

# Entrepreneur Mentoring Handbook

TenStep Spain & Viveka Turkey, for the Ankara  
Development Agency within the “Young  
Entrepreneurship Ecosystem” EU co-funded Project

Ankara, Turkey, 2017

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## Introduction

The Mentor guidebook has been designed to help decision makers, supervisors, mentors and mentees benefit from a unified approach by Ankara Development Agency Entrepreneurship Development Programme. (From now on will be referred to as EDP)

### ***The Guidebook describes:***

- Approach to mentorship.
- Code of Ethics for Mentors
- Mentor Key Skills
- Stages of Startups
- Matching System for Mentors and Startups
- Effective Mentorship Sessions
- Mentorship Programme Design

## Approach to Mentorship Programme

Formal mentorship programmes are starting to play an important role in the entrepreneurship development ecosystem in Turkey. TÜBİTAK is one of the first institutions to start a formal mentor programme in 2015. First mentor programme involved the recruitment, training and matching of mentors. 700 mentors were trained in the initial match. Initial criteria for mentor recruitment was to have at least 10 years of sectorial experience or five years in professional entrepreneurship development. TÜBİTAK also worked with independent institutions to develop a training programme to reach out more mentors and increase its pool. The situation analysis of entrepreneurship ecosystem in Turkey conducted by Ankara Development Agency in November 2016 reflects on the evaluation of current mentor programmes and expectations. Interview data show that the current mentor network is a start but requires improvement. Entrepreneurs interviewed particularly searched for a mentor who has been an entrepreneur before with a track record of success or an angel investor who can help them reach sources of funding. It is an interesting finding that focuses merely on the role model aspect and the funding part. It also shows the lack of understanding on mentorship on its coaching (psychosocial role) and informational role. It is a signal that most entrepreneurs in the local ecosystem are not aware of what they can get out of a mentor relationship. One of the primary determinants is that most mentor programmes that are executed in incubation programmes with TÜBİTAK as an exception are short duration (few sessions) with no particular emphasis on matching or no end goal.

After TÜBİTAK programmes, there were local organizations such as Startup Mentor Turkey, Smarts United and GCIP (discounting university based mentor networks) started offering different configurations such as longer mentor trainings, mentor matching mechanisms and investor presentations.

TÜBİTAK 1512 BiGG programme in 2015 exploded the number of mentorships offered in techno parks and universities. Each university has a number of mentors working with technology startups with an end goal of having receiving a grant from TÜBİTAK. Configuration with an end goal also formed a natural Key Performance Indicator (KPI) where the number of successful accepted applicants to TÜBİTAK programme can observe programme effectiveness and impact. Respondents to the interviews pointed out its effectiveness for idea stage companies. For prototype stage companies, a mentorship programme is recommended to help entrepreneurs for passing early commercialization tests, also known as “the death valley”.

In the situational report BIC101 programme in Istanbul, it is referred that the experimentation of the “equity for mentorship” model is still in process; therefore, measuring its effectiveness is difficult. Typical accelerator programmes take equity as a programme. Mentor taking equity is unproven legally and practically.

Based on the situational analysis of the Turkish entrepreneurship ecosystem, a need of a formal mentorship arises having the property of:

- Longer duration per entrepreneur than average university programme
- With custom configuration on different stages of entrepreneurs.
- An evaluation and matching system for mentors and mentees.
- A development network on emphasis for diversity of mentors working in coordination.

EDP will adopt a formal mentorship programme with an emphasis on building a development network. Formal mentoring programme have different challenges and requirements than informal mentoring programme. A critical difference is that the duration of the mentor session is limited by programme requirements unlike informal mentorship sessions where the session can continue indefinitely (Weinberg & Lankau, 2011). This second major distinction is the recruitment and matching process. Mentors needs to be recruited and matched with mentees unlike informal mentorship where mentors and mentee find each other based on personal preference. Due to artificial matching of dyads, motivation and the evolution of the relationship gains importance.

Initial mentor coaching, mentor matching and initial assessment are standardised and audited by EDP. Mentor session structure (location, time spent, single versus

multiple founders) and flow of discussion are left to mentors and mentees. Structure will help EDP to analyse mentee needs better which will increase its matching ability. Mentor independence in sessions will allow the natural process of building a relationship. EDP will rely on volunteering for specialist mentors; therefore, its likely mentors will seek autonomy in their discussions within an ethical framework.

## Values

**Vision:** A mentorship platform that delivers and monitors valuable exchange of information and network between entrepreneurs and mentors.

**Mission:** Increasing the investment capacity of new or developing ventures in Ankara by facilitating the exchange of indigenous business experience and network.

A sustainable mentorship programme for Ankara Development Agency requires:

**a) Continuity:** A mentorship system that is ongoing throughout the year supported by one stop diagnostic, special programme and events.

**b) Equal and Fair Access**

Equal and Fair opportunity for all entrepreneurs who would like to apply to the mentorship programme.

**c) Effective assessment and matching**

There are diverse stages of entrepreneurs with different issues and bottlenecks. EDP will help mentors in assessing the stage of entrepreneurs to ensure accurate matching with mentors for the highest impact on the local economy.

**d) Information Management:**

Accumulation and analysis of assessment, mentor session and review information on entrepreneurs at different stages to produce better policies for improving investment capacity.

**e) Network of mentors:**

Utilising a team of diverse talented mentors working as a group supervised by EDP to help mentees. Mentor should benefit from coordinating and networking within the EDP mentor pool.

**f) Integration into to Ecosystem:**

A programme should integrate and signpost to external entrepreneurship programme in Ankara. Mentor programme will not be an alternative to existing accelerator or incubation programme. It will be complementary.

## **Code of Ethics for Mentors**

The code of ethics is inspired by the code of ethics compiled with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, a reputable organisation in setting the standards for mentorship services (EMCC Council, 2016). The aim of code of ethics is to set the formal guidelines for the relationship between mentor and mentee. It is to ensure transparent, fair, open dialogue with respect to the reputation of the Ankara Development Agency.

### **1. Avoid Conflict of Interest**

If the mentor happens to run a business, become a partner in a business, work with a competitor, trading stocks or bonds in the same business as the mentee it runs the risk of conflict of interest. It should be an active business engagement. History in the same business line does not necessarily indicate a conflict. Mentors should disclose any potential of conflict of interest once the assessment session is completed. Mentee may decide to continue the session despite of an overlapping business interest. If a conflict arises during the session, the mentor should notify the EDP to end the session. EDP will evaluate to decide whether the mentor and the mentee are in the same business line, expect economic returns from similar product lines or substitute products. If mentor happens to have more than one mentees in the same business line, they should disclose the situation to both mentees and ask for their approval to continue.

### **2. Keep Confidential**

When working with a client, mentors will maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless EDP requires release of information. Members will have a clear agreement with clients and sponsors about the conditions under which confidentiality will not be maintained (e.g. illegal activity, danger to self or others etc.) and gain agreement to that limit of confidentiality where possible. Members will share with clients that they are receiving supervision and identify that the client may well be referred to in this context anonymously. The client should be reassured that the supervision relationship is itself a confidential relationship. Members will store, and dispose of, any records regarding clients, including electronic files and communications, in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security and privacy, and complies with all applicable laws and agreements. EDP has the right to store application documents, assessment



documents, session documents.

