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# Mentoring in compliance: Building and sustaining critical relationships

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Almost everyone attributes at least some of their success to the mentors who helped along the career journey, and there are widely varying definitions and expectations about what mentoring is and is not. For the purposes of this article, mentoring is the act of providing support, insights, and guidance for someone else in a business context. Mentors are often found outside one's own organization or even one's own enterprise.

Mentorships can be formal or informal, but in any form a mentoring relationship takes, it can have a profound effect. The joy of mentoring includes a feeling of exhilaration that you are helping shape someone's development and helping them grow. The protégé can also be given advice and connections that allow them to reach heights that might have been more challenging without the support.

Compliance as a relatively new profession hasn't had the history with mentoring that other areas, such as academia or science professions, have had. To help guide the formation and healthy development of mentoring relationships in the compliance profession, here are a few keys to success.

### **Mentoring is an investment by both parties**

Mentoring is a commitment of time and energy for everyone involved. When you have a mentor, it's the job of the mentee to drive goals, cultivate the relationship, seek out advice, and be responsive to the relationship. The mentor also needs to commit to being available, being thoughtful and "present."

Relationships are constantly evolving and must be tended to by everyone. The ongoing relationship and discussions at the start of mentoring build the bond necessary for longer-term growth and development. Preparation is key, and both parties should be prepared in advance and mindful about the use of each other's time.

### **Alignment around goals and measurement of progress**

Starting out strong in a mentoring relationship involves some heavy logistics in the early stages, including agreeing on issues such as when, where, and how frequently to meet, as well as how long and why you are meeting. Listening to the goals and expectations for each party is key to the success of the mentoring relationship. It is also important to set appropriate boundaries—some of the content that a compliance professional may be exposed to at work would not necessarily lend itself to being discussed outside of work. Be clear on what you can and cannot share.

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By setting those initial goals, you can use them to assess progress and success. It is critical to enable quick wins to keep all parties feeling motivated and encouraged, which can in turn lead to even more positive outcomes and growth. No matter which metrics are chosen, make sure that you track progress in a supportive way and follow through on any commitments made to ensure the success of the relationship. You will find the compliance metrics and dashboards that you prepare as part of your compliance job to be excellent training grounds for the mentoring relationship.

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