



# Upskilling & Reskilling Mentorship Programs

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## Introduction

# Mentoring is the missing link between theory and practice

Here's a sobering fact: The skills that make someone successful in the workplace today are likely to be obsolete within a handful of years. In fact, the World Economic Forum estimates that 39% of workers' existing skill sets will be transformed or outdated between 2025–2030<sup>1</sup>.

This is hardly news to any HR or L&D professional. Research conducted by Together revealed upskilling and reskilling are top priorities, especially among larger enterprise HR and L&D teams<sup>2</sup>.

And employees themselves see the value of continuing to grow their skill sets. According to Gallup, 87% of millennials rate professional or career growth and development opportunities as important to them<sup>3</sup>.

Companies want to retain their employees while continuing to innovate and remain competitive. Upskilling and reskilling can help them achieve those goals. Workers want to keep their jobs and build skills that will benefit them in the future. Growth and development opportunities can make that happen. So where's the disconnect?



<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum, "The Future of Jobs Report 2025" <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/digest/>

<sup>2</sup> Together, "Enterprise L&D in 2025" <https://www.togetherplatform.com/resources/enterprise-learning-and-development-2025-predictions-and-trends>

<sup>3</sup> Gallup, "What 'Meaningful Feedback' Means to Millennials" <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/284081/meaningful-feedback-means-millennials.aspx#:~:text=Gallup%20research%20shows%20that%2087,to%20them%20in%20a%20job.>



“Learning combined with career development—leadership training, coaching, internal mobility, and more—accelerates the flow of critical skills to keep pace with business needs.”

LinkedIn, “Workplace Learning Report 2025”<sup>4</sup>

Without a human element—a person who can share their own experience and expertise—training programs can struggle to truly stick with participants. And even if employers can agree on major topics or trends to cover, it takes personalized guidance for workers to see how these new skills could be applied to their own careers.

And that’s where mentoring comes in. Mentoring can help connect the dots between the theory of upskilling or reskilling programs and the practical demands of everyday work.

Wondering how to weave mentoring into your own upskilling and reskilling programs? We’ll share plenty of practical tips, tricks, and templates throughout this guide.

### Upskilling by the numbers

Out of every **100** employees



<sup>4</sup> LinkedIn, “Workplace Learning Report 2025” <https://learning.linkedin.com/resources/workplace-learning-report>

<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum, “The Future of Jobs Report 2025” <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/digest/>

## Part 1

# What are upskilling and reskilling programs?

First, let's get one thing straight. What exactly do we mean when we talk about upskilling and reskilling? These terms are often used in tandem, but there's an important distinction:

**Upskilling** is the process of teaching employees the skills that will help them remain competitive in their current role. An example might be a customer service representative who receives emotional intelligence training so they can handle more difficult conversations or complex cases.

**Reskilling** involves training participants for a completely different role, allowing them to pivot inside the organization while meeting business needs. An example might be an administrative assistant who undergoes training to become a project coordinator (and eventually a project manager).

Upskilling and reskilling programs can include different components, such as:

- Internal advanced training sessions
- Microlearning or peer-led sessions
- On-the-job training
- Online courses
- Job shadowing
- Mentorship programs



## Future-proof your workforce with these skills

According to the World Economic Forum<sup>6</sup>, the fastest-growing tech skills include:

- ✓ AI
- ✓ Networks and cybersecurity
- ✓ Big data
- ✓ Technology literacy

And the fastest-growing soft skills include:

- ✓ Creative thinking
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Curiosity
- ✓ Resilience
- ✓ Agility
- ✓ Lifelong learning

For this guide, we'll be focusing specifically on the mentorship aspect of upskilling and reskilling. In the next section, we'll dig into why.



<sup>6</sup> World Economic Forum, "The Future of Jobs Report 2025" <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/digest/>

## Part 2

# Why mentorship is integral to upskilling and reskilling

## Mentorship vs. traditional upskilling and reskilling training

Traditional upskilling and reskilling training often follows a classroom model: sit in a room, listen to theories, complete assessments, maybe do some practice or role-playing. It's predictable, scalable, and rarely leads to real results.

Mentorship flips this model. Instead of learning about skills in isolation, participants get the chance to put these new skills into practice under the supervision of an experienced mentor. They can observe firsthand how their mentor has adapted to the changing requirements of the company and kept their skills relevant.