### **3. Respect Privacy**

Mentors will not manipulate, coerce, force or condition the mentee into sharing key business information, disclosing important contacts and revealing trade secrets. Mentee is free to disclose or hide information to their preferences even if it affects the quality of the mentorship programme unless it is required by a special condition by EDP. In that case, the choice of opting out of the requirement will be presented. Mentor or mentee may not bring a participant to the meeting without the consent of the other party to the meeting.

### **4. Honest Disclosure**

Mentors will accurately and honestly represent their relevant professional qualifications, experience, training, certifications and accreditations to EDP and mentees when required. When talking with any party, mentors represent the potential value they provide. Mentors will keep their profiles on record updated. Mentors only represent themselves even in cases where they are invited through an organisation or a company. Mentors will attribute ownership of work, ideas and materials of others to the originator and not claim it as their own.

### **5. Respect personal space**

Mentors are responsible for setting and keeping clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern interactions, physical or otherwise, with mentees. Mentors and mentees will meet and conduct sessions at a location of their preferences. Mentor may not force the mentee to meet at a location where they don't feel comfortable. In a situation of agreement, they may use a place designated by EDP. Mentee or mentor will be respectful when communicating outside of the session. Mentor or mentee will try their best not to intrude during weekends (Saturday or Sunday) or off work hours (earlier than 09:00 past 18:30).

### **6. Right to Terminate**

Mentors will respect the mentee's right to terminate the engagement at any point in the process. Members will encourage the client or sponsor to stop the coaching or mentoring engagement if it is believed that the client or sponsor would be served better by another coach, mentor or another form of professional help.

## 7. Limited Liability

Mentors are not liable to mentee or to EDP by the information they share and the contacts they recommend. Mentors are not liable by the business performance of the mentees during the mentorship process. Mentees should consider evaluating recommendations given by the mentor and come to their own decisions. Mentor is liable to their commitment to EDP diligently attending sessions, respecting ethical boundaries and following up on assessments and review reports.

## 8. Respect Law

Mentors should be diligent in making recommendation that will not lead to a violation of legal rules or malpractice. Mentors should be careful about sharing or recommending legal or commercial loopholes. Mentors are not liable for their recommendations but EDP could consider it an ethical violation if mentee is recommended to break a rule or law based on mentorship session that will put EDP in a difficult position.

Secondary relationships that are derived out of mentorship sessions such as professional consultancy, angel investor, and business partnership are not covered by the ethical standards of EDP mentorship. Mentors and mentees are recommended to receive legal consultation in such situations.

## Mentor Key Skills

Mentorship is natural relationship type that is common in many contexts such as workplace, artisanship, management and academics. Informal relationships occur as an experienced peer feels the natural tendency to identify and feel responsible for younger inexperienced peer. Usually, older mentor will care for the younger peer and help them to develop. EDP will employ a formal mentorship where such relationship will be formed artificially through matching platform and hope for the relationship to blossom into an informal attachment that can go on for a long time.

There are several conceptualizations of mentorship. The definition that defines our approach to the programme is "Mentoring: a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or

experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé) (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007).” Definition does not hint at any age or demographic difference. It is the “perception” of having greater “relevant” knowledge, wisdom or experience. Independent of the age difference it is the gap of knowledge in the relevant field that gains more importance in time.

Kathy E Kram (1985) separates mentoring into two main functions: career functions and psychosocial functions. Career functions are composed of the consultation, coaching and network passed on from mentor as mentioned by Bozeman. It is dependent on the mentor’s industry experience, coaching skills and networks. Psychosocial support on the other hand is based on building trust, forming intimacy and developing a relationship. It is dependent on the emotional skills of the mentor.

Entrepreneurship support programme such as incubation and accelerator are increasingly utilizing formal mentoring programme in addition to formal entrepreneurship training programme. It is similar to training in a sense its primary goal is to improve the knowledge base of the entrepreneur. It relies on dyadic relationship unlike a lecture where information is delivered from top to bottom (group mentorship is also considered dyadic). Mentoring literature is moving towards a focus of a dyadic relationship where mutual benefit gains more importance (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997).

It takes a period of time for this exchange to occur. While consultant acts as formal advisors that deliver career development, mentor’s advice is dependent on the psychosocial relationship formed with the mentee. Mentorship is focused on passing of tacit knowledge rather than limited to personal development with a goal in coaching.

Mentoring plays an important role in helping new businesses succeed. Trainings can cover the basics of running a business. It relies on the development of repeated patterns of behaviour that formed managerial know how. However there are no training schemes that can cover all the possible routes to success in the business. Mentors can help guide through different routes success by sharing tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge can only be transferred through the special relationship built up between the mentor and the mentee.

Startup mentorship therefore melts coaching, consulting and sponsorship in one pot. Mentors with high specialisation can pass professional know how on to mentees in a process very similar to consulting. Mentors can coach mentees to perform better in business. Mentors may just informally underwrite a business and invest with their social capital to reach important contacts. All can happen within the same process of

mentorship. In order to understand what is more effective during mentorship, it's best to unbundle three key skills: consultancy, coaching and sponsorship.

### Consultancy Skill:

Mentor can act as a consultant. Consultancy is offered in the format of an insight from industry or technology. Mentor can also refer to a source of information, help to conduct literature review, provide access to data sets. Tacit knowledge is especially important to pass on. Tacit knowledge is information, skill and experience underlying a mentor that is difficult to formulate but can only show itself through a process. Consultancy does not necessarily require building a long period of relationship. Yet spending time with the mentee to understand their issues will surely help mentors be more effective. Mentees will look for a matching relevant experience with a convincing authority. Consultancy skills work to help mentees understanding their entrepreneurship process better. Entrepreneurs with intellectual curiosity, researcher tendencies and a good record keeping skills will make the most out of consultant.

**Example:** A mentor can share the experience of designing a chip that will run IOT (Internet of Things) applications and advantages/disadvantages of using an existing hardware.

### Coaching Skills:

Mentor acting as a coach. Typically, it involves changing the behaviour of the entrepreneur with milestones and ending goals. It requires the mentor to build a relationship and reach a level of trust and authority with the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs look up to role models when they pick their coaches. Mentees are focused on performance rather than knowledge. Entrepreneurs with high self-confidence, open-mindedness and will to act are likely to make the most of coaching sessions.

**Example:** Mentor chooses to coach the team in sales. Team has to keep a certain level of growth rate of customer base. Founders are coached to sell better.

### Sponsor Skills:

Mentor acting as a sponsor. Usually the mentor puts their reputation on the line by giving a reference and introduction to important contacts. This can be quite

damaging if the wrong type of entrepreneurs receive sponsorship. Entrepreneurs must be a figure with access to power rather than a role model to benefit from. It is based on sharing social capital. Entrepreneurs who are resourceful and outgoing will make the most of the sponsorship.

**Example:** Mentor directs the team to talk to a global investor who is interested in big data applications.

Often mentors use a mix of consulting, coaching and sponsoring. Assessment and mentorship programme design can direct how the mentor approaches to the entrepreneur. Generalist mentors are prone to utilize coaching and sponsoring more. Consulting gains more importance when the expertise of the mentor increases.

