

## *A Speed Mentoring Toolkit*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mentoring describes a developmental relationship between a mentor, who is a person with experience, skills and knowledge, and a mentee, who is less experienced or skilled in handling professional situations. This relationship may take the form of non-threatening training, coaching, modeling, supporting, discussing, and/or counseling, across time and work contexts. Informal mentoring may emerge between partners who spontaneously discover each other in unplanned and sometimes unexpected ways usually in casual settings. Formal mentoring happens by design — an individual is assigned mentees or it is part of the supervisor/supervisee job responsibilities. Highly organized formal mentoring programs have program goals, schedules, training and evaluation.

There are obvious advantages and disadvantages to both informal and formal mentoring, such as the effectiveness of matching mentors and mentees, or in some cases in finding a sufficient number of mentors to match the number of mentees, and the success of being non-threatening within the context of the organization's evaluation of the mentoring program or of the employee.

Modeled after speed dating, speed mentoring is a relatively new concept that focuses on quick-hit information, time-efficient networking and the methodical pursuit of a mentor. It addresses many of the disadvantages of both informal and formal mentoring for employees. By simply providing a venue and structured method for participants to seek out their own mentoring relationships during a fast-paced event, speed mentoring addresses [or solves] many disadvantages of formal mentoring programs.. These disadvantages include high costs of program management and evaluation, and the potential lack of successfully matching mentor to mentee, due to a lack of natural affinity.

A web-based search yields that there are businesses that market toolkits for implementing such a program, but more often various professional organizations have offered speed mentoring sessions at their regional and national conferences. Here is a “toolkit” to help facilitate the planning and implementation of speed mentoring events.

**...Let's get started!**



## HOSTING A SPEED MENTORING EVENT

STEP 1: Select a target audience:

- a. Recruit appropriate mentors
- b. Enlist potential mentees.

STEP 2: Plan event:

- a. Set time and date
- b. Establish a venue; characteristics of the location should include a room large enough to accommodate the interaction of the mentors/mentees that have been selected
- c. Arrange for refreshments (optional)
- d. Manage personnel; it is helpful to have more than one person available to moderate event so that a last minute absence will not leave an uneven number of mentors and protégés.

STEP 3: Invite the mentors and mentees:

- a. From your target audience create an email that invites these individuals at least 4-6 weeks before the event is to take place
- b. First email should include general information about program and specifics to the event, i.e., date, time, location
- c. Make sure to include an RSVP and give around 2 weeks to return
- d. If you want individuals to invite a guest, have them include the guest's contact information in their RSVP
- e. Track RSVPs in a database or spreadsheet
- f. (optional) Five days before event, send out email to participants asking for ONE professional strength and weakness. This information will be included on their name badges and will serve as a conversation starter in the mentoring session. This will also ensure adequate time before the event to create name badges. Have a back up plan ready in the case that not everyone returns the email with their information in a timely manner
- g. Three days before deadline of RSVP send out a reminder email to target list, including a suggestion that attendees bring plenty of business cards, reflect on what they hope to achieve during the event and determine their strategy for making the most out of each short interaction

STEP 4: Event preparation

- a. Print name badges including participant's (optional)
  1. Mentoring strengths
  2. Professional challenges
- b. Get a stop watch and an auditory signal (a loud bell or buzzer)
- c. Bring a camera to document the event if you plan to publicize it later

STEP 5: Script an agenda for the event, including:

- a. An introduction
  1. Welcome and a discussion on the consequences of first impressions
  2. Purpose - Quick-hit information; time-efficient networking; methodical pursuit of mentor
  3. Importance of time limits
- b. An explanation of the process
- c. A wrap-up
  1. Congratulations on having met and exchanged contact information — encourage them to continue mentoring process
  2. Thank you for participating
- d. Allow time at the end for informal mentoring and networking to continue

**Appendices:**

Sample Invitations  
Sample Agenda/Script  
Alternate Speed Mentoring Agenda/Script  
Sample Flyer/Announcement  
Product Information for Ordering Speed Mentoring Cards

## SAMPLE INVITATIONS

### Initial Email

#### RSVP\*\*\*\*\*

Great News! You have been invited to the (put your unit or department here) **Inaugural Speed Mentoring Event** on **April 2008, from 4-6 p.m. in Room 208 of the Administrative Building.**

#### So what is speed mentoring?

If you've heard of speed dating—dozens of people looking for the right match, cycling through fixed three-minute conversations to quickly sort out prospective future romantic interests from potential romantic “duds”—you're on the right track. Now think rather than meeting a potential future spouse or significant other, you are meeting future potential mentors and mentees, allies and sources of information to help you make the most of your career with the United States Coast Guard.

