



# **DJAA Mentor Program Guidelines**

*for Mentees and Mentors*

## **1. Introduction**

The aim of these guidelines is to provide a framework for the basis on which mentors and mentees participate in the program. Each mentor and mentee pair will communicate, interact and achieve their mentoring program goals differently – in the way that best suits each pair. The program is intended to facilitate, not restrict, the participation of mentors and mentees in the program.

## **2. What is Mentoring?**

Mentoring is defined as “a mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to identify and achieve their goals”.

A mentor provides support, a sounding board, knowledge, encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback to the mentee by developing a genuine interest in the growth of their abilities and talents.

A mentee actively seeks support and guidance in their career and professional development from an experienced Entertainer. A mentee always has ultimate responsibility for their career and professional development.

The relationship is based upon encouragement, constructive feedback, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

Mentoring is an important voluntary activity, critical to develop and nurture the future of DJ & MC Entertainers. A mentor should guide the mentee on any number of areas within their expertise.

The DJ Alliance Australasia (DJAA) believes it is of vital importance for DJ & MC Entertainers to benefit from the opportunity to share concerns and aspirations with someone experienced. Mentoring is ideally a two-way relationship that develops over time, with each person asking questions, finding answers and making choices. The DJAA has high expectations that each mentee will succeed in their professional accomplishments; mentoring is an important step in that success.

## **3. Program Purpose**

The program should provide a means for experienced professional DJ & MC Entertainers and those new to or wishing to improve on specific aspects of their professional development to form an on-going relationship by discussing matters relating to their business within an organised and supportive framework. Individual mentorship will be for a period of one year.

## **4. Participant Eligibility**

All program participants, mentors and mentees, must be members of the DJAA.

## **Mentors**

Mentors have experience in a variety of fields, in private and/or in their profession. Mentors will have excellent communication skills, particularly listening, a desire to contribute to the future of the Industry and the time to commit to the process for the duration of the one year program. Mentors must be Accredited Members of the DJAA.

## **Mentees**

Mentees may be Associate or Accredited Members of the DJAA .

## **5. Benefits of Mentoring**

There are many mutual benefits of participating in a mentoring program for the mentor and mentees', including:

### Mentors

- Contribute to the development of the future of the DJ & MC profession;
- Improve management, leadership and communication skills;
- Expand professional networks;
- Transfer of skills and knowledge;
- Recognition of skills, knowledge and commitment to the profession;
- Increase awareness of entertainment concepts and professional ideals;
- Increased respect from industry and general public; and
- Personal satisfaction from making a contribution to the industry.

### Mentees

- Develop communication skills and knowledge;
- Build professional networks and a support system;
- Increase confidence and self-esteem;
- Discuss and learn theoretical and practical issues with an experienced Entertainer;
- A confidential opportunity to discuss business and personal related issues; and
- Receive support and guidance to achieve career goals;

## **6. Participant Responsibilities and Role Statements**

### Responsibilities of Mentors and Mentees

- Act ethically and with respect towards all other participants;
- Maintain strict confidentiality and professional boundaries;

- Commitment to attend any prearranged meetings; and
- Discuss expectations in the first instance and review as time progresses.

Mentor's Role Statement:

Specific responsibilities include:

- Negotiate a commitment for ongoing communication;
- Lead initial meeting with mentee;
- Assist mentee to identify individual needs and support career development;
- Attend any information sessions or activities for mentors to be held by the DJAA;
- Contribute to discussion and resolution of issues raised in meetings; and
- Participate in program evaluation and review.

The mentor may achieve these in a variety of ways by:

- Challenging assumptions;
- Encouraging the exploration of new ideas and innovative thinking;
- Being open minded and non-judgemental;
- Listening to the mentees' questions and problems;
- Providing appropriate and timely advice;
- Assisting the mentee to identify and solve problems;
- Encouraging an understanding of options and outcomes; and
- Sharing professional experiences and a different view of the matter under discussion.

A successful and effective mentor has:

- Respect and consideration for the mentee;
- A high level of expertise and knowledge of the industry;
- A genuine interest in the mentees' growth and development;
- A commitment to the mentoring program;
- Highly developed communication skills (particularly listening, questioning and giving constructive feedback); and
- The ability to have some influence on behalf of the mentee.

