

Building rapport with a remote mentoring partner

We work in environments today that mean we do not need to be in the same physical space, the same city, the same country, in order to connect and work together.

The capability to connect and be productive with people all over the globe opens up a whole new world for mentoring opportunities. Your mentoring partner no longer needs to operate in the same space you do – they can be anywhere in the world.

While this may make some mentoring partnerships a little awkward to begin with, if we are committed, we can adjust and gain the most from the opportunity.

Some tips to consider:

Communication:

Communication is the key even if you won't be meeting face to face in the same space.

Try using message platforms to connect. Experiment as to what works for both of you... email, text, SLACK, snapchat or Instagram ... the list is endless, and tradition doesn't have to be the only way.

Whilst these platforms are a good way to connect adding more of yourself to the process through voice and physicality will build an even greater connection.

Video communication can be managed in this day and age not only in an office via FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, Google Hangouts or Zoom. Being able to use these on our portable devices when out and about can also be a contemporary way to catch up, share immediate information and involve our mentoring partner in an experience we're engaged with in the here and now.

Whilst both parties will have some initial preferences for communication (and many of these are often conservative due to the newness of the relationship) – check in as the relationship develops to trial some different communication approaches. Remember the whole experience is about learning from each other.

Commitment:

As you are connecting keep a note of the actions that come out of your conversations. What is it that each of you are responsible for following up? Again, there are some great online organisers to do this including Trello.

So, thanks to the wonderful world of technology we have an array of ways in which we can enjoy the experience of a mentoring partnership with someone in far off distant lands... or at least a different city. We will gain from working with expertise and the opportunity to be enterprising and engage in different ways.