



# Capitalizing on the Mutual Benefits of a Mentoring Relationship




## November 13, 2012

This webinar is being offered by the American Sheep Industry Association in conjunction with its Rebuild the Sheep Industry initiative with funding support from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center.


## Agenda

Mentoring Guidelines	Jay Parsons, Ph.D. Colorado State University Optimal Ag Consulting, Inc.
Producer Panel Introductions	Skye Krebs (Oregon) Eric Harlow (Oregon) Jennifer Tucker (Colorado) Cody Halligan (Nebraska)
Q & A Session	Jay Parsons (Moderator)

## Mentoring Guidelines

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*Mentoring is a joint venture of passing skills and knowledge from the established to the new in a meaningful way.*



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Mentoring Guidelines  
by Jay Farson\*

**Introduction**

Mentoring is an invaluable way to transfer knowledge from the established to the new in any industry. In recognition of this fact, the American Sheep Industry Association has established a mentor/intern network on a state-by-state basis across the nation in an effort to attract and support new producers. These mentoring guidelines are designed to provide a resource for new and experienced producers alike, guiding them in their relationship and highlighting the impact that strong mentoring relationships can have on successful personal and professional development.

**What is Mentoring?**

The word "mentor" has traditionally been used to describe a trusted counselor, guide, or coach. As such, much that has been written about mentoring has been confined to the academic or corporate setting. However, mentoring is meant to be much more broadly defined than just a formal academic or business relationship.

The origins of the word "mentor" come from Greek mythology where Mentor was the loyal friend and advisor of Odysseus and the teacher of his son, Telemachus (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). Mentors are more than just teachers. Mentors are active guides and a good mentoring relationship is a partnership in two-way learning.

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## What is Mentoring?

- "Mentor" originates from Greek mythology
  - Loyal friend and advisor to Odysseus
  - Teacher of Telemachus (Odysseus' son)



## Mentoring is about

- Passing on knowledge in a meaningful way
- Enhancing skill sets
- Expanding networks
- Learning to value differences in approach and philosophy
- A partnership in two-way learning

## Mentoring is not about

- Managing inexperienced people
  - Mentors do not “fix” problems.
  - They help mentees develop a plan of their own.
- Sponsoring young producers
  - Mentees need to have a “can do” attitude.
  - Questions and answers go both ways.
- Offering spontaneous or casual advice

## Benefits

- Mentee Benefits
  - Mentor's experience and knowledge
  - Contacts and industry network
- Mentor Benefits
  - Greater appreciation and understanding of the skills and knowledge you possess
  - Tapping into new ideas and enthusiasm

## Mutual Benefits

- Excellence in any field requires coaching.
- Coaches see things that you don't and they hold you accountable.
- A healthy mentoring relationship involves sharing experience and knowledge and holding each other accountable for ideas.
- There is strength in numbers.

## Mentoring Life Cycle

- Establishing a mentoring relationship
- Maintenance of the mentoring relationship
- Evaluating and ending the mentoring relationship



## Establishing the Mentoring Relationship

- Types of Mentoring Relationships
  - Formal vs. Informal
  - Virtual vs. Face-to-Face
  - Peer-to-Peer
  - Open-Source Mentoring
    - Related positions but uncompetitive
    - Relieves anxiety of training future competitor

## Establishing the Mentoring Relationship

- Making the Mentoring Match
  - Establish contact
  - Communicate goals and vision for your operation.
  - Communicate skills and experience
    - Communicate activities you do on a regular basis
  - Communicate what you would like to get out of the mentoring relationship
  - Agree to continue on into a mentoring relationship or not

## Maintaining a Good Mentoring Relationship

- Communication
- Respect



## Maintaining a Good Mentoring Relationship

- Establish mutually agreed upon modes of communication with each other
- Establish meeting guidelines
  - How long, how often, when and where
  - Potential topics
  - End each meeting with a next step
- Establish the expected length (end point) of the mentoring relationship

## Maintaining a Good Mentoring Relationship

- Respect each other's time
  - Efficient communications and meetings
- Respect each other's information & knowledge
  - Confidential information should stay confidential
  - No one has all of the answers
- Respect each other's operation, family, employees, property, etc.
- Respect each other's right to say "no"

## Maintaining a Good Mentoring Relationship

- The mentor is not a professional coach
  - Not liable for advice and/or suggestions
  - Due diligence is the responsibility of the person doing the implementing
- Make a commitment of time and energy
  - One hour per month
  - A year long relationship
- Promptly reschedule when needed
- Periodically assess and celebrate success

## Evaluating and Ending a Good Mentoring Relationship

- Celebrate successes
- Communicate desire to move on to a peer-to-peer relationship
- Allow time for a final mentoring meeting
  - Review accomplishments
  - Provide feedback
  - Review items still outstanding
  - Establish mentor/mentee closure

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## Question & Answer Session



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