

TRaining for Unique Skills and Techniques for Mentoring
TRUST ME

Competency Framework and Skill Card

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Competency Framework and Skill Card

This document comprises the most important competencies and skills company mentors have to possess when carrying out their professional work tasks at high quality level. We define competence here as a consistent, observable and measurable ability to perform a design task or an element of a task (Ackley and Gall 1992). Since the concept of 'mentoring' and the professional content of the term vary according to the institutional context and heritage of the different countries, the competence framework and skill card contains the first-hand experiences collected from the field in the TRUST ME project participating countries (e.g. Finland, France, Hungary and Romania). In order to create consistency between the various practices and approaches and to ensure a more comprehensive validity, the document also reflects to the most important finding of the relevant international literature. According to that, the skill card defines five key competence areas and, based on the empirical findings, provides a tentative list of generic competencies and a detailed analytical explanation of the relevant knowledge and skills.

1. Self-awareness and behavioural awareness (understanding others)

Mentors need high self-awareness in order to recognize and manage their own behaviours within the helping relationship and to use empathy appropriately. The mentor also should have reasonably good insight into patterns of behaviour between individuals and groups of people. Predicting the consequences of specific behaviours or courses of action is one of the many practical applications of this insight. The ability to pose the right questions at the right time is therefore an essential competence of mentors (Clutterbuck 2005:4).

According to our experiences there are two basic principles in selecting the mentors: personal values and high level of motivation. The most important values are the followings: **correctness, fairness, integrity, assertiveness, and responsibility** for the both the client and the mentoring process. The mentor should be **aware of the limitations** of the mentoring process and not assume more that it is realistic to deliver, but also needs to be more available if necessary. The importance of such ethical competences like **confidentiality** and **perseverance** should also be emphasized. **Altruistic behaviour** and the genuine **desire to help**, e.g. the willingness to share expertise with other entrepreneurs, are also of particular importance in successful mentoring.

Competences for TRUST ME	Selected KEY competences	Skills and knowledge connected to the competences
1: Self-awareness and behavioural awareness (understanding others)		
Managing own behaviour, using empathy appropriately Recognizing dissonance between what advising and what doing Analysing own behaviour and motivation Awareness of own values and beliefs	Willingness/desire to help Managing own behaviour Being emphatic without personal involvement Maintaining objectivity Open mindedness Perseverance Business ethics	Responding and being emphatic without personal involvement Accountability/responsibility - responsible for myself, process Self-knowledge (personality, motives, values) - Is able to understand different personalities. Able to co-operate with DP and understand motives and values. Able to reflect these to own character, motives and values. Behaviour control - Manage own behaviour, recognise own strengths and weaknesses, ability to behave in socially accepted way Emotional control - able to analyse and understand own behaviours, is able to distinct personal relationship from business relationship, able to be constructive. Ability to critically reflect to own behaviour, motivation and practice Ability to manage ethical issues

2. Business/professional savvy and sense of proportion

Savvy is the intuitive wisdom a person gathers from extensive and varied experience and reflection on that experience. It could also be referred to as specific contextual knowledge. The mentee's need for access to that wisdom may be very broad (an overview of good business practice) or quite narrow (making better use of a computer). Savvy may be technical, strategic, political or systemic. Savvy is the link between experience and being able to use experience to guide another person effectively. Sense of proportion is the other side of wisdom – the ability to step back from the detail, to identify what is really important and to link together apparently discrete issues (Clutterbuck 2005:5).

When it comes to a mentoring situation where mentees are new market entrance with no or relatively little entrepreneurial experiences, the most important professional skills they expect of a mentor are those competences that are related to enterprise building. Consequently, mentors should be experienced and credible in one or more of the following areas: **Marketing, Sales, Brand building, Strategy making, Financial planning and Capital raising.**

The other important aspect of professional savvy is the ability to represent **a holistic view**. A credible mentor should be able to look through the most important aspects of a successful business process. It is typical that mentees concentrate intensively on technical issues without taking other, business-related aspects into consideration, although even the best ideas cannot be profitable with no regard to the consumers' needs. Mentors should be able to help the mentees treat professional and business (management, market, finance, etc.) together as an integrated system and not to merely concentrate on solving particular problems.

