

Preface

Project: Return To Work Inc. (R2W) is replicating DoD ESGR's mentorship program with thousands of ESGR referrals already in our database. Your time volunteering for R2W counts toward your time for DoD ESGR if you wish to join both organizations. There are benefits to joining both organizations including reimbursement of some travel expenses and the privilege of serving with our nation's best.

Mentoring Guidelines

Colorado State

Employer Support of Guard & Reserve



October 7, 2015



Dear Veteran Mentees and Business Mentors:

On behalf of all Colorado ESGR volunteers, welcome to the ESGR Individual Mentoring Program. ESGR is committed to assisting Service Members (hereinafter used to encompass all Guard and Reserve, active duty, and veterans) with their career development by creating individual mentoring and networking opportunities with professionals from business and the public sector. The Colorado ESGR Individual Mentoring Program provides a unique career-development opportunity to Service Members who are seeking employment or looking to make a career move.

The goals for the ESGR Individual Mentoring Program are captured below:

- Assist Service Members in their transition from the armed services to the private or public sectors
- Provide Service Members with opportunities to leverage their military skills and experiences in civilian careers
- Provide Service Members the opportunity to evaluate and enhance their current civilian career path
- Develop and strengthen an ongoing support network of Service Members and employers.

The transition from military service to civilian occupations is not an easy one. In some cases, the civilian sector is not familiar with the vast skills, knowledge and abilities of our service members and how those translate into civilian roles. Often times, Service Members have significant leadership responsibilities that propel them well beyond the experiences of their contemporaries in the private or public sectors. We believe a comprehensive Individual Mentoring Program will do a great deal in helping our Service Members better position themselves for success.

These guidelines are provided as an introduction to mentoring for use by both our mentors and mentees. It is my hope that you find this material beneficial and use it not as a complete guide, but as a starting point for a mutually satisfying relationship.

Thank you for joining our effort and welcome to the program.

Mark Lilevjen, Col, USAF (R)

Colorado State ESGR Chair

ESGR Mentoring Guidelines

October 7, 2015

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Acknowledgement

The Colorado State ESGR would like to acknowledge that many of the ideas about the structure for its mentoring program stem from the mentoring program of the American Corporate Partnership group. Their efforts and interests, which are very similar to ours, are about providing support to our Veterans, Reservists and Guardsmen who are in career transition. We thank them for their willingness to share their work and ideas for this common goal of supporting our military service members.

What is Individual Mentorship?

Individual Mentorships are one-on-one relationships formed to focus on a Mentee's personal growth and long-term professional development. Some of ESGR's Mentees have experience in a field and seek a mentor to help as they look to take on new responsibilities in a more senior role; or they may be in need of guidance and support while choosing or changing career paths.

ESGR's program is not meant to solve every issue or problem, nor is it a "jobs program," but one of several tools available to Service Members seeking to enhance their civilian careers.

The role of a Mentor will vary depending upon the goals of the Mentee and the type of support he or she is seeking. In general, mentoring should focus on developing individuals to help them reach their full potential and meet the changing demands of their environment.

ESGR believes that Mentors and Mentees will find their experience to be mutually beneficial. Mentees will gain invaluable insight and advice on topics ranging from networking and interviewing to dealing with work-life balance and managing professional relationships. Likewise, Mentors will refine their leadership and coaching skills while giving back to their community and developing a deeper understanding of the issues facing those who have served our country.

A successful Mentor may assume any number of roles:

- Helps clarify developmental needs; provides feedback on the Mentee's strengths and opportunity areas; helps the Mentee build confidence
- Helps the Mentee explore issues more deeply by examining, questioning and openly discussing all aspects of his or her ideas
- Explains how corporate America functions; shares critical knowledge; identifies relevant resources; clarifies organizational goals and objectives
- Offers the Mentee new perspectives and encourages him or her to take calculated risks
- Encourages a two-way exchange of information; listens and responds to concerns; acts as a sounding board

ESGR Individual Mentorship Commitment

An ESGR Mentorship is a serious and strong commitment. ESGR's Mentor/Mentee Coordinator pairs applicants based primarily on career objectives and professional experience and secondarily on proximity.