### Stages of Startups

The EDP mentorship programme is targeting entrepreneurs at an early stage who need the support of the mentor the most. Classifying entrepreneurs at the early stage of maturity is based on product maturity, market maturity and organizational maturity. The application form questions are based on understanding and evaluating the applicant to ensure high quality matching with mentors. Suggested classification includes stages below:

- **Idea Stage:** It is a no market no product no organisation stage performance entirely dependent on the performance of the mentee and its team.
- **Project Stage:** There is a project phase between idea and prototype. It doesn't reflect an improvement on product, market or organisation but it is an improvement on the conceptualisation of the idea. Also known as the business plan.
- **Prototype Stage:** No market some product some organisation maturity.
- **Early Commercial Stage:** Some market some product some organization maturity.
- **Mature Stage:** Mature market, mature product, mature organization stage.






 Idea Stage	 Project Stage	 Prototype Stage	 Early Commercial	 Mature Stage
No market	Improvement on the conceptualization	No market	Some market	Mature market
No product		Some product	Some product	Mature product
No Organization		Some organization	Some organization	Mature organization

Figure 1: Classification Stages

Startups begin with an entrepreneur exploring a business idea is the first phase of the startup lifecycle. (Some refer to the stage as latent stage) Referred as the idea stage, startup founders look for a business idea, search for resources, and attract team members. Once the idea is formed, entrepreneurs start developing their prototypes/services. Resources are spent and the capital is transformed into a commercial business. At this stage, the market confirms the commercial viability of the business.

Startup cycle is introduced by Geoffrey Moore in his book “Crossing the Chasm” (Moore G. , 1991). It takes Rogers diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 2003) concept and applies to commercialising technology startups. Innovator and early adopter customer segment are users of technology who are willing to pay more and take more risk in trying new technologies. Early majority and late majority are more risk averse customers who are looking for assurance in the quality of the product with more economic pricing expectations.

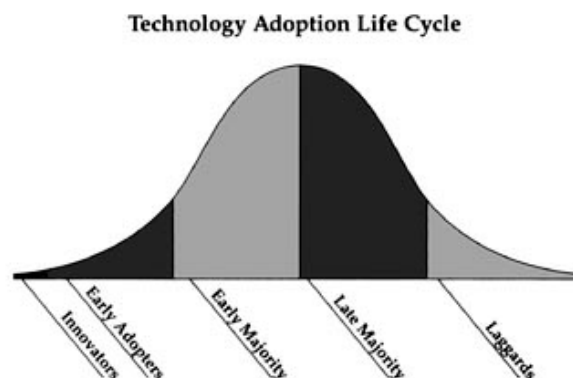
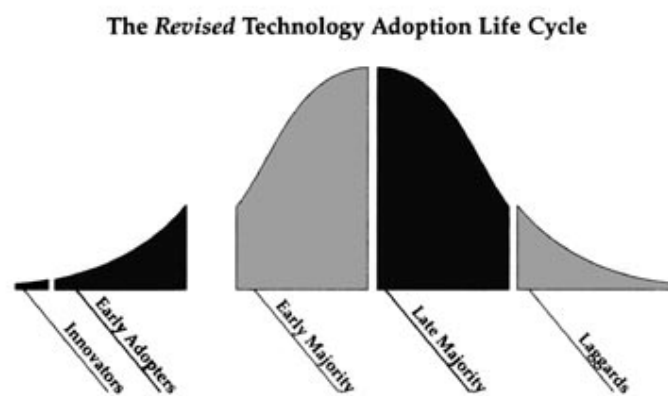


Figure 2: Technology Adoption Life Cycle

There is a phenomenon at this stage named as “Death Valley”. It is the stage between a completed prototype and the early commercialisation stage. In Moore’s conceptualisation, it is at the step after startup has reach early adopters and has problems in reaching the mainstream (early majority and late majority) customers (Moore G. , 1991) .During the Death Valley, startups have already spent up most of their startup capital. They are left with a prototype that has not reached its full technical or market potential. Their company or product has no track record feeding the insecurity of the buyers. Resources are very limited and certainly not enough to push for marketing. This is where a majority of startups in Ankara give up. Few push to continue financing their startups through consultancy businesses or grant programmes.



*Figure 3: The Revised Technology Adoption Cycle*

Business plans are executed if the startup survives “Death Valley” and manages to reach break-even point. The future of growth potential is understood once the business grows for 2-3 years into what we refer as maturity stage. At maturity stage, entrepreneurs look back to understand whether the business has grown or stayed flat. EDP is currently covering entrepreneurs at the idea stage to prototype stage.

Startups grow from ideation to prototype to early commercialisation to maturity stage. As mentees progress from one stage to another, habits and expectation keeps their inertia making it difficult for the mentee to adapt. Ideation stage entrepreneurs, as they move to the initial stages of prototyping, continue to ideate even though the impact of ideation is loosing its importance and execution becomes more important. Prototype focused mentees keep product improvement during early commercialisation stage even though resources and focus must be dedicated to sales. Mature startups keep their commercial inertia and would rather not take the risk of innovating because of the investment requirements.

## Scope of Business

Scope of business opportunity is also an important factor leading to different producing different challenges for mentors. Not all businesses are motivated to be growth oriented. Scope of the business will be clear in the initial assessment when the target market of the business is defined.

**Local scope:** business is usually a business identified to meet the demands of the local market in which the entrepreneur has discovered. A window of opportunity has opened to meet a demand in the local market in which the entrepreneur has to find a candidate product or service to commercialise. It is not growth oriented but rather would satisfy the survival budget of a micro SME: sometimes these businesses are called lifestyle businesses.

**Mentorship Review:** Local scope businesses usually do not choose to take a novel business model but rather apply an existing successful model. Mentor must help them to observe and understand why a business grows exponential in some market and stall in others. No business model should be copied directly but rather be adapted to local conditions. If the mentee chooses to start a business competing with local competitors, they will surely run into differentiation issues in which the mentor should help in developing a unique value proposition. Rather than taking on product risk, local scope entrepreneurs face business risk. Customer development takes priority.

**EDP Review:** Local scope business is usually entrepreneurs who are starting businesses out of necessity. Life style businesses are low growth businesses sustaining 1-10 staff usually based on service with low scalability opportunity. This does not necessarily mean they are low revenue (compare a simit house and gas station) EDP should not avoid lifestyle business. Instead, EDP can help them set the right business model and coach them to create value added services. There is no reason why a lifestyle business cannot transform into growth-oriented business. Yet it requires a lot of work in coaching to change the mindset and the habits. Often a family business with a new generation of owners can produce a fresh mindset to move the business into a competitive market. Investment activity in early stage among local service based businesses is quiet low.

**National scope:** National scope of business must be able to be scaled its service and production and have a unique value proposition. They have the potential to grow to into a small or medium business. Product must target a need that is common nationally with space to grow in the market despite of existing competition. Company must have the reputation and the network to reach to national market



growth. Product must have standard quality and process to achieve economic benefits for pragmatic mainstream customers.

***Mentorship Review:*** National business opportunity does have some innovative or competitive advantage over other businesses. Mentors must work closely with the founders to develop core competitive advantages in creating value. Mentees take on product and business risk altogether. Business must be able to grow and scale. This creates a problem of business complexity and target market choice in which mentors can share advice and insight for the mentees to make the best decision. Product development takes priority.