Mentors also should be a **specialist** in a particular field. There are two typical problematic areas where mentoring is being provided: **sales/marketing** and organisational development with a special focus on **strategic planning and management**. Mentors should be experienced in these areas.

Mentors should have a know-how and **experience in business and entrepreneurship**. They have to be sensible for problem solving, development challenges and changes. Since, the most frequent problems of the mentored companies are acquisition making or business expansion and uncertainty in decision-making, mentors' expertise should cover these areas, besides specific skills in business such as **sales, marketing, management, finance or strategic planning**.

Competences for TRUST ME	Selected KEY competences	Skills and knowledge connected to the competences
2: Business/professional savvy and sense of proportion		
<p>Intuitive wisdom - gathering from extensive and varied experience - and the reflection on them.</p> <p>Guiding mentee to use experiences effectively</p> <p>Putting the situation into wider (social, business) context and into perspective</p>	<p>Business and/or entrepreneurship experience</p> <p>General understanding of business with external perspectives</p> <p>Holistic view and experience on entrepreneurship and its wider (social, economic) context</p> <p>Ability to realize the need/challenge of the mentee</p> <p>Putting the situation into a flexible context</p> <p>Ability of transferring knowledge and experience</p> <p>Specific contextual knowledge/ Specific areas of expertise</p>	<p>Strategical thinking, business development</p> <p>Specific contextual knowledge:</p> <p>Marketing, Sales, Brand building, Management, Strategy planning and strategy making, Financial planning, Capital raising, OD</p> <p>Questioning, listening, open minded, resilience</p>

3. Communication and conceptual modelling

Communication is not a single skill, but rather a combination of a number of skills. It includes listening, observing as a receiver, parallel processing (analysing what the other person is saying, reflecting on it, preparing responses), projecting (crafting words and their emotional ‘wrapping’ in a manner appropriate for the situation and the mentees) and concluding a dialogue. (Clutterbuck 2005)

Based on experiences collected in during the fieldwork in the participating countries, mentors should possess specific **social competences** that concern the ability to **create and maintain positive and trustful human relations** with the mentees. Social competence incorporates various dispositions, attitudes and behaviours. It also means that mentors should be open to **understand the very nature of human relations** between culturally more or less similar people and to understand the dynamic changes of these relations, as well. Mentors have to be able to **create positive and supportive social relations** with the mentees, to **inspire cooperation** between the different parties in order to ensure the long-term impact of mentoring and keep it at a high level.

In addition, the mentor should be able to **guide** the client even when the client has a clear problem and also in cases where the problem should be identified. The successful guiding requires the capability to **create a common language** with the client and the ability to **convince** him/her. **Emotional intelligence, assertive communication, open-mindedness and a win-win attitude** are playing a decisive role here.

Mentors have to be willing to **encourage** and **give** unbiased and **critical feedback** to the mentee. We have to call attention that contrary to the Hungarian case, where proximity in social relations is desirable outcome of the mentoring process, in Finland mentors have to **keep distance** and mentoring-mentee-relationship should not get too friendly.

Competences for TRUST ME	Selected KEY competences	Skills and knowledge connected to the competences
3: Communication and conceptual modelling		
<p>Listening - opening the mind to what the other person is saying, demonstrating interest/attention, encouraging them to speak, holding back on filling the silences</p> <p>Observing as receiver - being open to the visual and other non-verbal signals, recognising what is not said.</p> <p>Parallel processing - analysing what the other person is saying, reflecting on it, preparing responses.</p> <p>Projecting - crafting words and their emotional 'wrapping' in a manner appropriate for the situation and the recipient</p> <p>Observing as projector - being open to the visual and other non-verbal signals</p> <p>Exiting - concluding a dialogue or segment of dialogue with clarity and alignment of understanding and agreeing on follow-up action to be taken.</p>	<p>Ability to create a trustful communicative atmosphere</p> <p>Active listening</p> <p>Forming ideas in written and oral communication in a relevant way</p> <p>Ability to argue in an analytical way</p> <p>Powerful questioning,</p> <p>Exploiting non-verbal communication</p> <p>Being available and understanding in helping the mentee cope</p>	<p>Assertive communication</p> <p>Giving and receiving feedback</p> <p>Business vocabulary</p> <p>Showing adequate personal and professional credibility</p> <p>Understanding body language and meta communication</p> <p>Ability to go into details and seeing the big picture</p> <p>Understanding emotions and needs</p>