If you are paired in a local mentorship it is vital you meet in person, hopefully frequently. The two of you should communicate by phone, e-mail, etc. as often as necessary. Mentors should also facilitate meetings for their Mentee with others in the Mentor's professional network.

During each Individual Mentorship, all pairs should aim to have a number of significant discussions regarding the Mentee's professional development. These discussions will vary based on the Mentee's experience and goals. Possible topics may include resume building, interview preparation, networking, small business development, work-life balance and career guidance. The recommended activities list outlined in this document provides some structure as to how you may wish to organize your time together.

ESGR's Mentor/Mentee Coordinator will periodically contact each participant for updates and feedback over the course of the Mentorship. A prompt response is requested to ensure satisfaction of both parties and continued commitment to the Mentorship.

ESGR Volunteers as Individual Mentors. Many ESGR Volunteers will serve as Individual Mentors, either as their primary ESGR assignment or as their secondary one. It is hoped and expected that others who wish to serve as Individual Mentors in the program will consider becoming ESGR Volunteers as well, as this will help with communication and the reporting of their Volunteer hours to the Corporation for National and Community Service where they will be eligible to receive the United States President's Volunteer Service Award. It will also permit them, if ESGR Volunteers, to be compensated for certain expenses incurred if approved by ESGR

Each Mentor shall normally have only one assigned Mentee, unless the Mentor requests more than one mentee at a time. We do not want a second mentee to, in any way, diminish the effort and time given the first Mentee.

Conclusion of Mentorship. When a Mentorship is concluded by: 1) the Mentee obtaining employment he or she was striving for; 2) the two believe they have accomplished as much as possible from such mentoring; or 3) either the Mentor or the Mentee wish to terminate the Mentorship for whatever reason. The Mentor shall not be assigned another Mentorship until the Mentor advises the Mentor/Mentee Coordinator that he or she is ready to accept another Mentee.

Our Mentees

ESGR's mentees come from diverse military backgrounds. Some joined the military straight out of high school and are now writing their first civilian resumes, seeking employment, experiencing the jitters of their first job interviews or attending college. Others are Reservists and National Guardsmen seeking assistance in balancing their military and civilian careers. We also assist veterans who have just recently gotten off active duty, or left the service years ago and are looking to make a lateral and/or upward move in the civilian sector.

Service Members and their families have given a lot of themselves and they face a variety of challenges during their transition. Many are unfamiliar with the language, nuances and culture of corporate America. Some will struggle to translate their military skills for a civilian audience. Some mentees may know exactly the career path he or she wants to follow, while others have no idea where to begin. Some will aspire to start their own businesses. Mentees may be overseas and looking to get a head start on the transition to a civilian career or they may be adjusting to home life following a recent deployment.

Individual Mentors should be aware of these challenges and make their best effort to understand them when working with a Mentee to achieve his or her goals.

Starting Your Mentorship

Once you are matched with your Mentor/Mentee, you should contact each other right away. We recommend setting a date for your first in-person meeting, videoconference or phone call as soon as possible. You should also discuss your preferred method of communication and general availability.

ESGR suggests that Mentors and Mentees spend considerable time getting to know one another. Learning about your partner's interests, work activities and personality will help establish a solid foundation for your mentorship. It is important to have patience in the development of a dialogue/rapport. It will take time for two people, who would otherwise be strangers, to build a trusting relationship.

During the first month in the mentorship, review the mentees Career Assessment Questionnaire (CAQ). The CAQ is a valuable tool for jointly assessing and establishing goals for the mentorship. Use it in conjunction with the Action Plan Template to set deliverables and benchmarks for the relationship. Goals are likely to change over the course of the mentorship. Both mentorship goals and the action plan should be monitored regularly and reassessed when necessary.

To ensure progress, we recommend you conclude each session by establishing the time and date of the next session. You may wish to create a monthly meeting schedule at the beginning of your mentorship. The schedule should allow for at least twelve significant discussions of the Mentee's professional development to take place during the mentorship period.

The following section offers resources and suggestions for building a successful mentorship. Refer to these throughout the course of the year. You may find the Recommended Quarterly Activities list, beginning on page 9 of this document, an especially helpful source of inspiration as you map out a monthly plan.