***EDP Review:*** National scope businesses start out in Ankara but have potentially grow into the national market. This is a sweet spot to mentor and support. The market is large enough to allow the startup to capture a beachhead market. The value is relevant nationwide so there is room for growth. Room for growth will allow enough profit to develop the business into a competitive market. Investment opportunities are active in early stage angel investment opportunities.

***International scope:*** Ambitious business ideas with innovation dimension. International scope businesses mostly rely on trading of goods (importing and exporting), technology (global technology transfer and applications), and manufacturing (joining international value chain). All require an exceptional level of human and financial capital. Their economic impact is high.

***Mentorship Review:*** Choosing a business model scope that is relevant internationally requires market and product risk management. Consultancy oriented mentors take importance to understanding the needs of a global market. Time to market is long and difficult with financing issues and quality barriers and challenges are faced along the way. Recruitment is difficult in these highly specialized sectors. Mentors should make the best to get entrepreneurs learn and develop globally competitive skills and knowledge. Team development takes priority.

***EDP Review:*** International scope businesses are mostly research and development startups, spin off from a traditional manufacturing or design business, trading of high quality commodities and components. They require high amounts of initial capital, veteran managers and international contacts. It is difficult to commercialize with restricting requirements but their economic impact can be high. Mentors who can help international scope businesses are hard to find.

In initial assessment session, trying to figure out the motivation and commitment level of the mentee is important. Scope of business they are seeking will directly

influence the challenges; they will face in developing idea and prototype stage. Business ideas also evolve in practice from local to national to international by adopting new practices.

## 1. Idea Stage

Idea Stage entrepreneurs are identified by the idea application submitted to EDP. They have ambiguous commitment to starting a business. Founders don't have a clear liability if they decide to quit the idea of starting a business. The applicant is battling with the idea of taking entrepreneurship as a top life priority. Idea Stage companies are mostly assessed on the potential of the team on discovering market opportunity and executing the business. Finding product market fit is one of the most important aspects of building a business model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). Performance is not visible; therefore, it is very difficult to benchmark. Key team potential factors are:

- **Execution:** commitment to developing idea and consistency in pursuing and developing an idea.
- **Capacity:** relevant knowledge and skill in developing business opportunity.
- **Team:** ability to work as team with diverse skills and show leadership and management potential.

The suggested way to start sessions is to focusing on the team and their underlying motivation. Motivation is strongly related to strength of the business idea. In some sense, nascent entrepreneurs are more motivated if the strength of the business idea is internalised. You can help them by coaching them into validating their business.

Any concept of an idea whether it is in business model canvas or business plan or a sketch is considered within an idea stage. It is highly recommended for entrepreneurs to spend time exploring their concepts before writing a business plan. Most entrepreneurs resist changing or pivoting their original ideas once they reach feasibility stage.

**Entrepreneurship Culture:** Young entrepreneurs in Turkey hold a variety of attitudes on starting new businesses. According to a recent analysis into entrepreneurship culture in Turkey conducted by Intel (Future Bright, 2016) and ranked by share of distribution:

- Being proactive and pursuing opportunities (Opportunity Seekers)
- Having your own business (Autonomy)
- Own a job (Compulsory Entrepreneurship)
- Working at a dream job (Visionary)

New undergraduates tend to be more idealistic, looking for ways to apply their new knowledge in business but lacking execution skills. (Visionary) They are dominantly product and service oriented. Early professionals have more practice in execution and tend to spot business opportunities better. (Opportunity seekers.) They are mostly customer oriented. Their desire for autonomy is only reached with an economic safety, (an age group likely to be around 35). They are market oriented. In some cases, there is a job turnover in which case the entrepreneur is forced to start a business to tackle unemployment (compulsory entrepreneurship). These profiles usually depend on their skills and they look for ideas where they can commercially utilise them.

Underlying influencers in the Turkish entrepreneurship culture in Turkey relies on economic security, risk averseness and competence level. Internal locus of control, the person's belief that events are under the control of the person, is a strong determinant in risk averseness. Turkish university student internal locus of control is highly correlated with their entrepreneurial intentions (Şenen, 2013). Self-efficacy is the highest correlated entrepreneurial intention: Entrepreneur's perception of competence level (Şenen, 2013). Security and workload factors weighed negatively with entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Turkey (Gurbuz & Aykol, 2008). Some young graduates of family businesses can handle more risk backed up by economic security. Having entrepreneurial parents also has a positive relationship (Gurbuz & Aykol, 2008). Personality factors weighed significantly as a stronger determinant than environmental factors (Şenen, 2013).

Academic profiles can have unique vision based on their own perceptions, however, they also have competing goals with their other commitments. Strengths outlined in the situational analysis highlighted academic capacity as one of the unique strengths of Ankara. Academic businesses have high technology potential but with particular challenges in commercialization. High technology requires focused customer segment and extra patience in commercialization, which due to variety of commitments academic founders have, trouble to sustain. High technology also requires abundance of capital to pass development hurdles that is also dependent on customer acquisition or grants in Turkey and abroad. Technology transfer offices in host universities are working hard to fulfil the role of commercial matchmakers.

The startup ecosystem in Ankara has been a supportive community. Grant programme reduce the concerns for economic security. Development and maker communities help entrepreneurs to share competence and know how between each other. Startup competitions help entrepreneurs practice their ideas and improve their visions. The weakness of the Ankara ecosystem is lack of fuel in opportunity

seeking. While most of the ecosystem is keen on building prototypes establishing commercial connections is weak.

Mentors should focus their efforts into helping entrepreneurs to think about commercialisation early on (Early product market fit). The Ankara entrepreneurship culture must have more opportunity seekers. Mentoring them and sharing business network will help them gain a commercial attitude.

**Primary role of EDP Mentors:** Help Idea Stage Entrepreneurs discover a valuable market opportunity through validating team, product, customer, and market information.

**Performance Markers:** The number of market, product, customer, team validations completed. Validation occurs when an entrepreneur tests out assumptions by experimenting, collecting data, conducting customer interviews or recruiting team members. Through the validation process, entrepreneur may discover that assumptions are invalidated in which the business idea requirement will be forced to change. Such change is welcomed because that is how the business idea will develop. In some cases, validation will force the entrepreneur to make a major change in the business model. This is called a “pivot” (Ries, 2011) where the evidence collected will push the entrepreneur to rebuild the business model holistically rather than incremental adjustments.

***Biases to watch out for;***

- Overconfidence in skills: Business requires a solid level of skill and knowledge that the founder does not possess but is positive that they can learn and adopt.
- Quick reach to conclusion: Founders have not tested some of their hypotheses.
- Under the effect of popular market signals: Founders are chasing market signals that are mature and difficult to compete.
- Idea fanaticism: Founder is obsessed with initial idea but won't pivot.
- Scope too grand to implement: To excite stakeholders founders are inflating the scope of value the product has to offer
- Scope too tight to market: To avoid competition founders are over focusing in a particular segment.
- Trophy hunting: Attending competitions and programmes but concept has not moved on.

**EDP Review:** Idea stage entrepreneurs require substantial filtering in the initial application phase. Validation process tests the commitment of entrepreneurs.