Research from Harvard Business Review<sup>7</sup> found that 54% of respondents rated mentoring as very or extremely effective compared to just 35% for traditional skills training. The reason? In the context of mentoring, learning becomes personal, practical, and immediately applicable.

## Traditional training vs. mentoring

### Traditional Training



Classroom based, standardized curriculum

Focuses on theory

Participants are passive recipients

Delivered by external trainer who doesn't necessarily know company context

Easy to scale

Feedback is often delayed (generally given in post-training surveys)

### Mentoring



Relationship-based, personalized guidance

Focuses on practical application

Participants are actively engaged

Mentors are tenured and experienced leaders with a deep understanding of company culture and context

Requires careful matching and monitoring

Feedback is immediate and continuous (mentees can ask mentors to adjust topics, communication style, etc. at any time)

<sup>7</sup> Harvard Business Review, "Leveraging Coaching and Mentoring to Create More Effective Leaders." <https://hbr.org/sponsored/2023/01/leveraging-coaching-and-mentoring-to-create-more-effective-leaders>

## The mentorship learning cycle

The magic happens in what we call the mentorship learning cycle:

### Real-world challenge

The mentee faces an actual workplace situation



### Guidance and perspective

The mentor shares relevant experience and frameworks



### Action and experimentation

The mentee applies new approaches



### Reflection and adjustment

Both parties debrief on what worked and what didn't



### Knowledge integration

Learning becomes embedded through practice



Here's what makes the mentorship learning cycle powerful: It creates employees who can actually put their new skills into practice.



## The core components of a mentorship program

### Intentional matching

Unlike informal networking, these programs use data-driven approaches to pair mentors and mentees based on complementary skills, career goals, and development areas.

### Structured framework

While relationships should feel organic, the best programs provide clear guidelines, conversation starters, and development milestones to keep pairs on track.

### Skills-focused development

Rather than general career advice, these programs target specific competencies employees need to develop like emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and proficiency in emerging technology.

### Measurable outcomes

Successful programs track progress through goals, feedback loops, and performance metrics.

## The benefits of mentorship

Let's take a closer look at how mentorship can enhance any upskilling or reskilling program and increase its chances of success.

### Mentorship leads to happier, more engaged employees

There's a clear connection between companies that offer mentorship and positive sentiment among employees. Gallup finds that employees with mentors:

- Are more than twice as likely as those without to strongly agree that their organization provides a clear plan for their career development.
- Are twice as likely to strongly agree that they have had opportunities to learn and grow at work in the last year.
- Are twice as likely to be engaged and 98% more likely to strongly agree that they would recommend their organization as a great place to work<sup>8</sup>.



**“As the job market continues to evolve, organizations that fully harness the potential of mentoring will not only retain their top talent but also foster a more motivated and productive workforce.”**

**– Harvard Business Review<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>8</sup> Gallup, “Mentors and Sponsors Make the Difference” <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/473999/mentors-sponsors-difference.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> Harvard Business Review, “Why Mentoring Programs Fail — and How to Make Them Worthwhile” <https://hbr.org/2024/12/why-mentoring-programs-fail-and-how-to-make-them-worthwhile>

## Mentorship provides knowledge transfer that actually sticks

Compared to typical training formats, mentorship creates "sticky" knowledge transfer because:

- 01 Context matters**  
Mentors share wisdom in the context of specific situations
- 02 Emotional connection**  
People remember advice from people they respect and trust
- 03 Ongoing reinforcement**  
Unlike one-time training events, mentorship provides continuous reinforcement
- 04 Personalized relevance**  
Guidance is tailored to the individual's specific challenges and goals

## Mentorship boosts confidence

Research on nursing leadership mentorship programs shows that participants report increased leadership awareness, stronger motivation, better stress-coping mechanisms, and greater confidence as leaders<sup>10</sup>. In other words, we develop confidence when given the chance to succeed in increasingly challenging situations—especially when we have the support of someone who believes in our potential.