In Preparing for your first meeting, consider these general questions:

- What are your expectations?
- What would you like to gain from the program?
- What challenges might you face?
- What are your concerns moving forward in the relationship?
- What are your interests?
- What type of career field(s) interest(s) you?
- How will you measure progress?

Foundations for a Successful Mentorship

The most effective mentoring relationships are based on a foundation of trust and confidence, where the Mentee feels safe to openly share his or her goals, objectives, and concerns. While every mentoring relationship is different, the following general guidelines are essential for success:

Have Realistic Expectations

Both parties should understand and agree on their expectations for the partnership. Self-awareness is important, and both the Mentor and Mentee should identify what they would like to gain from the program and what they are able to deliver. Articulate these desires to each other and determine realistic goals.

Share Responsibility for the Relationship

Both the Mentor and Mentee need to take ownership of the relationship. Neither should assume it is the other's sole responsibility for arranging meetings. Significant energy and time is required of both parties to create a successful mentorship.

Establish Concrete Goals and Develop an Action Plan

The mentorship should be focused on learning and development with clearly stated goals. Set objectives and benchmarks at the outset and review them frequently as they may change over time.

Communicate and Respect your Partner's Time

No relationship can succeed without clear communication. Show respect for your partner's time by confirming meetings beforehand and always letting your partner know if you are running late or need to reschedule. Mentees should anticipate what they would like to discuss in advance of each meeting.

Keep an Open Mind

Both parties need to be willing to be open and exchange information. Remain open-minded and flexible as your relationship evolves.

Take Ownership of your Career Development

While Mentors may help Mentees develop the necessary tools for success, Mentees must remember it is up to them to implement these tools. Mentees will need to put in the time and effort required to advance toward achieving their career goals. It is important to keep in mind success will not come immediately. While the Mentor can be a valued guide, responsibility for the Mentee's career always belongs to the Mentee.

Be Aware of Differences

Be sensitive to cross-race/cross-gender relationships, different social and educational backgrounds, and different career experiences (e.g., military vs. civilian).

ESGR Resources and Troubleshooting

ESGR believes the mentoring relationship should evolve primarily between the Mentor and Mentee. However, several support structures are in place to strengthen and guide the mentorship.

ESGR EMPLOYMENT COORDINATOR

First and foremost, your relationship with ESGR as spelled out in this Guide, needs to be a collaborative and consultative one. ESGR is here to assist you and provide guidance, support, and encouragement throughout your Mentoring. The Mentor/Mentee Coordinator will communicate with each participant on a regular basis to monitor the progress of the relationship and offer suggestions as appropriate. If the Mentor needs guidance, has questions, or needs help to troubleshoot an issue, the Mentor should contact ESGR's Employment Coordinator, who will provide technical assistance and suggested solutions. This help may be simply when a Mentor or Mentee becomes unresponsive or shows a lack of commitment. Should this happen, please contact ESGR's Employment Coordinator for assistance in resolving the situation.

AVAILABLE ESGR RESOURCES In addition to these guidelines, National ESGR's online Resource Center offers a variety of support for both Service Members and Mentors. Each Mentor shall also be given an ESGR Resource Book, being created for each Individual Mentor, one covering the Denver area, one for the Colorado Springs area. This Resource Book will contain information on services that are available to a Service Member to assist him or her to find various services that are for, or aimed at Service Members to improve themselves, to obtain employment or to better their life.

ESGR ON THE WEB. ESGR has an active community on LinkedIn with regional subgroups that allow members to connect locally and nationally with other participants. To hear about ESGR updates, news, like us on Facebook and/or follow us on Twitter (@ESGRUSA).

Recommended Program and Activities

ESGR strongly recommends mentors and mentees jointly develop an action plan focusing on achieving specific goals and objectives over the course of the mentorship. Ideally, pairs will spend time together allowing for at least twelve significant discussions of the Mentees professional development. Objectives should be reassessed when necessary and the achievement of benchmarks monitored.

Pairs should consider a variety of activities together throughout the course of the mentorship so goals remain fresh, allowing for a dynamic and sustainable relationship. Activities may range from career-focused to social and can take place between a Mentor / Mentee pair or with other Mentor/Mentee teams. Below are a variety of potential activities organized by broad themes. Throughout the mentorship, consult with ESGR staff for additional suggestions and advice.

