



MENTORING ACTION MAP

Build the spine. Hand off to leaders.

A phase-by-phase map for building a mentoring program leadership can take ownership of.

Pilot size

Built for a pilot cohort of 8–10 pairs over six months.
Stretch the timing to fit your world; keep the order.

HOW TO USE THIS

- 1** Every phase has two lanes: what **L&D builds** and what **leadership owns**.
- 2** Don't move to the next phase until the "ready" box is true.
- 3** If the leadership lane is empty? That's your cue to stop and have the conversation, not to pick up their part yourself.

L&D BUILDS

LEADERSHIP OWNS

READY TO MOVE ON

THE FIVE PHASES

six months, start to finish

01

Get clear

Weeks 1–2

02

Build the spine

Weeks 3–6

03

Match & launch

Weeks 7–8

04

Keep it moving

Months 1–5

05

Six-month review

Month 6

01 Get clear

WEEKS 1-2

L&D BUILDS *the spine*

- Pick ONE business goal the program serves (HiPos ready for management, new-manager retention, knowledge transfer before a wave of retirements)
- Define who it's for and how many pairs you'll start with
- Pull baseline numbers for that group: turnover, promotions, internal moves, engagement
- Ask two people who've been mentored well: "What made it work?"

LEADERSHIP OWNS *the walk*

- Names an executive sponsor: a person, not a title
- Confirms the goal matters and agrees to say so out loud
- Puts the six-month results review on the calendar now

READY TO MOVE ON WHEN...

You can finish this sentence: "This program exists so that ____, and we'll know it's working when ____." And the review date is on a real calendar.

☐ **READY**

02 Build the spine

WEEKS 3-6

L&D BUILDS *the spine*

- Survey future mentees: What do they wish someone would explain? Who do they already admire?
- Recruit a mentor bank of willing volunteers (not voluntold), with short profiles mentees can browse
- Set matching rules: mentees get real choice, and matches stay outside the reporting line
- Set the cadence and the end date. Monthly meetings over six to nine months is a solid start
- Build short mentor prep: asking good questions, listening without fixing, handling it when the conversation gets real

LEADERSHIP OWNS *the walk*

- Encourages strong mentors to join, and at least one leader joins the bank
- Protects the time in writing (for example, one hour a month per pair)
- Adds mentoring to leaders' performance expectations

READY TO MOVE ON WHEN...

You have more mentors than mentees (so choice is real), mentor prep is ready, and protected time is in writing.

☐ **READY**

03 Match & launch

WEEKS 7–8

L&D BUILDS *the spine*

- Run the matching: mentees browse the bank and pick their top three
- Confirm matches and tell each mentor why they were chosen
- Host a kickoff: expectations, a pair agreement (goals, cadence, confidentiality), and first meetings booked before anyone leaves the room
- Send mentees' managers a short note on what the program is and the time it needs

LEADERSHIP OWNS *the walk*

- Sponsor opens the kickoff live. A recorded video doesn't count
- Managers of mentees commit to honoring the protected time

READY TO MOVE ON WHEN...

Every pair has their first meeting on the calendar.

☐ READY

04 Keep it moving

MONTHS 1–5

L&D BUILDS *the spine*

- Send mentors a short prep nudge each month
- Run a quick pulse check at month one and again at month three
- Reach out to leadership to alert of any pair that misses two meetings in a row
- Track participation and collect stories as they happen, not at the end

LEADERSHIP OWNS *the walk*

- Sponsor talks about the program out loud, more than once (all-hands, team meetings, Slack)
- Takes a 15-minute midpoint update at month three and clears blockers
- Leaders who mentor stay in it and reach out to mentors who miss two meetings in a row

READY TO MOVE ON WHEN...

Pairs are meeting, stalled pairs have heard from leadership, and the sponsor has spoken up about the program at least twice.

☐ READY

05 Six-month review

MONTH 6

L&D BUILDS *the spine*

- Compare results to your Phase 1 baseline
- Compare participants to non-participants where you can
- Gather quotes and stories from mentors and mentees
- Bring recommendations for round two: what to keep, fix, and drop

LEADERSHIP OWNS *the walk*

- Sits down with you and reviews the results (the meeting booked in Phase 1)
- Decides on round two and recognizes mentors in their performance reviews
- Recommits as sponsor, or names the next one

READY TO MOVE ON WHEN...

There's a decision on round two and a sponsor's name attached to it.

☐ READY

CHECK IN EVERY MONTH

Signs the ownership is drifting

- ☐ The sponsor hasn't mentioned the program in 60 days.
- ☐ Pairs keep canceling for "real work."
- ☐ You're the only person asking about results.
- ☐ The mentor bank is the same five generous people every round.
- ☐ The six-month review "got moved" and nobody rebooked it.

Spot two or more?

Go back to the leadership lane for the phase you're in.

The fix is almost never more L&D effort. It's a leadership conversation.

YOUR ASK, READY TO GO

Say this out loud.

Use this in the meeting where someone says,
"Can you put together a mentoring program?"

"I'm excited to build this. I'll handle the structure, the matching, the mentor prep, and the tracking. For it to work, I need a few things from leadership: a named sponsor, protected time for the pairs, and someone to sit down with me at the six-month mark and look at results. Can we agree on who that is today?"

That's not passing the buck. That's being clear about where the buck lives.

Plan it: phase tracker *fill in with real names*

PHASE	TARGET DATE	L&D OWNER	LEADERSHIP OWNER	DONE?
01 Get clear				☐
02 Build the spine				☐
03 Match & launch				☐
04 Keep it moving				☐
05 Six-month review				☐

One more thing. You're not the person who runs the mentoring program. **You're the person who built it so well that leadership can't walk away from their part.**