#### How will it work?

A brief overview on how speed mentoring works will be given by \_\_\_\_\_. After the talk, we will split into \_\_\_\_\_ groups and start the speed mentoring. You will meet on-on-one with another participant for 3 minutes, getting to know each other and discussing your professional strengths and challenges. Bring your business cards so that you can make them available to other participants, as you can exchange these cards before moving on to your next participant.

If you would like to join us for this exciting event, please **RSVP** to (contact name) at (email address) indicating:

1. Yes I am interested in attending!
2. Yes I am interested and I am bringing another member/employee  
(Please include their contact information as well)
3. No, unfortunately I cannot participate

**Please send your RSVP5 to me by \_\_\_\_\_.** If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone:

**SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP EMAIL:**

Thank you all for being willing participants in our first ever Speed Mentoring Event this Thursday! I have one task for you to complete before your arrival on Thursday.

Please send me by email: **1 Professional Strength and 1 Professional Weakness (optional)**

This information will be added to your name badge and help in conversation during the event. As a reminder, here are the details for the event on Thursday:

Name: Speed Mentoring Event

Location: Lexmark Room, 2nd Floor of the Main Building

Time: 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Special Instructions/Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.**



**“Speed Mentoring” Guidelines**  
**Novations Group, Inc.**  
Outlined for 1-hour session

**Set up:**

- 10 round tables
- 1-2 Mentors per table
- 1 deck of Novations *Mentoring Connection Cards* per table
- Sign on each table with Mentor name
- Bell or action device with facilitator

**Instructions:**

1. Participants go to table of interest. When table has 5-6 Participants plus Mentor, the table is full. Participants should find another table.
2. After instructions are announced, Mentor will briefly introduce self to table (45-60 seconds):
  - Name
  - Title and organization
  - What you do
  - Something that most don't know about you (outside interest, etc.)
3. Each Participant introduces self, following the same instructions as Mentor.
4. Bell will ring at 10 minutes and Step 5 (questioning) should start if it hasn't already.
5. There is a deck of cards in the middle of each table – Novations *Mentoring Connection Cards*. The deck is like a regular deck of cards – 52 cards in 4 suits – Challenge, Opportunity, Messages, and Journey. Each card contains a question that is relevant to a mentoring discussion.
6. Shuffle the deck. Each Participant (not Mentor) draws one card and reads it quietly. Participants can exchange card for another card only once.
7. The first Participant reads their card aloud and responds to the question. Mentor may ask questions for understanding and clarification (5 minutes max).
8. The Mentor takes the same card and responds to the question, shaping their response to meet needs of Participants. Participants may ask clarifying questions for additional information and advice (5 minutes max).
9. The second Participant reads the next card aloud and answers question per the above (5 minutes max). Mentor responds to the question as well (5 minutes max).
10. This process is repeated until all Participants have responded to one card each. Table may repeat process of drawing and responding to cards after first round as desired.

11. Bell will ring with 15 minutes remaining in session. As desired, the Participants may ask additional questions of their choice or continue with the drawn cards. Majority vote.
12. Bell will ring with 5 minutes remaining in session. Questioning ends.
13. Mentors and Participants will instruct the table about one action they will take to further their development as a result of this session.
14. Mentors and Participants thank each other.
15. Optional: Each Mentor and Participant completes an evaluation sheet before departing.

Additional *Novations Mentoring Connection Cards*® and other mentoring tools may be purchased at:

<http://store.novations.com>

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**Welcome:**

Good morning, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I will be your MC for today's event.

**Thank you's:**

I would like to begin today's event with a large Thank You to our mentors who have all taken time out of their busy schedules to be with us here today.

Words cannot express the gratitude we have for those of you who took time out to be with us here.

I would like to introduce the distinguished mentors that are with us today for this event. As I announce your name please raise your hand to be recognized. Please save your applause until I have read the names of all of our guests:

- .....

Please join me in thanking them all for being with us here today.

**Mentoring Overview...**

The fact that our mentors all felt mentoring was important enough to be here with us today...says volumes on both the value and importance of mentoring. The value of which is not only reserved for those who receive mentoring; but, equally as much for the mentors that provide the advice/counsel/coaching – however you wish to phrase it; and, the Coast Guard as a whole.

I cannot overstate the importance of mentoring at all levels of our organization; as well as, spotlighting the various mentoring initiatives and resources that are ongoing and available to our entire workforce. each and every day -- such as Commandant CG-133's web-based mentoring tool that has the ability to connect both individuals with other individuals; and as groups for a more dynamic mentoring experience for those who wish to connect with members of a community, affinity group, or pay grade, etc.