GOAL 1: Career Assessment and Objectives

Utilize the Career Assessment Questionnaire early in the Mentorship to establish goals and a plan of action to achieve them. Mentees should be honest and realistic about their needs and objectives, and Mentors will need to recognize what they can deliver before committing to a particular outcome. ESGR recommends the remainder of this initial effort be spent building a relationship in which both parties get to know each other beyond their professional experiences and career goals. Mentees may also want to discuss their experiences as service members to help Mentors gain general knowledge about the military.

- Establish a Top 10 list of realistic and achievable goals to be met over the course of the mentorship (*You may want to share this and other documents virtually via email.*)
- Devise a complete action plan with strategies for meeting each benchmark
- Discuss current events, news, politics, or other areas of mutual interest
- Go over the intangibles of professional success, such as attire, grooming, organizing your desk/office, and managing your free time
- Talk about mentors or role models each of you has had in the past and how they impacted your life or career
- Describe the most challenging moment in your career and how you dealt with it, or discuss “Things I learned on my own that I wish someone had told me”
- Sign up for a Webinar together, or a class or workshop at a local college or library
- Set up “shadow days” to allow the Mentee to observe the Mentor at work
- Watch a movie or read a book, periodical, magazine, or journal together and discuss
- Attend a cultural or athletic event together or try a new activity (e.g., a sport or community service project)

Goal 2: Networking Enrichment

Many Mentees will benefit from being introduced to others within the Mentor’s sphere of influence—to learn about different lines of work or to meet additional role models who offer alternative perspectives on the Mentee’s objectives. Ideally, the Mentee will be introduced to three or more other professionals from the Mentor’s sphere.

- Attend networking events together at the Mentor's company, conduct office tours and introduce the Mentee to coworkers
- Arrange a group sporting event, such as basketball, soccer, or golf with the Mentor's coworkers
- Prepare for and attend a job fair together; network with other professionals at the fair
- Discuss conversation starters that can be used at networking events
- Help the Mentee develop an "elevator pitch"
- Arrange a meeting or conference call with a person at the Mentor's company that aligns with the Mentees area of interest
- Temporarily swap Mentees with a company colleague for a meeting or conference call, or spend time with other Mentor-Mentee pairs in the company
- Give the Mentee a project or writing assignment and have him or her work through several revisions with colleagues (or writing specialists) at the company
- Learn a new computer application or workflow together; have a colleague or friend give you both a tutorial

GOAL 3: Job Preparation and Career Development

ESGR recommends that Mentors offer assistance with various skills required of Mentees who will be applying for a job or building a career. Examples may include: third-party skill assessment, personality typing, résumé review, interview training, and public speaking. Mentors may wish to engage a company's Human Resources department or a Workforce Center for assistance with these activities. Pairs should revisit the Career Assessment Questionnaire periodically to assess if goals have changed.

- Review professional résumé templates and send the Mentee's résumé to friends and colleagues for feedback
- Set up/review LinkedIn profiles
- Invite the Mentee to give presentations at the Mentor's office meetings
- Help the Mentee assemble a professional portfolio including work/writing samples; academic transcripts and records; performance evaluations; complimentary emails/praise; letters of recommendation; and copies of diplomas, awards, or certificates
- Watch interviews on YouTube and critique them together
- Set up mock interviews for the Mentee with Human Resources professionals at the Mentor's company or a local Workforce Center.
- Videotape each other conducting a practice interview or speech; review the recording and offer feedback to one another
- Brainstorm ways of highlighting military skills and translating military experience in a manner that is understandable to those without a military background
- Discuss how to negotiate salary, ask for a raise, and make requests of superiors
- Take a personality test together (e.g., Jung or Myers-Briggs) and discuss the results
- Identify three companies the Mentee is interested in; schedule and prepare for informational interviews

GOAL 4: Program Recap and Professional Networking

This Goal should commence with a review of the Mentee's original Career Assessment Questionnaire to determine if objectives are on a path toward being realized. This time may be best

spent by the Mentor assisting the Mentee in building a professional network. Ideally, the Mentor will introduce the Mentee to three professionals that can help make contacts for the Mentee.

