

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

By Toni Krasicki



fitnessU is a new brand of fitness education, backed by 25+ years of industry leadership, experience and innovation from the fitness industry's leading membership organisation, Australian Fitness Network. A key element of the fitnessU education package is its unique mentor arrangement, which each student has access to, as part of their enrolment. In this article, Toni Krasicki explores the benefits of mentoring and how you can make the most of your mentor.



The Sponsorship Consultants hold seminars in major cities throughout the year which offer athletes valuable insights and strategies for engaging their own sponsorship, and their book 'Sponsorship for Athletes' is available on their website www.thesponsorshipconsultants.com.au

Sponsorship tips and news is provided on the Facebook page at [/TheSponsorshipConsultants](https://www.facebook.com/TheSponsorshipConsultants).

● So, exactly what is a mentor and what do they do?



Eric Parsloe from The Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring sums it up this way: Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be.'

To put even more simply, a mentor is someone with more experience and knowledge than you, who is willingly available for you to learn from. They are there to provide you with ongoing support, with help with networking opportunities, and to act as a professional sounding board for anything you need clarification or assistance with. When used correctly, mentors really can be the ultimate in career guidance.

Mike Campbell is an Ambassador for the fitnessU Mentor Program, as well as a successful Personal Trainer with Fitness First George Street in Sydney (NSW), and author of *Unleash Your Alpha*. From his first-hand experience both as a mentor and a mentee, Mike believes the benefits of mentoring are enormous. 'Mentoring provides both best practice and examples to follow, but also ensures there is accountability to the student's development and education. It's great because it provides actual plans, structures and systems to follow as well.'

Regardless of your study style and how challenging or easy you find the fitnessU education process, working with a mentor can help develop and refine your skills and techniques, improve the quality of your education, and increase confidence in your abilities. And you never know, you may even make a life-long friend as well.

Kathy Johnsun is another Ambassador for the fitnessU Mentor Program and was named Australian Fitness Network's 2014 Group Exercise Instructor of the Year. Kathy works at as a Personal Trainer and Group Fitness Instructor at Fitness First St Leonards (NSW) and says 'Mentoring helps ease the pressure of starting out as a Personal Trainer, when you have zero or limited experience. It really encourages students to become successful in the fitness industry, by providing them with support, direction and the confidence to shine.'

So how can you make the most of your mentor arrangement?

It's important to get the most out of the time you have with your mentor. Both Kathy and Mike agree that in the mentor/mentee relationship, there are no 'silly questions' so treat that time together as an open forum where you can ask as much about everything that you want clarified or confirmed.

To each mentoring session make sure you show up with a pre-written list of questions, so you are not wasting precious time trying to remember what it was you wanted to discuss. By having this type of agenda for each session, you'll ensure the time is spent effectively and efficiently. One way to create this list or agenda, is to simply make a note on your phone or send an email to yourself every time you think up with a question for your mentor – by doing this immediately, every time a question pops into your head, you'll ensure all your questions are addressed.

Kathy suggests asking for as much advice and guidance as you can. 'Don't be afraid to ask detailed questions that really make use of their experience and knowledge, such as "what strategies do you use to attract and retain clients?" or "how do you decide what exercises to prescribe?". Your mentor knows what has and hasn't worked for them, so pick their brains about all of it! That is, after all, exactly what your mentor is there for!'

Mike agrees that asking questions is the key, but also recommends you act with curiosity and even some level of scepticism. 'Try and figure out how things make sense to you and take the best elements of these,' he advises.

The bottom line is, what you get out of your mentor relationship will heavily rely on what you put in. When you commit to making the most of your time with your mentor, your future success as a fitness professional is already one step ahead!

To find out more about mentoring and fitnessU visit www.fitnessU.com.au