4. Commitment to own learning and interest in helping others to learn

Mentors become role models for self-managed learning. They seize opportunities to experiment and take part in new experiences. At the same time, effective mentors have an innate interest in achieving through others and in helping others recognize and achieve their potential (Clutterbuck 2005:5).

In cases, where the main role of the mentor is to help newly established enterprises to realize their business ideas and support them to enter new markets or increase their market share, teaching them how to operate a business and so make financial benefits from the original initiatives. In doing so, besides holistic perspective, **practice-oriented thinking** is a necessary precondition of success. Mentors should be able to **guide** mentees in finding practical solutions to their problems, **define realistic alternatives** and make rational choices between them. This process contains the development of a range of possible outcomes and the definition of the steps leading to them. The mentor is responsible for the process and not for the outcome. Therefore, the mentor should possess the adequate and relevant **techniques and methods of scenario making and project management**. The scenario setting supports the achievement of the preliminary defines goals of the mentoring process but also serves as a model for solving the future problems. The mentor acts as a **role model** at a very concrete level and by willingly sharing his/her knowledge he/she directly contributes to the enrichment of the mentee's capabilities and **promotes the culture of learning**. The mentor's personal values concerning **altruistic behaviour** play a decisive role in this type of knowledge transfer.

The mentor represents a role-model and takes responsibility for the outcomes of the mentoring process. (S)he should be able to **avoid unrealistic expectations** and to **convince** the client who does not understand the real need of the mentoring process. It requires willingness to **accomplish the client's needs** and **readiness to learn** permanently. (S)he needs to **be informed and updated** on the business environment, to constantly read articles and to search information. **Analytical thinking** is an important requirement.

There are, however, cases when mentors **do not provide explicit guidance** and do not intervene directly to business. They restrict themselves to help and support the entrepreneurs in focusing to the most important aspects of the **improvement of the business plan** (e.g. market surveys, investments, recruitment of staff and communications related issues). It also may include the **teaching of the use of new management tools**. Mentors should represent a **pragmatic** way of thinking and a **target-oriented approach** in problem solving. (S)he has to **respect learning and professional development** and to desire to test out new thoughts and ideas (e.g. **innovativeness**). Mentors have to **respect** and **understand** that everyone has his/her own **pace and style of learning** and they should be

able to support mentees on this individual development path. (S)he also should be able to **provide new perspectives** on entrepreneurship and **inspiration** to the mentee.

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4. Commitment to own learning and interest in helping		
Becoming role models for self-managed learning Keeping professional knowledge up-to-date Seeking and using behavioural feedback from others Perceiving the mentoring relationship as an opportunity for mutual learning Articulating learning needs to the mentee Giving and receiving feedback Result orientation Motivating others Analysing strengths and weaknesses	Ability to self-development in the mentor capacity Willing and ready to learn (towards ability) Willing and able to share experience in self-managed learning Having a pragmatic way of thinking Perceiving the mentoring relationship as an opportunity for mutual learning (and develop it through the Learning process)	Keeping professional knowledge up-to-date (tools; access to information / sources; exchanging and networking; finding sources; learning to learn...) Pedagogical skills (identify the relevant practices / examples; able to formulate and articulate them into sharing experience/cases; understanding different learning styles) - Communication and expression skills - Autonomy/initiative capacity (for the person and for other individuals, outside a structured learning process)
Willingness to accomplish the client's needs and readiness to learn, perceiving the mentoring relationship as an opportunity for mutual learning Keeping professional knowledge up-to-date, being informed and updated on the business environment Providing new perspectives on entrepreneurship,	Giving and receiving constructive feedback Facilitating learning Inspiring and motivating mentees to learn	To develop and enrich all of the above pre-conditions skills. Learning / being put in conditions of positive feedback and learning from constructive confrontation. - Seeking and using behavioural feedback from others - Multi-cultural context / immersion - Capacity to take global/holistic view in the context of a learning/mentoring activity - Developing participative culture and practice