Mentee's Role Statement:

Specific responsibilities include:

- Sign Mentoring Agreement with mentor;
- Negotiate a commitment for ongoing communication;
- Attend any information sessions or activities for mentees held by the DJAA;
- Initiate the organisation of all meetings (e.g. develop a schedule of meetings agreed by the mentor);
- Organise an (formal or informal) agenda of discussion topics for meetings;
- Contribute to discussion and resolution of issues raised in meetings; and
- Explore own strengths and development needs.

The mentee may achieve their role by:

- Discussing topics of interest researched as part of ongoing self-improvement;
- Sharing their particular interests in the Entertainment field;
- Reviewing their experiences as an Entertainer in the industry;
- Discussing and developing their career goals;
- Be willing to share their hopes, needs and expectations; and
- Always having an open frame of mind.

A successful mentee will:

- Organise all meetings with their mentor;
- Commit to the mentoring program;
- Take responsibility for their own personal and professional development and opportunities;
- Seek constructive feedback; and
- Accept new responsibilities and challenges.

## **7. Confidentiality for Mentors and Mentees**

Topics discussed by mentors and mentees may be a personal opinion or of a sensitive or controversial nature, therefore strict confidentiality must be maintained between mentors and mentees.

## **8. Mentoring Program Champions**

The role of the program champions is to help guide the delivery of the program, and to provide additional support to mentors and mentees participating in the program, to ensure that mentors and mentees are benefiting from the mentorship. There will be one Mentors Champion (Chairperson?), and one Mentees Champion (Membership Officer?). Mentor and mentee champions may contact mentors and mentees during the program to check how the mentorship is progressing and to provide advice or tips that may be helpful to the participants.

## **9. Matching Mentors and Mentees**

Each Accredited Member who wishes to participate in the program as a mentor will provide a short biography indicating areas of experience and expertise. Mentees will then have a list of potential mentors to select from based on their particular challenge, question or help required.

If either the mentor or mentee is uncomfortable with the pairing or decides the mentorship is not successful, the mentorship between a mentee and mentor may be, by mutual agreement, terminated.

Cases may arise where mentorships end prematurely for a variety of reasons and in these situations a 'no fault' closing of the relationship is appropriate. A 'no fault' closure can be initiated by either the mentor or mentee and detailed explanations do not have to be provided. The aim of a 'no fault' closure is to ensure a win-win situation and that there is no blame involved. The mentee is free to select another mentor participant.

## **10. Suggested Mentor Program Framework**

The following program is a suggested framework for mentoring pairs to follow throughout the Mentoring Program. Participants may choose to follow part of the program or may choose to create their own mentoring framework.

### **Stage 1: Negotiating Expectations and Goals**

#### **First Meeting**

The first meeting is critical in establishing the foundations for the development of the mentorship but can be quite daunting for both the mentor and the mentee. The key to a successful mentorship is to ensure that both participants share the same objectives and expectations of the program. These should be discussed openly, negotiated and clarified within the partnership.

Mentees and mentors will have completed and signed the attached Mentoring Program Agreement (Appendix 1) to demonstrate their commitment to the program. If this has not been completed, then it should be completed and a copy should be forwarded to the Membership Officer (or other DJAA Position TBD).

#### Discussion points

- **Activity:** Mentors and mentees should complete the activity in Appendix 2 before the first meeting in order to identify and record their aims and objectives. The answers should be used to promote a discussion and agreement about their program aims and objectives.
- **Time Commitment:** It is essential that contact be maintained throughout the mentorship. It is recommended that participants meet at least 6-7 times over the twelve months. However, the level of time commitment needs to be discussed and negotiated between the mentor and mentee. Some partnerships may wish to meet more often and/or may supplement this with regular emails or phone calls.
- **Preferred Style of Contact:** Both the mentor and mentee need to decide whether contact during the mentorship will be formal or informal. Participants should also decide whether they want to follow the suggested program framework, discuss pre-prepared topics at their meetings or would prefer ad hoc discussions.
- **Location:** Both participants need to agree on a preferred location(s) to meet during the mentorship. Suggested locations include the mentor or mentee's residence or office, a café or via Skype/Google Hangout, etc.
- **Goals:** Participants should discuss what they want to achieve through the Mentoring Program and how they will reach their goals.