## Mentorship creates an organizational multiplier effect

Mentorship doesn't just improve individual performance; it creates a cultural shift that results in:



### Improved leadership pipeline

A steady flow of capable leaders ready for advancement



### Enhanced knowledge retention

Critical organizational knowledge transfers between generations



### Stronger cultural cohesion

Shared values and practices propagate through mentoring relationships



### Increased innovation

Cross-generational and cross-functional mentoring sparks new ideas

<sup>10</sup> National Library of Medicine, "Empowering Leadership: A Journey of Growth and Insight Through a Mentoring Program for Nurses in Leadership Positions." <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11537044/>

## Mentorship closes skill gaps and boosts retention at the Louisiana Department of Public Health

Employee turnover, talent gaps left by retiring staff, and concern over employee well-being and connection led the Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH) to explore how mentorship could address these challenges.

OPH set a number of goals for their mentorship program, including:

- Develop key public health skills
- Increase retention
- Support succession planning

They also set KPIs in categories like mentee development, program engagement, and org impact to measure the success of the program.

Once they'd defined the goals and purpose of their mentoring program, OPH partnered with Together to handle critical tasks such as managing the application and matching processes.

OPH also implemented Colleague Connect, Together's peer-to-peer learning tool. OPH uses Colleague Connect to match individuals of all levels based on shared skills and professional goals for one to two meetings. OPH treats this as an "evergreen" initiative that allows participants to opt in and out as they choose.

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Since starting their program in 2021,

**100%** Of participants have found the mentorship program valuable.

One area that OPH's mentorship program has seen particular success in is skill development. Before the program, 83% of mentees responded that they had little to no knowledge of the identified skill that they wanted to grow in.

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After the program,

**100%** Of mentees said they had some level of proficiency in that skill, with

**8%** Of participants even labeling themselves as subject matter experts.

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“The idea of a mentorship program originally came up in the 2019 cohort of our OPH Leadership Development Institute as a solution to improve retention. Once we realized that it could help us reach other organizational objectives, like closing skill gaps and boosting employee engagement, we knew that a mentorship program would be worth the investment.”

– Jennifer Taylor, Deputy Director of Workforce, Louisiana Department of Health

## Part 3

# Building your upskilling & reskilling mentorship program

Let's take a look at the essential steps that will help you build an upskilling and reskilling-focused mentorship program.

## Define your upskilling or reskilling goals

### Step 1

Start by defining your mentorship program's goals. In order to do this, you may need to perform a skills gap audit so you can find high-priority gaps to address. As you identify the key skills employees need, make sure they align with both their interests and your company's objectives. Clear, well-structured goals create a strong foundation, ensuring mentees gain the guidance and support they need to grow and succeed.

### The SMART-ER Framework for Mentorship Goals



- ✓ **Specific**  
Target particular leadership competencies
- ✓ **Measurable**  
Include quantifiable outcomes
- ✓ **Achievable**  
Set realistic expectations
- ✓ **Relevant**  
Align with business objectives
- ✓ **Time-bound**  
Establish clear timelines
- ✓ **Evaluated**  
Build in assessment checkpoints
- ✓ **Readjusted**  
Allow for program evolution

### Example Goal Framework

"Increase retention of high-turnover roles (e.g. customer support) by 30% within 18 months by developing emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills through structured mentorship relationships."



## Identify your participants

### Step 2

Decide who should participate in your upskilling and reskilling mentorship program, both the mentees who need to develop their skills and the more experienced mentors.

### Mentor Selection Criteria

Look for:



Specific skills or capabilities (e.g. familiarity with specific technology or exemplary soft skills)

Emotional intelligence and communication skills

Availability and general interest in development

Diverse perspectives that represent your organization's values

Willingness to receive training on being an effective mentor

### Mentee Selection Process

Look for:



Employees whose roles tend to see high turnover, are most likely to be impacted by automation/AI, or who will benefit most from structured mentorship

Growth mindset and openness to feedback

Commitment to the program requirements

Diverse representation across functions, levels, and backgrounds

## Design your program structure

### Step 3

As you're designing your program, there are a few structural elements to consider, including what type of mentoring format will work best, which milestones you'd like participants to achieve, and the nuts and bolts such as how long the program will last and how frequently mentees will meet with their mentors.