Competences for TRUST ME	Selected KEY competences	Skills and knowledge connected to the competences
4. Commitment to own learning and interest in helping		
<p>Teaching of the use of new management tools, techniques (e.g. scenario making and project management)</p> <p>Providing guidance, help to analyse strengths and weaknesses, reality testing</p> <p>Facilitating the creation of ideas/ alternatives, innovativity and creativity</p> <p>Pragmatic way of thinking and a target-oriented approach</p> <p>Inspiring and motivating mentees</p>		<p>Maïeutic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing guidance, help to analyse strengths and weaknesses, reality testing - Support the Mentee identifying the learning goals - Ability to assess Learning Outcomes (including methods and tools: teaching and evaluating) - Knowledge and experience on the specificities of Adult learning - Teaching of the use of new management tools, techniques (e.g. scenario making and project management). <p>Develop skills to facilitate the creation of ideas/ alternatives, innovativity and creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding human motivation/drivers - Passing on enthusiasm and energy

5. Relationship management and goal clarity

Goal clarity is important, because the mentor must be able to help the mentee sort out what (s)he wants to achieve and why. Goal clarity appears to derive from a mixture of skills including systematic analysis and decisiveness (Clutterbuck 2005:5).

The mentor's ability to setting clear goals and concepts and to manage the process that leads to them (**project management skills**) is of particular importance, as well as expertise in planning and management issues. Mentors should possess organising skills for being able to properly perform the mentoring process, to set terms and effectively manage the recourses (time, financial resources). The expertise covers the following competences:

- **planning:** identifying the performance indicators and strategic objectives,
- **organizing:** organizing meetings, delegating tasks, prioritizing
- **leadership:** plans for discussions with the employees, motivating the employees, communication
- **controlling:** possessing evaluation instruments

The mentor is able to **set objectives** together with the mentee, to **clarify** the assignments, to **give feedback** and to **discuss** particular questions.

When formalizing the connection between the mentor and the mentee it is obvious to **discuss** and to **fix** the mentoring **needs** and the **target** of the mentoring process in the framework of **a guidance plan**. At the beginning the parties have to **agree** about the roles, objectives and regular meetings. The closing of the mentoring process is also formalised. It should come to an end by carrying out an **assessment** of what has been learned in relation to the original objectives, **evaluation** of the success of the guidance and also with an **agreement** on how the move on forward independently.

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5. Relationship management and goal clarity		
Establishing and maintaining rapport Setting and adhering to schedule of meetings Stepping back and reviewing the relationship from time to time Helping in setting and pursuing clear and challenging goals, and boundaries Practice-oriented thinking Conflict resolution Action planning and reality testing Evaluating the process and the outcomes Assignment and guidance	Ability to establish and maintain the rapport based on mentee's needs Ability to frame and evaluate the process and the outcomes Ability to help in setting and pursuing clear goals Ability to manage practice oriented common self-reflection Ability to handle the guidance regarding the changing conditions	Active Questioning and Listening, Own skills self-evaluation, cognitive skills, 'Draw-up picture ability', communication skills, ability to create trust, willingness Project and process based thinking, analytical skills, evaluation instruments & topic knowledge, communication skills Cognitive skills, support and motivating skills (or talent??), Project and process based thinking, communication skills, holistic view and experience on entrepreneurship in its wider context, imagination Management skills, give and get positive feedback, communication skills Flexibility, open-mindedness, holistic vision, imagination

References:

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