National associations such as the National Naval Officers Association, the Association for Naval Services Officers, and annual events such as the Women's Leadership Symposium support members of our workforce 365 days a year. And I would like to take the opportunity here today to encourage each and every one of you to take part in one or more of these groups during 2010...

**Benefits to the Mentor, Mentee, and organizations...**

I would like to briefly touch on some of the benefits of the mentoring process.

**First for the mentors: ...**

- A sense of pride when the mentees do well;
- Sense of worth due to contribution to the organization;



- Exposure to new ideas, techniques, perspectives through interaction with the mentee.
- Improvement in your coaching and counseling skills; and, exposure to concerns, issues and needs of diverse employees.

A 2006 case study at Sun Microsystems looked at how mentoring impacted mentors in the terms of real dollars. It would probably not surprise you to realize that individuals who received mentoring (the mentees), were promoted at a rate FIVE-times greater than other employees within the control group --  
 - However, what if I told you that same case study also showed that the Mentors themselves (those who provided the guidance to the mentees) were promoted at a rate of SIX times that of the control group!

**...For the mentees or protégés: ...**

- Greater job satisfaction
- Better performance and higher productivity
- Improved career management
- Great awareness of organizational values and expectations
- Development of new technical, interpersonal and management skills
- And, greater access to professional contacts.

**And, finally for the organization: ...**

- Reduction in turnover
- Increased organizational communication
- Increased productivity
- Enhanced employee talent development
- Reduced labor costs and expenses.

***This is one way...others are:***

There are literally hundreds of ways we can mentor others in our lives, professionally and personally. The mentoring tool we are highlighting today is just one way we can affect change. This tool we are using today, called “Speed Mentoring” is most effectively used as an icebreaker or a way for perspective mentors and mentees to “get acquainted with each other.”

It is a way to meet a number of mentors and mentees in a short time frame and hopefully, continue the dialog with one of the mentors or mentees after the event.

It could be used on a messdeck of a ship or shore unit for non-rates to meet members from different ratings; for civilians to meet military and civilian leaders that could help with the transition to the Coast Guard culture – or, maybe help in getting into a different job description or professional community, etc.

**Directions and plan for today's event:**

1. *Starting with the mentor, each person briefly introduces themselves, states where they work, and something that most don't know (hobby, family, etc.)*
2. *Each participant pulls a card.*
3. *First participant reads the card aloud and responds to the question.*
4. *Mentor responds to same question.*
5. *Next participant reads card and answers question.*
6. *Process is repeated until all participants have responded to one card each or until time is up.*
7. *MC will announce when 5 minutes remaining in session, and at the end of the session.*
8. *Each session will last approximately 15-20 minutes; after which, the mentees will stand and go to a table they have not yet sat at, and repeat steps 1-7 above...Note: Conduct as many cycles as your time allows for (hopefully 3-4)*

**Let's get started!!**

## ALTERNATE SAMPLE AGENDA / SCRIPT:

### Introduction

**Welcome** to the first SPEED MENTORING event sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_. This is an inaugural event in that we've never tried this before either! Many of us haven't even tried speed dating.

As you all know, first impressions have important consequences. Some psychological research even shows that marriage counselors observing just a 2 to 3 minute video taped sequence can predict whether couples stay together. Other research shows that first impressions are made within the first three seconds — that's why speed mentoring should work to match mentors with mentees!

The purpose of speed mentoring is to provide a quick hit of information in the form of a discussion of your mentoring strengths and professional challenges (and we all have both!), an efficient way to rapidly build your campus network, and a methodical way to "try-on" a number of mentoring relationships to see which one you might want to pursue later.

The time **limits are** important. We have schedule the speed mentoring to give you 3 minutes with each mentor and allowed 2 minutes to make sure everyone moves on for a total of 50 minutes. So everyone must keep moving so that we all can meet at least 10 people. You notice that we have scheduled the event for an hour and a half.. .that is to provide an extra half hour to enjoy the refreshments and to informally allow you to go back to talk more with the people you have met. You can always return to the conversations that were interrupted by the 3 minute signal!

### Explanation of the process

First, it doesn't matter where you sit.. .the way we look at it, we can all use some mentoring. We all have strengths and challenges.

Second, the signal will sound like this (sound the signal)

Third, we will signal to start, move, and start again. Notice there are 3 minutes to talk and we've allowed for a very generous 2 minutes to move — this should allow plenty of time for you to close the conversation and switch chairs.

READY.. .SET.. . MENTOR!

### Wrap Up

**Congratulations** on having met and exchanged contact information. We encourage you to continue mentoring process.

**Thank-you** for participating