### Essential program elements

#### Kickoff Session

Bring all participants together to explain expectations, provide initial training, and create excitement

#### Goal-Setting Workshop

Help participants establish specific development objectives and success metrics

#### Mid-Program Check-in

Group session to share experiences and troubleshoot challenges

#### Skills-Building Modules

Optional content on specific relevant topics like developing familiarity with AI tools or preparing for tech certification

#### Networking Events

Opportunities for cross-functional learning and relationship building

#### Capstone Project

A visible way for mentees to apply their learning

#### Celebration Event

Recognition and program graduation



## Program format

There are several ways you can design your upskilling and reskilling mentorship program, such as:

### ✓ Traditional 1-on-1.

Traditional mentorship pairs a senior employee with a junior one. The focus is on employee development and growth.

### ✓ Group mentoring.

In a group mentoring experience, there may be one or more mentors and several mentees.

### ✓ Peer mentoring.

Matching an employee with someone in a similar position who has a different skill set is a form of peer mentoring. This can be particularly beneficial when employees have skills that complement each other.

### ✓ Reverse mentoring.

We typically think of mentorship as a senior employee guiding a junior one—but reverse mentoring flips the script. In this model, less experienced employees share their knowledge with more experienced coworkers. This is especially valuable for upskilling situations where managers and executives are looking to stay current with evolving technologies. Younger employees, often more fluent in the latest digital tools, can help senior leaders adapt and innovate. A well-structured reverse mentoring program creates a two-way learning experience that benefits both parties.

### ✓ Virtual.

Mentorship programs must adapt to fit remote and hybrid work environments. Any mentoring style can be tailored for a virtual setting using video calls, chat platforms, or collaborative tools. Remote mentoring also helps global organizations build meaningful connections where employees can benefit from mentorship regardless of location.

### How long should your program last?

At Together, we've found that 12–18 months provides enough time for meaningful relationship development and skill building. Shorter programs feel rushed; longer ones risk losing momentum.

For meeting cadence, we find monthly 60–90 minute meetings work best for most participants.

## Create your matching process

### Step 4

The matching process is one of the most important factors in creating a great experience for mentors and mentees. You'll need to develop a strategy for matching pairs, considering:

#### Functional alignment

Same or complementary areas of expertise



#### Personality compatibility

Communication styles and working preferences



#### Development goals

Mentor's strengths align with mentee's growth areas



#### Career stage

Appropriate experience gap between mentor and mentee



#### Logistics

Geographic location, time zones, and availability



To manage this effectively, especially as programs grow, consider using a mentor matching app to achieve the best possible results.

These apps can build matches based on standard criteria like skills and departments—but also around shared interests, hobbies, or goals. Fully automated matching saves time, but you still have the option to personalize or customize specific matches when it makes sense.

### The Together advantage

Our platform uses sophisticated algorithms to analyze dozens of data points and create optimal matches, significantly improving relationship success rates compared to manual matching.



## Provide structure and resources

### Step 5

Support the mentoring relationship by equipping mentors and mentees with valuable content and resources. Share articles, TED Talks, sample questions, or discussion prompts to spark meaningful conversations. This helps break the ice and also keeps each session engaging and productive.

Mentoring platforms like Together have template agendas on various topics like problem-solving, goal setting, and career development. Resources are available for all programs and include mentee, mentor, and colleague handbooks; email templates; program agendas; and personalized discussion points for every match.

## Launch and support

### Step 6

Now you've got all the pieces in place, you're (almost) ready to launch your upskilling or reskilling mentorship program. But before you roll it out, consider whether you might want to run some experiments first.

For example, you might decide on a soft launch where you pilot the program with a smaller group of participants to identify issues.

Once you feel confident that all the logistics are handled and any bugs have been addressed, you can fully roll out the program.

Remember that just because your program has launched, that doesn't mean your work is done. You will also want to provide regular touchpoints to support participants and collect feedback.

### These might include:

- ✓ Quarterly pulse surveys
- ✓ Resource updates
- ✓ Optional group sessions
- ✓ Troubleshooting support



## Part 4

# Proven best practices for successful mentorship programs

There are a few elements the most successful mentorship programs tend to share. We break them down for you below.

### Executive sponsorship that actually sponsors

The best mentorship programs have sponsors who don't just endorse—they participate. True sponsorship includes:

Executives serving as mentors

Adequate resource allocation

Regular communication about program importance

Integration with performance reviews and promotion decisions



## Cultural integration, not just add-on programs

Mentorship works best when it feels like a natural part of how your organization operates, not another HR initiative to manage.