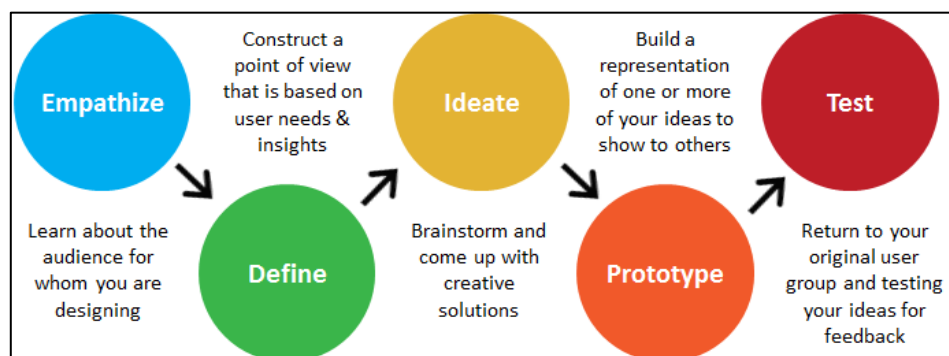
Expect a lot of drops from the programme. It is advised to try matching with coaching oriented mentors. Most ideas will be underdeveloped due to weak research. Don't waste your valuable specialist mentors time if you think the same insight can be gained through coaching mentees to research. Idea stages typically require seed funding of 30-50k TL to test their ideas. There are almost no angel investors who invest in the idea stage in Turkey unless for overlapping personal interest or enthusiasm for the founder. Crowd funding is also an interesting method for fundraising for proof of concept. It has a double advantage: receiving preorders, and raising funds to build the prototype.

**Mentorship review:** Idea stage mentorship requires a coaching oriented approach with a surrounding network of consultant-oriented mentors to help validating. A fully committed entrepreneur must be able to validate a new dimension every week. A semi committed entrepreneur takes two weeks on average to improve the business model. Team dynamics are fluid as new founders come and leave; therefore, making it difficult to run a team focused mentorship. In some cases, entrepreneurs exhaust innovative business ideas. Just like a writer block, they have trouble thinking creatively. This is a signal of lack of depth in technical and market insights. Mentors should push them to research more. As more insights are uncovered, the likelihood of forming new relationships and patterns between insights increases. In other words, the chance of creativity increases as the depth of knowledge increases discovering solutions once unthinkable.

### **Common tools used**

### **Design Thinking Approach**

(Brown & Katz, 2009) can be used to improve the ideation of the product design.



*Figure 4: Design Thinking Approach*

### **Concept-Knowledge Design**

(Hatchuel & Weil, 2009) approach for developing creative business ideas.

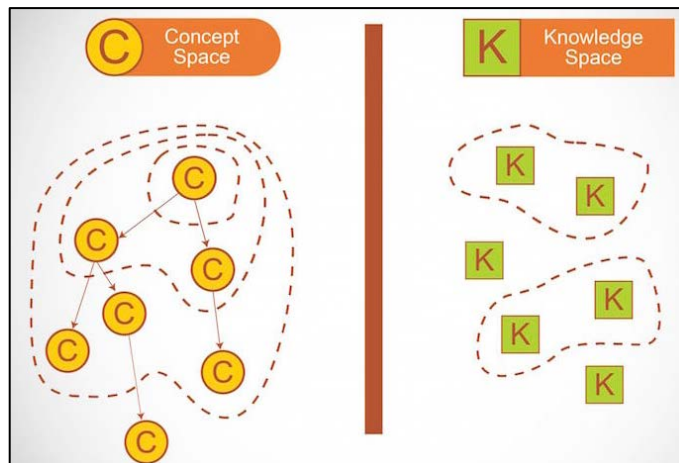


Figure 5: Concept – Knowledge Design

### Value Proposition Design

(Osterwalder, Pigneur, Bernarda, Smith, & Papadakos, 2014) approach can be used to improve customer segmentation.

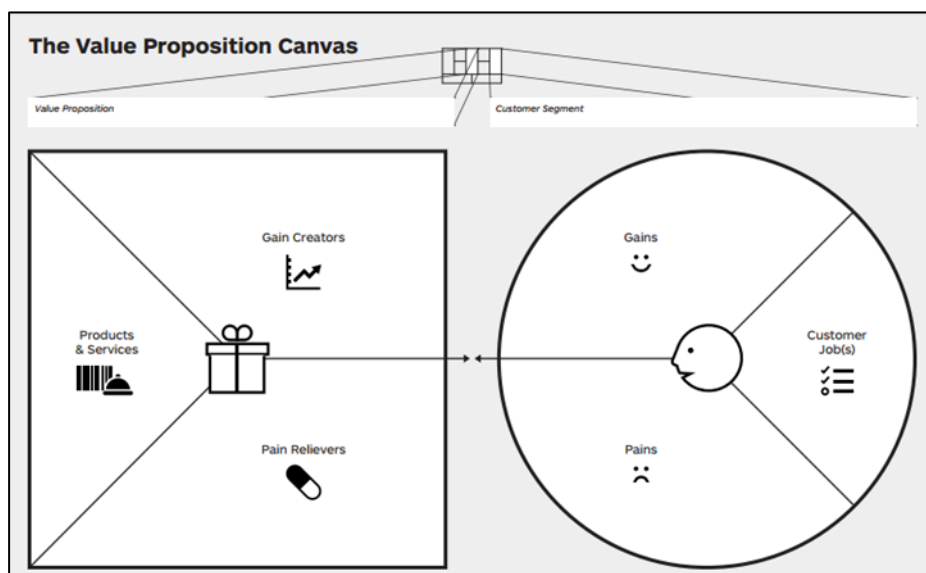


Figure 6: The Value Proposition Canvas

### Business Model Canvas

(Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) approach can be used to brainstorm on the type of business model to implement.

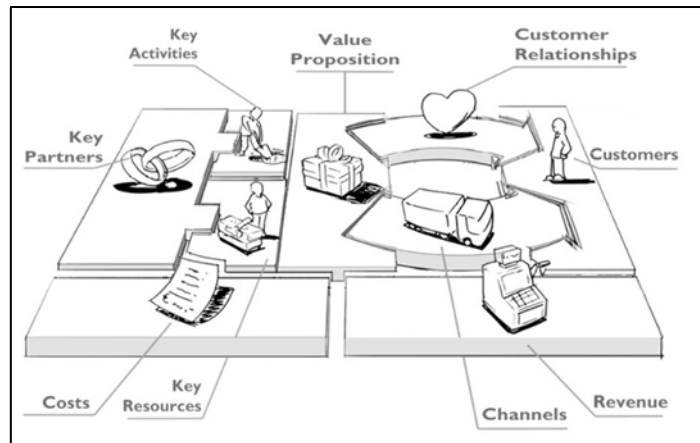


Figure 7: Business Model Canvas

## Business Plan

Business Plan is generally a project management (PMI) approach can be used in helping entrepreneurs think about feasibility and implementation.

## Evaluating Idea Stage Entrepreneurs

Idea stage entrepreneurs should be rated based on:

- **Idea**  
 Real: Problem Solution Fit. Can the product actually be built?  
 Worth it: Is the idea unique? Does it have commercial potential?
- **Team**  
 How committed is the team? Can they offer full time or part time commitment?
- **Depth**  
 Does the team have relevant proven skills or knowledge that would get the idea working?
- **Diversity**  
 Does the diversity of skills and knowledge cover the idea?