The mentee is responsible for contacting the mentor to organise a time and place for the first and subsequent meetings that is suitable for both participants.

#### **Avoiding Potential Pitfalls**

Mentors may expect the mentee to do all of the contacting/organising to 'drive' the program, but mentees are often reluctant to seem too demanding. To avoid this, it is best to plan for the next contact together at the end of each meeting. If a mentor cancels a meeting don't be disheartened and continue to reschedule. Mentors are often exceptionally busy people but they are committed to the program and will endeavour to find time for their mentee. If either party needs to reschedule, it is a good idea for the mentee to immediately give the mentor a list of three or four alternative times and locations to meet for the mentor to select a suitable time and location or suggest an alternative.

## **Stage 2: Establishing the Relationship**

### **Second Meeting**

The second meeting should focus on the mentor and the mentee getting to know each other. Learning each other's interests and opinions beyond DJing & MCing helps build trust and understanding in the mentorship. Topics for discussion may include "Where in the world do you most want to travel to and why?", "How would you spend your last day on earth?", "Who is your hero?", "What personal/professional qualities do you most admire/detest?", "What are your favourite hobbies?", "Are you a morning or a night person?", "What is your dream job?", etc.

Many people find it easier to start with a more informal discussion, such as the topics suggested above, to build rapport and provide a gentle introduction to the discussion of more serious 'planning' and career development topics. Mentors and mentees may find that many of these discussion topics may eventually lead back to 'DJ & MC' topics. Mentees should also feel comfortable to ask their mentors advice on current event planning topics, career development, emotional issues, technical matters, performance, and general business, marketing and personal matters.

### **Third Meeting**

It is recommended that at the third meeting mentors share some of their own career/work history. Initially, mentors may share their general career history, significant experiences and how they got to where they are now. Furthermore, mentors should discuss in depth a couple of anecdotes from their own experience. For example:

- I wish I had known at the time .....
- The event I am most proud of is .....
- I am so glad I did/didn't .....
- A significant obstacle I overcame was .....
- I was most proud to be an Entertainer when .....
- My biggest learning curve was ....
- My greatest professional success or achievement is .....
- When I got into entertaining, I didn't realise ....
- Today's DJs & MCs should know....

Mentees can share similar information, based on their experience (including any non-entertainment related careers) and any important life experiences. Both mentors and mentees should reflect on what is important to them and what drives them both personally and professionally.

Following on from this discussion, mentees (with assistance from their mentor) should try to determine their personal strengths and 'development needs'. Development needs are professional skills or areas of knowledge that mentees want to improve or learn more about to develop as a professional in the entertainment industry. At this point, the mentee should select three development needs that their mentor can help them work on over the coming months. Mentors and mentees should brainstorm ideas and opportunities for possible ways of assisting their mentee in developing their skills and knowledge based on their needs.

### ***Potential Development Needs***

Possible development needs that the mentee may want to work on include:

- Presentation, public speaking and master of ceremony skills;
- Communication skills;
- Networking skills;
- Specific job-related skills such as procedure to be followed at a wedding, how to compile a playlist which will appeal to all generations, lighting design and how to present your equipment in a more aesthetically pleasing manner;
- Knowledge of specific current issues impacting the industry (eg new spectrum for wireless microphones) and concepts (eg Photo booth considered to be entertainment);
- Practical application of related legislation;
- Workplace scenarios and politics;
- Entertaining in an international context;

### **Avoiding Potential Pitfalls**

Mentors need to be wary of unknowingly dominating conversation, exerting undue influence or quickly discounting alternative opinions. Their role is to support and facilitate the mentee to take responsibility for their own problem solving and arriving at opinions independently. Mentors should help mentees work through all issues or alternatives to a topic and help mentees see the 'big picture', rather than offering 'the' solution. Playing the 'devil's advocate' is often a good way to help mentees challenge their opinions and assumptions but mentors should be careful to help mentees explore their ideas in a greater depth before presenting an alternative argument or view point.