Here are a few ways to integrate mentorship into your company:

### Onboarding new hires

Offering mentorship to new hires creates a sense of belonging and ensures new employees have everything they need to be successful.



### Leadership competency models

Explicitly include "develops others" as a leadership expectation so all aspiring leaders know they're expected to mentor others, both formally and informally.



### Performance management

You can incorporate mentoring goals into individual development plans to demonstrate how much your company values mentorship.



### Career pathing

Make mentoring participation visible in promotion criteria.



## Technology as an enabler

Here's where we need to be honest about the role of technology in mentorship. Software doesn't create great mentoring relationships—people do. But the right technology can absolutely enable and enhance those relationships.

### What Technology Should Do



#### Simplify logistics

Easy scheduling, communication, and resource sharing

#### Enhance matching

Data-driven pairing based on meaningful criteria

#### Track progress

Goal setting, milestone tracking, and outcome measurement

#### Provide resources

Centralized library of content and tools

#### Enable scale

Support hundreds or thousands of pairs efficiently

### What Technology Shouldn't Do



#### Replace human connection

The relationship is still the core of mentorship

#### Overcomplicate simple interactions

Don't add friction to natural conversations

#### Become the focus

Technology should be invisible, enabling the relationship

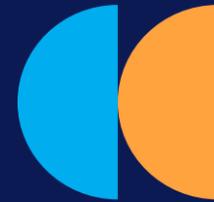


## Measurement that matters

Track both leading indicators (things that predict future success, like relationship quality, goal completion, engagement) and lagging indicators (things that measure ultimate impact, like promotions, retention, performance improvements).

### The Together advantage

Our platform automatically tracks both types of metrics, providing real-time insights into program health and long-term impact measurement.



## Flexibility within structure

Provide clear frameworks while allowing relationships to develop organically:



### Structured

Program timeline, goal-setting templates, resource libraries



### Flexible

Meeting frequency, conversation topics, communication styles, additional activities

## Continuous learning and iteration

Great programs evolve. They gather feedback, analyze data, and make improvements continuously rather than waiting for annual reviews.

### Iteration tactics to test out

- Quarterly feedback collection
- Short surveys to identify issues early
- Focus groups
- Deep-dive sessions with participants to understand experiences
- Data analysis
- Regular review of engagement and outcome metrics
- Best practice sharing
- Highlight successful relationship strategies
- Program updates
- Regular refinements based on feedback and results

## Part 5

# The role of technology in modern mentorship

Do you really need mentorship software? If you want to run a program at scale, with consistent quality, measurable outcomes, and manageable administrative overhead—then yes, the right technology is non-negotiable. Here's why.

### The scale challenge

Let's take a closer look at why manual program management doesn't scale:

A program with 100 mentor-mentee pairs generates 1,200+ meetings per year, 200+ goal-setting processes, and hundreds of coordination requests. Managing this manually isn't just inefficient—it's a setup for failure.

**Let's take a closer look at what the day-to-day experience actually looks like for program administrators.**

#### In a typical workday, you'd:

- ✓ Respond to multiple "Who should be my mentor?" emails
- ✓ Manually update your matching spreadsheet with dozens of new manager requests
- ✓ Cross-reference mentor availability, expertise, location, and preferences
- ✓ Send dozens of individual emails introducing mentor-mentee pairs

#### In a typical workweek, you'd also:

- ✓ Field "What should we talk about?" questions from program participants
- ✓ Hunt down goal-setting documents and manually send them to new matches
- ✓ Wonder who's actually meeting and who isn't (with limited to no visibility into these numbers)



## At the end of the month and quarter, you'd also:

- ✓ Send surveys via a separate tool and manually track responses
- ✓ Export data from different tools like Survey Monkey, Google Forms, and email
- ✓ Spend multiple hours building a report in Excel and PowerPoint
- ✓ Realize you're missing data from about one third of participants
- ✓ Struggle to prove ROI to leadership
- ✓ Make educated guesses about what's working and what isn't
- ✓ Be exhausted from all this manual effort

## What great mentorship technology does

### Intelligent Matching

Together's algorithm analyzes dozens of factors including leadership style preferences, career goals, communication preferences, and industry expertise to create optimal matches.

