

The MENTOR Framework

Apply six concepts on your feedback sessions to be a better and more productive mentor

Quick Reference Card



Mechanics

- Are we satisfied with the present problem/solution fit? Is there room to improve?
- What is the nearest business model we can validate to get initial revenue?
- How can we improve the scalability of the business model?
- What are the key drivers or metrics that must be tracked?
- What are the riskiest assumptions we can validate first, for every model hypothesis we have?
- How does all that propagate to the team, plan and operations?

Empowerment

- Am I imposing directions? I should not.
- Did they get to the answer by themselves? If not, how can I run around the issue and help them figure it out?
- Are they right and I'm wrong? Maybe I'm wrong!
- How can I reach a middle ground that I'm confident will work?
- What task or references can I list to help the founders decide on this?
- Remember motivation works well to reinforce good behavior: "Nice!" or "You got it!" should come out naturally when the founders solve stuff out.

Network

- What founders do I know who have been through the same problem?
- What investors do I know who can help them out without being judgemental?
- What contacts do I have in their Customer Segments who can try the product, or help validate it?
- Can I help them sell this as it is, right now? Who should I pitch?
- If I'm not able to help them on this, do I know anyone who can?

Trust

- Ethics is massively important on mentoring
- The mentor should not impose his experience nor act as an omniscient deity (mentors learn as well!)
- The mentor should not impose respect, and should avoid comparisons between how mentor and founders performed
- Mentors and founders must compromise to deadlines and pending tasks
- Mentors and founders must be able to simply have fun, even while discussing the heaviest topics

Objectiveness

- Look up numbers and facts that corroborate your opinions
- Define the metrics that will validate which path to follow
- Propose assumptions that invalidate the present conclusions (they are mostly intuitive ones, and those should be minimized whenever possible)
- UX is only validated by users, not anyone's (much less a mentor's) design skills
- Shut up and listen. Rethink what you're about to say, and rephrase it in a non-subjective way

Results

- Finish all mentoring sessions with "What have we learned today?"
- Then ask "What are the key issues that need further addressing?"
- Then ask "Who will take care of what?"
- Take notes of "Who – What – When" to make sure things get done
- Follow-up on those notes at the start of the next session
- Mark down the strongest results so you can review them later