or profession, and is loyal to their company or organization, while at the same time, recognizing its weaknesses and constructively helps the protégé deal with those same weaknesses.

Mentor Road Map

Your Role as a Mentor

The success of the program is highly dependent upon your leadership and participation. More than any other component, the protégé's perception of the program's value is based upon the relationship they have with you as their mentor. You are the program's most valuable asset. Specifically your role is to:

- Set goals and expectations of the partnership. This should include scheduling meetings that are held every four to six weeks. When these meetings are cancelled or not scheduled, the protégé's perception of the value of the program goes down dramatically. Often mentors will suggest meetings that coincide with WICT events.
- Be responsible for urging your protégé' to attend all of the program offerings through WICT Greater Ohio. A schedule of the WICT events can be accessed online at <https://wictgreaterohio.org/local-events-calendar>
- Be available for ad-hoc discussions/meetings one-on-one. Some of our best mentors put a tickler in his/her file to reach out individually to their protégé at least once every three weeks via email or phone. This contact lets the protégé know that you are thinking of them and it opens the door to conversation.
- Advise our Mentoring Program Committee (Deidra.Bartlett@charter.com, Lori.Maxwell@charter.com, Ann.Oliver@charter.com, Stephanie.Megas@charter.com or Laura.Nix@comcast.com, Toria.Lee@Charter.com) of any changes in your own or your protégé's contact information or any specific situations regarding your protégé.

How to Become an Effective Mentor

The key to being an effective mentor is understanding that you are a teacher to a less experienced student. The method of training called mentoring is effective because it is so personal. As opposed to a lecturer trying to meet several developmental needs in a classroom, mentoring is designed to meet the individual needs of your protégé. Every meeting, telephone call; or discussion is a potential "teaching moment" between a mentor and a protégé. Think of these teaching moments as opportunities to clarify personal and career objectives and goals.

Being an effective mentor or teacher also requires that discussions focus only on important issues. It is easy to stray into other areas especially when the partnership has a sufficient degree of chemistry. Staying focused will impact the protégé's progress.

During the course of the mentoring partnership you will be asked to take several roles. There are basically four types of mentoring that will keep you on task and working within the scope of the mentoring relationship.

Your activity as a mentor may take on one or a combination of the following roles:

Teaching – As a teacher, you will help the protégé develop or strengthen the competencies necessary for her personal and career growth by suggesting and/or facilitating opportunities for experiential learning at the protégés own pace.

Guiding – As a guide, you will help to facilitate the protégé’s growth in personal, career and/or organizational knowledge to enhance her career potential. You will also assist the protégé to develop self-confidence by reducing her number of failures and increasing her level of risk-taking ability. The key is to facilitate, not direct, her development.

Counseling – As a counselor, you will help the protégé to accurately describe problems and insights and then work through them in a process that is productive, positive and supportive of her personal and/or career goals.

Challenging – As a challenger, you may be in a position to challenge or confront your protégé. Help the protégé clarify expectations and then help to implement strategies to improve any deficiencies.

Guidelines for Effective Mentoring Meetings

- Leave your title at the door
- Have a problem-solving mindset
- Assume the best intentions from others
- Seek to understand before seeing to be understood
- Speak for yourself (I think, I feel)
- Commit to agreements and keep commitments
- Create collective goals for mentoring experience
- Share “ground rules”

Suggested Meeting Structure

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| Meeting 1 | • Break the ice and establish a rapport |
| Meeting 2 | • Agree to goals and development plan |
| Meetings 3 & 4 | • Workshop and monthly action plan |
| Meeting 5 | • Evaluate and assess |
| Meeting 6 & 7 | • Workshop and monthly action plan |
| Meeting 8 | • Wrap-up |

1st Meeting: Breaking Ice & building rapport

Opening the Meeting

- Ask/establish reason for participating & what you are both hoping to learn
- Take notes and listen with intent
- Set meeting expectations & boundaries (meeting times/dates/availability)
- Get to Know Each other - share areas of expertise, acquired business knowledge, and a broad context of career – this should be candid and authentic

Conversation Starters

1. *What are you hoping to gain from this experience?*
2. *What do you love most about your job?*
3. *What was a proud moment of your career?*
4. *What is an area or skillset you are struggling to master?*
5. *What is a group, topic, or person who you'd like to have more exposure to?*

Close the meeting

- Review SMART Goal Template (see Meeting Two)
 - Mentor reviews the principles of SMART goals in preparation for editing and improving Protégés' goals.
- Obtain Protégés commitment to come to the next meeting with SMART goals outlined and a draft Development Plan
- Develop a meeting schedule

Meeting 2: Setting Goals and Expectations

Define SMART Goals

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Realistic

Time-bound

Creating SMART Goals

Ask these questions in order:

1. Who?
2. Will do what?
3. by when?
4. How will we follow up to ensure success?

Tips for Writing SMART Goals

- Consider the career/life goals you want to achieve or problems you want to solve before entering the mentorship.
- Start each goal with an action verb (for examples, Increase, Complete, or Attain)
- Avoid writing “all or nothing” goals.
- Don’t mistake tasks or activities for performance goals.
- Make sure each goal is observable. The results of your efforts need to be evident to you and others who will provide feedback on performance.

Agree to Goals and Development Plan

Meetings 3-4; 6-7 Webinar/Events/Activities

Objectives

Tackle the tactical objectives resulting from the Protégés’ SMART goals and Development Plans. These discussions might include: Tips on becoming a first-time manager, Building high-performing teams, Navigating difficult conversations, dealing with challenging cross-functional relationships. Be prepared to pivot and adjust as needed.

Discuss learning/ideas or follow up from monthly webinars (if applicable)

Meeting 5: Evaluate and Assess

Objectives

- Check-in with one another by reviewing the goals, and share constructive feedback about how the sessions are tracking against these goals
- Complete a Keep, Start, Stop exercise
- Re-establish goals for the remaining months based on any changes occurring in business or professional life of Protégé

Meeting 8 Wrap-Up

Objectives

- Ensure that Protégé can look back, recognize, and recreate lessons learned from this experience
- Define what outcomes were achieved
- What learnings were truly valuable?
- Consider what you could have done better and take that in consideration for future mentoring relationships