### Relationship Management

Great mentorship software acts like a customer relationship management tool (CRM) for mentoring relationships:

- **Goal setting and tracking:** Structured frameworks for establishing and monitoring development objectives
- **Communication tools:** Secure messaging, video calls, and document sharing
- **Resource libraries:** Curated content tailored to specific development needs
- **Progress monitoring:** Dashboards that show relationship health and milestone achievement

### Program Administration

For L&D teams, the right platform provides:

- **Real-time analytics:** Understanding program engagement, satisfaction, and outcomes
- **Automated workflows:** Reminder emails, check-in surveys, and milestone notifications
- **Reporting capabilities:** Executive dashboards and detailed program analysis
- **Integration options:** Connection with HRIS, LMS, and other enterprise systems

## The Together platform advantage

Here's where we're going to be direct about why mentorship software matters—and specifically why Together has become the platform of choice for organizations serious about mentoring for upskilling and reskilling.

### Comprehensive program management

Together manages multiple program types, relationship structures, content types, and complex organizational hierarchies in one platform.



### Enterprise-grade integrations

Seamless integration with HRIS systems like Workday, SuccessFactors, and BambooHR, plus communication platforms like Microsoft Teams and Google Workspace.



### Advanced analytics

Predictive relationship analytics, cohort analysis, custom reporting, and ROI measurement tools that would be impossible to track manually.



Remember the typical program administrator's schedule we shared earlier? Here's an updated version of what you'd be capable of if you use technology to streamline some of those tedious manual tasks.

### **In a typical workday, you'd:**

- ✓ Review suggested matches based on 40+ compatibility factors
- ✓ Approve dozens of matches with one click—or let participants approve their own matches
- ✓ No longer be responsible for sending personalized introduction emails, calendar invites, or goal-setting prompts since these would go out automatically

### **In a typical workweek, you'd:**

- ✓ Review your dashboard that shows real-time engagement metrics (no more guessing!)
- ✓ Receive notifications only for mentor/mentee pairs that need intervention
- ✓ No longer need to send conversation guides or other resources since these will be available on demand

### **At the end of the month and quarter, you'd:**

- ✓ Have the results of automated pulse surveys that were delivered to all participants
- ✓ Be able to generate a report in just a few minutes—no more copying and pasting from different data sources!
- ✓ No longer need to chase program participants to share feedback because your mentorship platform sends reminders and follow-ups automatically
- ✓ Have increased bandwidth to think about your broader mentorship strategy and enhance your program



## Part 6

# Measuring the success and ROI of your mentorship programs

How do you prove that your mentorship program is actually working? Keep these guidelines in mind.

### The multi-level measurement framework

Effective measurement happens at multiple levels, from individual relationship health to organizational business impact. Here's the framework that actually works:

#### Level 1

##### Reaction and satisfaction

- Participant satisfaction scores and Net Promoter Score
- Completion rates and engagement metrics

#### Level 2

##### Learning and skill development

- Pre/post skill competency assessments
- 360-degree feedback improvements
- Goal achievement rates

