

GSVC Mentoring Checklist: Top Ten

Identify

- **interests and strengths** of the mentor, venture and team to determine best fit
- **core business / infrastructure challenges of the venture**
hint: mentor and venture should express opinion on this to see where different and where match
- **communication preferences**, including personal feedback style; how, when and how much
hint: Be honest and direct. If you are someone that does not respond well to critical feedback, then establish a mechanism for efficient feedback that is constructive.
- if **other resources** or mentoring assistance are needed (gaps in what is needed for venture success, not available within the team)

Establish

- **general and 1-2 specific goals** for the mentoring relationship
E.g.: 'general goal is to get strategic support in how best to grow the venture, with an emphasis on technology challenges. Specific goals: a.) identify current needed technological infrastructure to support venture; b.) set up and review a realistic resource allocation strategy for technical investment going forward.'
- **timeline and schedule** for working together
hint: consistency is important in a mentoring relationship, particularly in a competition setting where there is a tight timeline. Thus it is typically more beneficial to provide an hour a week, or two hours every other week (with a brief weekly check-in), versus several hours once a month.
- **benchmarks and reporting mechanisms**, if appropriate
hint: the venture may not be ready to establish benchmarks during this initial meeting, but you should give a rough idea, with the commitment to establish these by your next mentor meeting.
- **mutual commitments** – 'contract' for interacting
hint: this is extremely important -- this is your agreement to all above, and to provide certain levels of support and responsiveness across the given period of interaction. This should include the venture's (and possibly the mentor's, if agreed) commitment to build or bring in additional support critically needed to succeed. It is also an expression of the seriousness of this relationship. A mentoring relationship is a formal commitment for both mentor and venture, and should be viewed as such, unless and until one or other party ends the agreement.

Remember

- **Mutual respect:** each mentor is giving their extremely valuable time pro bono to help an up and coming social venture grow and succeed. Each venture is dedicating themselves to the brave path of creating a breed of business innovation. Together, you are forging the forefront of merged financial and social return.
- Most well matched mentoring relationships work extremely well, to the great benefit of the mentor and the venture. Some do not work, for many reasons, and this does not mean you have failed. It means it is not a fit, and you should both try again!