Pairs may wish to discuss ways the Mentee can continue to develop professionally beyond this Mentorship.

- Review the Mentee's original objectives
- Contact friends and colleagues who can give the Mentee helpful tips about how to hold brief, effective, pitch-oriented conversations
- Set up meetings, meals, or conference calls between the Mentee and professionals outside the Mentor's company
- Attend a company sales expo, listen to sales pitches, and network with people at the event
- Attend a charity event, wine tasting, or gallery opening (together if possible) and attempt to meet at least two people and learn about their line of work
- Start a collaborative project that requires outreach to professionals at different companies
- Begin developing 2-year, 5-year, and 10-year plans for network growth for both the Mentee and Mentor, and compare them
- Brainstorm ways of keeping your networks fresh and current

Mentors and Mentees should discuss how often and if they will communicate moving forward once the Mentorship is ended (as indicated above). We encourage both the Mentor and Mentee stay in touch, perhaps on a more informal basis (emailing occasionally and scheduling coffee, lunch, or a phone call every few months). The resources offered at ESGR will remain available to the Mentees looking for continued professional development, business advice, and networking.

Career Assessment Questionnaire

ESGR encourages Mentees to complete this form in advance of their first mentorship meeting. Mentors and Mentees may then jointly develop an action plan based on the Mentee's responses.

PART 1: CAREER ASSESSMENT

Instructions: Please respond to each statement by choosing a number 1 -5 that is most true for you.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Maybe/ Not Certain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I know what motivates me to excel at work.				_____
2. I can identify my strongest abilities and skills.				_____
3. I have three major achievements that clarify a pattern of interest and abilities that are relevant to my career.				_____
4. I know what I both like and dislike in work.				_____
5. I know what I want to do during the next 1-2 years.				_____
6. I know what I want to do during the next 5-10 years.				_____
7. I have a well-defined career objective that focuses my job search on particular organizations and employers.				_____
8. I am going back to school and considering different career options.				_____
9. I know what skills I can offer employers in different occupations.				_____
10. I know what skills employers seek in most candidates.				_____
11. I can clearly explain to employers what I do well and enjoy doing.				_____
12. I can clearly and succinctly explain why employers should hire me.				_____
13. I want to start/have started a small business and would like assistance in building it.				_____

Career Assessment Questionnaire, Continued

PART 2: OBJECTIVES

Instructions: Check all that apply below and list your top three objectives in the open fields at the bottom of the page.

I would like a corporate Mentor to help me:

- Obtain a job
- Identify which career fields best suit my skills, interests, and experience
- Learn about various careers in numerous industries
- Learn about career opportunities in a particular industry
- Build a network of professionals in a variety of industries
- Learn how to advance at my current job
- Learn how to deal with a difficult boss, colleague, or fellow student
- Learn how to start my own business
- Learn how to build a business I have already started
- Determine if I should go back to school
- Make sure I am on the right path toward my desired career after I earn my degree
- Better deal with work-life balance issues
- Improve my résumé and my interview skills
- Translate my military background for the corporate world
- Learn the language and culture of corporate America
- Get along better with my peers
- Build lasting relationships with those in the civilian world
- Other:

Top Three Objectives:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Use this completed questionnaire to develop an action plan with your Mentor. You will find an **Action Plan Template** on the next page.

Action Plan Template

This template is meant to be used in tandem with ESGR’s Mentoring Guidelines, Career Assessment Questionnaire, and Recommended Activities. Examples and suggestions below should serve as a rough guide.

Section 1: Career & Professional Goals and Objectives	
Short-term Goals (1-2 years)	Long-term Goals (2-5 years)

Section 2: Month-to-Month Action Plan			
	Meeting Date	Objectives/Goals	Strategies/Tactics
Example	1/1/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify top three short-term and long-term goals. Identify professional strengths and opportunities for growth (taking military background into account). Use this worksheet to create a plan of action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review completed Career Assessment Questionnaire.
Month 1:			
Month 2:			
Month 3:			

Action Plan Template, Continued

Section 2: Month-to-Month Action Plan			
	Meeting Date	Objectives/Goals	Strategies/Tactics
Month 4			
Month 5			
Month 6 etc.			