#### Level 3

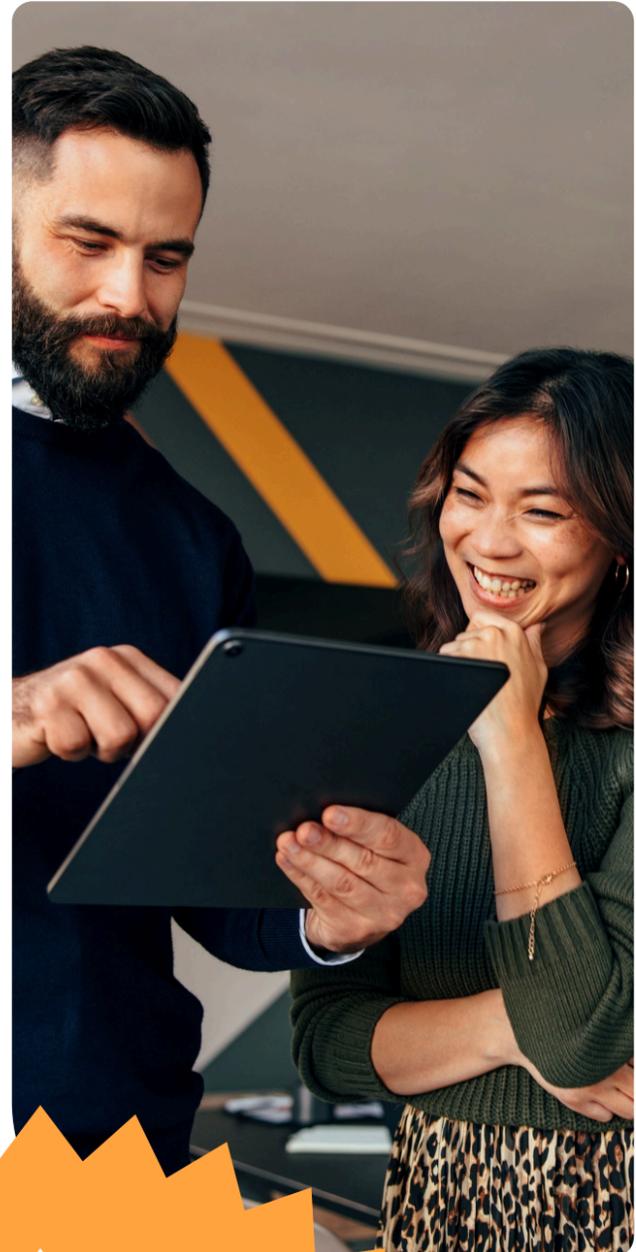
##### Behavior change and application

- Skill development observations
- Manager effectiveness ratings
- Self-reported confidence increases

#### Level 4

##### Business results and impact

- Internal promotion rates
- Retention improvements
- Team performance metrics



## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

### Relationship health metrics

- Meeting frequency and engagement quality
- Goal progress and satisfaction scores



### Program impact metrics

- Promotion rates (percentage of mentees promoted within 12-18 months)
- Retention rates (difference between participants and non-participants)
- Leadership pipeline strength



### Business outcome metrics

- Team performance improvements
- Cost savings from reduced recruitment and training



## Calculating financial ROI

Here's the formula that makes CFOs pay attention:

$$\text{ROI} = (\text{Program benefits} - \text{program costs}) / \text{Program costs} \times 100$$

### Example ROI calculation:

Let's say you have 100 participants in your mentorship program



#### Retention improvement

20% reduction in turnover saves \$500,000 (assuming \$50,000 average replacement cost)

#### Productivity gains

15% improvement in performance equals \$750,000 in value

#### Total benefits

\$1,250,000

#### Program costs

\$200,000 (platform, staff time, materials)

**ROI:**  $(1,250,000 - 200,000) / 200,000 \times 100 = 525\% \text{ ROI}$

## Part 7

# Common pitfalls and how to avoid them

Let's talk about mentorship program killers—those seemingly small decisions that can doom even well-intentioned initiatives.

### Warning signs your mentorship program needs help

#### Does any of this sound familiar?

- ! You've invested all of your time and effort into matching participants and don't have time to support what comes after
- ! Mentees complain that they have nothing in common with their mentors
- ! Mentees say they enjoy their conversations with mentors but aren't really sure what they're getting out of the sessions
- ! Mentors regularly ask you "What should we talk about in our sessions with mentees?"
- ! The majority of mentors come from the same background or have similar work experience
- ! You have no visibility into program engagement metrics
- ! Executive leaders don't participate in or endorse the program
- ! You don't know how to answer when leadership asks about the program's ROI

If you checked three or more boxes, it's probably time to restructure your approach using the solutions we've provided below.

#### Pitfall #1: The “set it and forget it” mentality

##### The Problem



Organizations launch programs and then assume that relationships will manage themselves.

##### The Fix



##### Build ongoing support into your design:

- Monthly pulse surveys to identify issues early
- Quarterly group sessions for troubleshooting
- Clear escalation paths when relationships need help



## Pitfall #2: Poor matching = program failure

### The Problem



Random or superficial matching kills participant enthusiasm.

### The Fix



#### Invest in thoughtful matching:

- Comprehensive intake surveys capturing goals and preferences
- Multiple matching criteria weighted by importance
- Trial periods allowing for re-matching if needed

## Pitfall #3: Unclear expectations and goals

### The Problem



Vague objectives lead to vague outcomes.

