

American Association of Professional Landmen Mentorship Program

Being a Mentor

As a mentor, you can enjoy many benefits, including gaining insight from your mentee's background and history that enhances your professional and personal development as well as the satisfaction of sharing your expertise and life experience with others. Steven Spielberg once said, "The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."

The following are some tips that will perhaps make your experience as a mentor a success for both you and your mentee.

1. **Set expectations: Support, yet challenge, your participant.** Mentors and mentees come to the program with their respective sets of expectations about each other and about the process. Mentors have the responsibility to manage the mentee's expectations and to communicate their own expectations about how they will interact with the mentee. Mentors should evaluate their mentee's level of knowledge, skill and ability and find ways to educate, stimulate and challenge the mentee through the program.
2. **Be a positive role model.** Good mentors are respected by their mentees. A mentee can learn a lot from their mentor simply by watching how their mentor behaves in any particular situation. Good mentors will also look out for experiences or even create situations in which their mentee can become involved to learn new things.
3. **Be genuinely interested in your mentee as an individual — facilitate rather than clone.** As a mentor, get to know your mentee's academic, professional and personal goals so that you can help them in a way that meets their personal best interest. If a mentee seems disengaged or appears to have other things on his/her mind, the mentor may inquire whether things are going okay. Some mentees will respond to the invitation to talk, others will not. If the mentor is concerned, he/she should contact AAPL's Mentorship Committee Chair.
4. **Share your experiences and insights.** Sometimes your role as an mentor can make you seem intimidating to a mentee, thus discouraging them from speaking frankly about their problems or asking questions that they fear will seem silly. Mentors can humanize themselves through sharing stories about their own academic and professional journey. Mentors should choose stories that they feel are appropriate and helpful, but do so in a neutral way, without attachment to how your mentee will use this learning. Be open to sharing your mistakes and failures too, as these are often where our biggest lessons are learned. It will help your mentee to be aware that challenges will arise and the way you dealt with the situation might also help them gain insight about how to build resilience.
5. **Ask questions.** Asking your mentee open-ended question will help you as a mentor to identify their real needs, values and passions. It is also a great way to encourage your mentee to identify their real needs, values and passions, to think through situations themselves and draw out the consequences of the various choices or courses of action they can take.
6. **Act as a sounding board: Empower rather than solve.** Mentees benefit greatly from the opportunity of having a good mentor to listen to them. Allow them to explore their thoughts, ideas, and curiosities openly with you. This will often help them unravel their thinking, gain insights about a situation as they share their concerns with you and develop problem-solving skills.

7. **Provide helpful and honest feedback — faking it is not making it.** Not all feedback is helpful. A good mentor knows this and will deliver feedback in a way that will help their mentee gain insight to further develop specific qualities or skills.
8. **Acknowledge achievements.** Highlight for your mentee any achievements they might have forgotten to help build their confidence in their capabilities as a landman. Remember to celebrate their successes.
9. **Be accessible.** Many mentees will hesitate to contact their mentor until they have something big to report or a serious issue arises. Making regular contact, whether it be through monthly meetings, an unsolicited email, or a Zoom/Teams/Skype session, provides your mentee reassurance that you are present if they have questions, concerns or simply want to share an idea they came up with in their job.ⁱ
10. **Maintain confidentiality and trust.** Mentors and mentees have a responsibility to treat each other with dignity and respect and to behave in an ethical manner. Mentors should not intrude areas the mentees wishes to keep confidential until invited to do so. However, they should help the mentee to recognize how other issues may relate to these areas. All mentors are expected and required to maintain high levels of confidentiality. Although opinions and issues such as skills building and self-confidence concerns that can be resolved over time should always be kept confidential, employee theft, divulging trade secrets to an outside third party or unlawful behavior are examples of situations where confidentiality doesn't and shouldn't apply regardless of whether it involves the mentor or mentee.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Caltech – Student Faculty Programs, Mentoring Tips and Resources/Mentoring Events

ⁱⁱ Jackie Lohrey, The Importance of Confidentiality in Mentoring