## 2. Prototyping Stage

Mentees who are in the process of setting up their businesses or developing their product are in the prototyping stage. Mentees by then must have completed their business models/plans, validated various aspects of their business model/plan and finally reached decision among founders on the direction to take. Often founders form their new company. In rare cases, they decide to build their prototype

informally to avoid legal costs. Company registration is a sign of legal liability; therefore, mentors should see it as a sign of commitment. As the business process has started, it will require funding. The funds raised will also set the limits on the scope of the business to start off with.

## **Entrepreneurship Culture**

Building a prototype requires two key resources:

- ***Startup funds to purchase supplies and infrastructure:*** Grant programme in seed funding are the primary source of funds for most entrepreneurs.
- ***Talent and skills to build it:*** Access to human resource with the capability to build the prototype and reasonable conditions to join a startup.

Ankara has an abundant number of laboratories, workshops, suppliers, and prototyping facilities. The primary challenge is all the prototyping facilities are controlled by type of institution (university) or a private company that requires key contacts to access resources. Unless the founder is connected to the industry or the university, they end up using their resources to rebuild the same infrastructure.

Mentors can help entrepreneurs to reach key contacts that will make their resources accessible to entrepreneurs. It is important to be careful in picking entrepreneurs and recommending them to contacts. If the favour is not utilised or harm is done while the resources are being used, the key contact will lose their appetite when new time you ask for a favour.

Grant programmes enforce a project cycle that is defined by the programme requirements. Most entrepreneurs in grant programmes follow their programme defined project cycles. This eventually inflates their time to market and cause them to miss the window of opportunity. Ankara entrepreneurs are notorious for relying on grants to build over complicated products and have trouble in selling them in the Turkish market.

In case of working with a grant recipient, it is important to be aware of the fact that project cycles do not have to match business operations. Help entrepreneurs separate business cycles and project cycles. Get them to learn about concept development, rapid prototyping. Grant programmes expect few commercial prototypes. A successful early prototype often requires 10-15 prototypes until the value proposition is discovered. Given the funds are limited, helping them to figure out how to build cheap prototypes is a must.



There are entrepreneurs in industries with prohibitively high barriers to entry such as defence, medical, transportation. Their time to market is defined by their access to quality tests, ethic committees, and bureaucratic approvals. These costs are often ignored in feasibility planning. Assist your entrepreneurs to discover barriers to the market and prepare their budget planning accordingly. In case of being a seasoned member of the market, it would be crucially important to share the timetable and costs involved for getting products approved.

**Primary role of EDP Mentors:** Help Prototype Stage Entrepreneurs complete their minimum viable product and test in the market for commercial potential.

**Performance Markers:** Technology Readiness Level phases passed. Project milestones completed. The entrepreneur defines project milestones. In some cases, entrepreneurs don't have a feasibility or project plan; helping them to draft one. Timing is very important in fulfilling a business opportunity. The conditions that create a window of opportunity might pass once the product is completed. Entrepreneurs must manage time and resources to capture the window of opportunity.

**Mentorship review:** Mentors should help them in effective management of their resources by identifying key development requirements that lead to value in customer or competitive advantage in the market and point to sources of fund and develop their fundraising skills. Work in building the product will be either be handled by the founder or assigned to a key supplier. The quality and effectiveness of the work handled by the founder is dependent on the commitment and the depth of knowledge and skill of the entrepreneur. Consultant mentors will be needed more to improve the depth of the founder. In the work packages assigned for outside supplier, know who becomes more important than know how. In such cases, sponsor oriented mentors will be more effective.

**Biases to watch out for:**

- **Project creep:** Entrepreneur is changing requirements; thus, causing the project to be delayed indefinitely.
- **Funding through sales:** Entrepreneur tries to finance the prototype with a commercial product; thus, losing focus.
- **One-man show:** Obsessed with quality entrepreneur refuses to collaborate with potential supplier and decides to build every piece on their own.
- **Minimum product:** Launch of a product that has minimum requirements but no viability. Immature launch that causes problems and issues with customers that will influence the reputation of the company.

- **Common Tools:** Project Management Frameworks, Rapid Prototyping Tools, Simulations

**EDP Review:** Prototype phase startups should continue their engagements with potential customers. An early pilot or launch can have great benefits in avoiding the death valley when the funds are depleted. EDP should focus on bringing all three types of mentors into play. Coaching mentors to help them with execution, specialist mentors to pass on tacit knowledge in building and marketing the product and sponsor mentors to unlock resources. Turkish angel investors will typically wait until commercialization phase to invest. If the product happens to have an IP potential investment could occur at prototype stage.

### ***Evaluating Prototype Stage Entrepreneurs***

Mentees at the prototype stage are rated on four dimensions. This is to filter weak or not so serious applicants from the pool:

- Product Maturity
- Market Maturity
- Customer Maturity
- Team Maturity

Mentors should not expect an all star rating on all dimensions. In fact, such teams are increasingly rare to find. What is important to have one dimension with sufficient maturity that the mentor can start with to improve other dimensions.

Almost all startup programmes rely on team maturity more than product, market or customer maturity. Performance depends on the team. A weak team will not be able to organise or can be coached with difficulty in improving ideas. A strong team can receive mentorship to improve other dimensions.

### **3. Early commercialization Stage**

The entrepreneur has a company with a completed product or service with revenue that can support a maximum 3 staffs. Early commercialisation companies battle with improving the quality of a product, trying to gain market credibility, improving revenue, finding staff and finance for their companies. They are trying to survive in what the industry calls as the “death valley”. It’s when the company has exhausted their startup capital and are still in the early phases of increasing revenue.

**Primary role of EDP Mentors:** Help Early Commercialisation Stage companies reach a commercial maturity that can accumulate enough capital to support 3 staff for at least a year only through selling products and services that are part of the intended business model.

**Performance Markers:** Sales Funnel KPIs completed.

- Number of leads
- Number of prospects
- Number of customers
- Number of satisfied customers
- Reference sales

**Biases to watch out for:**

- **Delaying commercialisation:** Company delays commercialisation due to lack of confidence in product.
- **Lack of communication with customers:** Entrepreneurs over promise product offers to customers often failing to meet them or spends a huge budget.
- **Weak negotiation:** Selling product for low price or giving free trials.
- **Weak follow up:** Entrepreneurs fail to follow up with customer complaints.

**EDP review:** Early commercialization startups are in the radar of angel investors, VCs, micro VCs. They will be interested in seeing financial and sales performance and a vision of a business model that can scale and compete in the future. Achieving financial and commercial success require strong managerial and leadership skills. Not all founders and inventors are great managers. Involving mentors as advisors can complement lack of managerial skills. EDP should employ coaching mentors to push for increasing sales and have specialist mentors occasionally to offer credibility.

**Mentorship review:** Sponsorship oriented mentors are increasingly effective as team is looking for a strong advisor to offer credibility to the business. Coaching approach in the sales funnel is also effective to get the team focused on improving traction. In markets with frustratingly high barriers to entry such as medical or defence sector, process oriented specialist mentors (ministry of health or defence) could be useful.

**Common Tools:** Growth Hacking can be used for early acquisition of users. Sales Funnel KPIs can be used for disciplined sales.