### The Fix



#### Provide clear structure while maintaining flexibility:

- SMARTER goal-setting workshops
- Template conversation guides and development tools
- Explicit time commitments and meeting expectations

## Pitfall #4: Inadequate mentor training

### The Problem



Being a good leader doesn't automatically make someone a good mentor.

### The Fix



#### Comprehensive mentor development:

- Training on coaching skills and feedback delivery
- Workshops on different mentoring styles
- Ongoing development opportunities for mentors

## Pitfall #5: Diversity & inclusion oversights

### The Problem



Programs can inadvertently perpetuate existing inequalities.

### The Fix



#### Intentional inclusive design:

- Actively recruit diverse mentor pools
- Cultural competence training for all participants
- Regular analysis of outcomes by demographic groups

## Pitfall #6: Executive support that's only surface deep

### The Problem



Leaders who endorse programs publicly but don't provide real resources or participation.

### The Fix



#### Genuine leadership commitment:

- Executive participation as program mentors
- Clear communication about program importance
- Integration with talent management processes



## Conclusion

# Your next steps

You've seen how quickly the skills landscape is shifting. You understand the impact that mentorship can have on making learning personal and meaningful.

So what's next?

Here's the key takeaway: It's all about starting somewhere.

Don't worry about building the perfect program from day one—just lay the foundations for a good program and improve it over time.

**Here's how you can make this happen.**

### The 90-day quick start plan

**Days  
1-30**

#### Foundation Setting

- Define program objectives using the SMART-ER framework
- Identify initial mentor and mentee populations (aim for 20–50 participants to start)
- Secure executive sponsorship and budget approval
- Choose your technology platform

**Days  
31-60**

#### Program Design

- Create selection criteria and matching process
- Design program structure and timeline
- Plan training and resource materials

**Days  
61-90**

#### Launch Preparation

- Recruit and train initial mentors
- Complete matching and conduct kickoff
- Begin relationship meetings and program execution



## Ready to transform your upskilling and reskilling mentoring programs?

The best mentorship programs combine three elements: clear strategic vision, committed participants, and the right technology platform to support them.

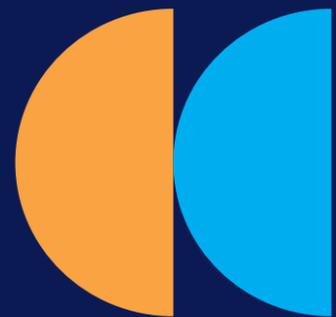
You've got the vision (if you've read this far, you understand the why and know how to go about setting your program goals).

You can identify the participants (every organization has people who need to develop new skills, and hopefully at least a handful of employees who are willing to share their insights as mentors).

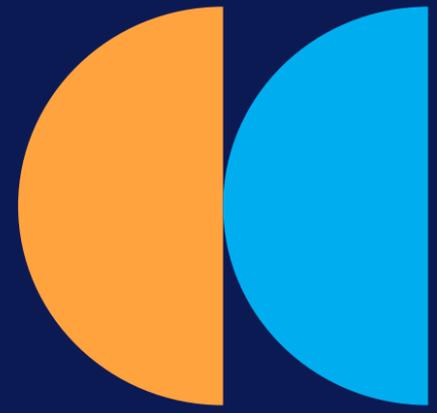
The technology? That's where Together comes in!  
Book a demo at

[togetherplatform.com/book-a-demo](https://togetherplatform.com/book-a-demo)

And see how our platform can help you build the upskilling and reskilling mentorship program your organization needs.



# About Together



Together, from Absorb, makes it easy to unlock the power of mentorship and coaching in your organization. Our platform removes the manual burden of running mentorship and coaching programs by automating matching, guiding and supporting matches with session agendas, delivering actionable insights through built-in reporting, and more.

Our impact speaks for itself. G2—the leading software review site based on verified user feedback—has consistently ranked Together as the top mentoring platform for enterprise organizations.

## Together Administrators Report...

94%



Improved Employee Skills

95%



A More Connected Company

100%



Improved Inclusion and Support

79%



Improved Retention

## Some of our customers include



Book Demo