### **Stage 3: Development Needs/Knowledge Acquisition**

#### **Meeting 4**

At this stage of the mentoring relationship, mentors and mentees should focus on development needs identified in Stage 2. This may include activities such as mentors

providing advice on their mentee's event planner, mentors using a 'real' Event to explain how a detailed planner helps to avoid potential issues or how to recover from something that goes wrong mid Event, advice on how to handle the client following an Event mishap, etc. It may be appropriate for mentees to take along examples of their work so that mentors can assist with particular development needs.

Mentors and mentees should not feel that discussions must be limited to the mentee's development need. Specific issues and interesting discussion points naturally arise and should be explored as needed. These may include specific performance or business issues, marketing advice, etc. Mentors and mentees may also wish to discuss all development needs concurrently, rather than focusing on one each meeting.

#### **Stage 4: Career Development**

Towards the end of the twelve month period, mentors should focus on the career direction of the mentee. Mentees may want assistance from their mentor to clarify their preferred career direction or to develop a career plan. It is important to evaluate an appropriate career direction based on the mentee's likes/dislikes, strengths and developments needs as well as skills, values and interests. Partnerships may consider career placement opportunities/work experience, specific Event experience, educational options, expanding networks or other avenues of establishing/developing a career.

#### **Stage 5: Sustaining the Relationship.**

It is important to acknowledge the end of the Mentoring Program at the one year milestone, even if the mentor and mentee agree to continue the mentorship after the program. It is a time to formally acknowledge the value of the program, appreciate the time and contributions of the mentors and the lessons learnt by both mentors and mentees. It is important to each reflect on each other's professional and personal development.

#### **Measuring the Success of the Mentorship**

As the mentorship develops it is important to reflect and consider successful aspects and identify areas for improvement. Self-assessment of the participation of the mentor and mentee is important to measure the development and success of the mentorship.

Mentors and mentees can consider the following questions when evaluating their participation and the development of the mentorship.

- Has the mentee/mentor attended all meetings and any required events?
- Does the mentee/mentor have a positive approach to each meeting?

- How does the mentee/mentor respond to new ideas and suggestions?
- Has the mentee developed realistic career aspirations?
- Has the mentee/mentor completed agreed tasks?
- Is the mentee/mentor punctual and organised?
- Has the mentee improved professionally?
- Has the mentee expanded their professional network?
- Has the mentee/mentor actively developed a level of trust with the mentor/mentee?
- Has confidentiality been maintained?
- Has progress been made towards the mentee's goals?
- Has the mentee/mentor cancelled meetings?
- Is the mentee/mentor attentive during the meetings?
- Does the mentee/mentor ensure there are no interruptions during the meetings?, i.e. phone calls, people in office, etc.
- Is the mentee/mentor comfortable with the mentorship?

## Appendix 1 – DJAA Mentor Program Agreement

We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
(mentor) (mentee)

Voluntarily commit to the DJAA Mentor Program for the entire 1 year duration. We will:

- Strive to meet regularly for an hour or as otherwise agreed;
- Attend mentoring program sessions and activities held by the DJAA;
- Have a genuine interest and commitment in the mentoring program;
- Be objective, honest and supportive;
- Act ethically and with respect towards all participants;
- Respect and maintain strict confidentiality;
- Contribute to discussion and resolution of issues raised in meetings; and
- Participate in program evaluation and review.

We acknowledge that either person has the right to discontinue the mentorship for any reason and we will follow the mentorship closure guideline as detailed in Item 9 of the Guidelines.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (mentor) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (mentee) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 – ‘Before the First Meeting’ Activity

The following questions are to be answered by the mentor and mentee in preparation for the first meeting. These answers do not have to be shared but they provide a good basis for discussion in the first meeting.

Why are you participating in the Mentoring Program?

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What do you expect from your mentor/mentee?

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What do you hope to learn and/or achieve by participating in the Mentor Program?

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What led you to a career as a DJ and/or MC?

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Why do you enjoy being a DJ and/or MC?

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