**Evaluation of Early Stage Entrepreneurs:**

Type of information requested:

- Value Proposition
- Management Team
- Financial Forecasts
- Human Resources
- Production Capacity
- Go to Market Plan

Early stage entrepreneurs are a question mark due to their short duration of track record in the market. Value Proposition, Production Capacity and Human Resources information defines their capacity for growth. Marketing Plan and Financial Forecasts identify the future expectation and positioning of the company. Management Team defines the leadership. Based on capacity for growth, positioning and leadership EDP can identify mentors that can help mentees most effectively.

#### 4. Mature Stage

An SME Company is looking for growth potential. They could be a company of 2-5 years old with an average employee size of 3 to 30. A business model is being executed. There is an active commercial product or service in the market. Company is looking for investment to grow. Market pressures the company to gain competitive advantage.

**Primary role of EDP Mentors:** Help Mature Stage Entrepreneurs increase innovation capacity by incubating an innovative business model and transform their business.

**Performance Markers:** Candidate business model versions generated, ROI on the implementation of the innovation capacity and funding attracted.

**Biases to watch out for:**

- **Business Inertia:** Entrepreneur refuses to modify a business that is losing profitability but keeps generating cash.
- **Stifling Shareholders:** May have complex decision-making procedures due to ineffective shareholder involvement. This is especially visible in family business.
- **Leadership over involvement:** Leadership interferes with process making it impossible to standardise and externalise.
- **Chasing whales:** Obsessively looking for large tenders or becoming over dependent on one client.
- **Hiring mistakes:** Hiring relatives and close friends, thus, bloating the company with inefficient employees.

### ***Common Tools:***

- BCG Growth-Share Matrix
- Zone Methodology (Moore G. , 2015)

***Entrepreneurship Culture:*** Ankara hosts many mature level startups with a steady cash flow mostly from a subcontractor business, project based or consultancy based businesses. Subcontractor business does not scale in the long run because the client traps the company at a certain income level and builds restrictions and dependencies. Project based and consultancy based businesses do not have a repeatable sustainable revenue. Consultancy, project participation and subcontractor work are useful at the early stage of commercialisation for building skills and capacity. These companies despite of their strong revenues are out of scope for many investors who are looking for a company with a scalable and repeatable business model.

***EDP Review:*** EDP can help mature companies attract investment by helping their businesses transform by gaining scalability and unique value proposition. The advantage of working with a mature company is that it relies on its mature reputation, skill, capacity and capital. EDP can increase investment capacity by improving and motivating mature businesses to adopt innovative and growth oriented models.

### ***Mentorship Review***

***Ideation:*** Coaching oriented mentors can help mature SMEs to brainstorm candidates for new business models, product ideas and services. Brainstorming process is the same validation process involved in idea stage companies. They can also be effective in coming to a decision at the idea stage. Consultant oriented mentors can provide insight.

***Transformation:*** Business coach oriented mentors are required to help the company implement the business idea in transforming their current business.

***Investment:*** Sponsor oriented mentors may help in networking with investors and securing funding to finance the transformation.

### **Evaluating Mature Stage Entrepreneurs**

Evaluation Criteria:

- Product and Service Portfolio
- Sales Performance

- Financial Performance
- Partnerships and Legal Structure
- Leadership and Organisation
- Market Information
- Level of Internationalisation (Import and Export)

These criteria are useful to understand and assess the current maturity level of the startups. Sales and Financial performance is a strong indicator of growth orientation. Product Portfolio, Market Information and Level of Internationalisation show the scope of the business (local, national, international) and their strategic approaches to the market. Leadership, organisational structure, legal and partnership show the company and team and their execution structures. Growth orientation, Scope of Business and Execution Structure are the main criteria that will help EDP to match with mentor pool. For example, high growth orientation with international scope and a team of high tech research need for mentors is going to be different from a low growth orientation local SME with family business managerial structure.

### **Startup Lifecycle in Transition**

Startups grow from ideation to prototype to early commercialisation to maturity stage. Once entrepreneurs complete a phase of development, new challenges developing forcing them to drop old habits and adopt new attitudes to solving and managing problems. Ideation stage entrepreneurs, as they move to initial stages of prototyping, continue to ideate even though the impact of ideation is losing its importance and execution becomes more important. Prototype focused mentees keep product improvement during early commercialisation stage even though resources and focus must be dedicated to sales. Mature startups keep their commercial inertia and would rather not take the risk of innovating because of its investment requirements.

#### **Mentorship review**

Coaching approach is important in getting the mentee to phase out current habits and replace them with new required ones for start-ups in transition.

### **Matching System for Mentors and Start ups**

The matching process is one of the most important functions of a formal mentorship programme (Eby & Lockwood, 2005). A mismatch decreases the life of the relationship. Giving decision power in matchmaking does not necessarily help mentors and mentees. Factors affecting the success rate of matching criteria

according to (Chao, 2009) are: “a) recruiting a large and diverse pool of mentors to accommodate different mentor strengths and needs, b) collecting specific information on mentor strengths and needs, c) understanding an individual’s priorities in matching criteria and reviewing by participants of potential mentoring partners”. Chao also recommends that a tracking mentee needs to target the campaign to attract more mentors. Matching criteria must also be priority criteria on both mentor and the mentee. EDP will collect and match profiles to ensure criteria match.

Initial assessment session is when mentor and mentee meet to form a relationship and see if the “chemistry” works. Initial assessment and the roadmap are designed to highlight common priority criteria. If mentor and mentee are unhappy in the initial assessment session, they can ask for re-match. EDP will not allow both parties to pick their preferences as highlighted by Chao; such freedom opens the door for satisfaction when their choices are unavailable or drop out of the programme.

“Individuals who are coerced or pressured to volunteer for a mentoring programme are likely to drop out, regardless of the match. The motivation and commitment required for a successful mentorship can be enhanced with good training and programme support. Training can include a clear description of the programme’s objectives and concrete steps to initiate, build, and maintain the relationship.” (Chao, 2009) Mentees or mentors should not be forced to join a programme if it is likely that it will influence the effectiveness of the sessions. EDP ethics code clearly protects from such coercion due to its destructive nature in session. Instead, EDP will start every programme with an orientation and a guideline and support the process with organisational support.

Key information to collect for mentees is

- Demographic information: Age influences the role model factor of mentors
- Team size: Useful in identifying startup phase
- Tech/product field and maturity: Useful in identifying startup phase
- Target market field: Important for industry matching
- Commercial maturity: Useful in identifying startup phase.

Based on given information EDP can decide on the startup lifecycle of the company.

Information to collect for mentors are:

- **Demographic information:** Age influences the role model factor of mentors
- **Job experience:** Job experience is an important factor in the commitment of the mentee.
- **Entrepreneurship experience:** Influencing factor in career development.
- **Relevant technology/industry:** Influencing factor in career development.
- **Special interest:** Topics that can be covered in building social bonds

- **Level of commitment:** Availability, flexibility in conducting sessions

Information may be collected through online forms and phone interviews to speed up the process.

### Determining the stage of startup

Based on the short questionnaire given with the application stage of the startup can be determined. Stage of the startup is important in matching the applicant with the right mentor program. Only Master grader fills the evaluation form for the stage of startups. While yes and no are clear responses if the application form does not indicate a clear direction for the criteria Master Grader will mark as “No”. In the evaluation table “Not a Determinant” refers to criteria is eligible whether the answer given is yes or no. For example if the applicant has a clear business model and ready to start building a prototype it is not important for the reviewer whether they are registered as a company or not. Yet if the business idea is unclear it is important for the reviewer to understand that there is no registered company and they applicant is not partner in an established company to avoid the confusion what the applicant is representing.

	Idea	Prototype	Early Commercial	Mature
Clear Business Idea	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Business Model	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Registered Company	No	Not a determinant	Yes	Yes
Partnership in an established company	No	Not a determinant	Not a determinant	Not a determinant
Proof of Concept	No	No	Yes	Yes
Mock-up	No	No	Yes	Yes
Working Prototype	No	No	Yes	Yes
Company with sales based on consulting/services	No	Not a determinant	Not a determinant	Yes
Company with target technology product based sales	No	No	No	Yes
Company only partners	No	Yes	Not a determinant	No
Company size 1-10 employees	No	Not a determinant	Yes	No
Company size 10-30	No	No	No	Yes
Company size more than 30	No	No	No	Yes



## Mentee Application Scorecard

### Problem-Solution fit strength (0-5)

#### Signals :

- Proven: Proof of sales in the target customer group (5)
- Strong : Customer vocal about the exact problem (4)
- Medium : Customer need is derived through a real life scenario (2-3)
- Low: Customer need is assumed. (1)
- None: No clear description of problem solution fit (0)

### Team background strength (0-5)

#### Signals:

- Proven: Team has a proven track record of business success. (5)
- Strong : Team has +5 experience in the business and tech domain. (4)
- Medium : Team has +5 experience in either business or tech domain. (2-3)
- Low : Team has entry level experience in business/tech domain. (1)
- None: No description of team background (0)

### Competitive Advantage strength (0-5)

#### Signals:

- Proven: (5) Company has a locked customer and licensed technology.
- Strong: Product has IP potential or team has key contact in the market. (4)
- Medium: Product has a novel feature comparing to customers or team has access to market advantage (2-3)
- Low: Product has no significant difference between close competitors. (1)
- None: No description of competitive advantage (0)

### Funding to start (0-5)

#### Signals:

- Proven: (5): Project is fully funded with company revenues.
- Strong : Project is fully funded to complete MVP (4)
- Medium : Project can start and run at least to %50 of the project plan. (2-3)
- Low: Project needs funds to start developing the products (1)
- None : Team needs funds to survive (0)

### Commercial strength: (0-5)

#### Signals:

- Proven: (5) More than average sales record.
- Strong : Window of opportunity is long and durable. (4)
- Medium : Window of opportunity is a hype that might last for few years. (2-3)
- Low : Market opportunity is already mature. (1)
- None : No market description (0)

## Evaluation Strategy

Evaluations need to be scored with minimum 2 graders and 1 master grader. Graders can be picked from a pool of graders or external experts can be invited for help. Master Graders is fixed and is a member of Ankara Development Agency and an active member of the EDC. Graders do not discuss scores among themselves. Once

scores are submitted master grader collects scores and calculates. Total Score is the total average off all the sub scores.

Master grader checks for a discrepancy between grader scores. If there is 1 point difference (for example Grader: 0.3, Master Grader: 1.5, Grader3: 0.8) master grader will mark as “dispute”. Each graders score are also added to give Final Score. Applications are ranked based on their Final Scores from the highest grade to the lowest.

**Disputed Candidates:** Grader1, Grader2 and Master Grader hold a meeting to discuss disputed candidates. Grader who has scored high starts and makes their justification. Grader with the lowest score makes their justification. Together they make a decision to downgrade the highscore by 0.5 or to upgrade the lowscore by 0.5.

**Elimination Pool:** If the final score is between 0-1 mentee applications is underprepared to join the mentor program. Candidates are directed to program requirements and the information center on the EDC web portal.

**Pending Pool:** Average Score is between 1-2. In this case EDC will rank this pool by dividing the sub scores for each graders and marking applications with a sub score of more than 4. Although rare there are applications with one strong dimension and overall low score which can potentially improve with mentor program. Marked application will be kept in the pending pool. Rest will move back to elimination.

**Eligible Pool:** Average Score is between 4-5 are eligible for the program. Applicants with a score with more than 4.5 will be marked as star applicants. These are highly engaged and challenging applicants will require mentors with a stronger background for the session to run.

Once the grading is completed there must be 4 final classifications:

- Star applicants
- Eligible applicants
- Pending applicants
- Eliminated applicants

EDC will pick the batch of applications to run the mentor program. A good strategy is to run the program in batches of 20. Overloading the batch will complicate the matching process and also making the costly to run the coordination of the mentorship process.

A common mistake is the run batch based on star applicants. Good candidates will be exhausted in the first batch. Following batches will be more challenging. Final batch will be toughest. This will create an uneven effectiveness outcome throughout the program usually perceived negative by the stakeholders.

Best approach is to hold a portfolio of applicants. 4 Star applicants 12 Eligible applicants 4 pending applicants is a good ratio. EDC can change the ratio depending

on the overall quality level of the applicants and the mentor pool. Objective is to have the most effective mentor matching therefore the composition of the applicant portfolio must match the current mentor pool.

### **Mentor Scorecard Criteria**

A Master Grader will evaluate mentor applications. Master grader will be a member of EDC. Master Grader will filter and classify mentor applications based on the following criteria's:

- Knowledge Assets: Minimum eligibility requirement is 5 years in the relevant industry
- Network Assets: Minimum eligibility requirement is 5 years in the relevant field or a valid trained mentor certification
- Relationship Assets: Not blacklisted by EDC through previous session reports.
- Technical Assets: A membership to a professional body (PMI for project managers, Certification by Accountants, membership to bar association for legal)
- A clean record in the background check for criminal offense.

Candidate must meet the minimum eligibility requirement for at least one of the listed assets.

Candidates that do not fit the eligibility criterias are informed of their elimination status and kept on record until candidate decides to apply again if a change occurs in their background.

**Primary factors (Knowledge assets):** Knowledge assets cover the industry experience and focus of mentors and mentees. The career support function of mentorship mostly depends on the knowledge assets shared by mentors and mentees. These can be listed as follow:

- Relevancy of working experience in product line, market, technology field.
- Professional/entrepreneurial/business experience in the relevant field.

**Secondary factors (Network assets):** Network assets cover the development network effect that influences the range of mentorship the mentee can receive from the mentor. These can be listed as follow:

- Relevancy of contacts in product line, market, technology field.
- Membership to professional bodies / mentor networks / angel investment networks.

- Working experience in TTO/ Incubation / Acceleration programme with a network of mentors.

**Tertiary factors (Relationship assets):** Relationship assets cover potential role model function of mentorship.

- Common interests, attended same college, attended same type of faculty.
- These factors are also important so as to build a positive relationship / rapport with the entrepreneur. Mentors utilizing role model to figure out leverage behaviour.

**Technical matching:** Technical mentors with specific skills (accounting, legal, branding, engineering) can be matched without a primary, secondary or tertiary but on the basis of the specific needs identified in the assessment phase.

Each mentor may take up to several mentees in parallel or consecutively, with each mentor process having an agreed time-scale between mentor and mentee of between 6 to 10 weeks. Mentees may also match more than one person as the lead-mentee, but the lead-mentee can bring to the mentoring meeting other colleagues or co-founders of the project or venture. However, the lead-mentee has to remain the same and is responsible for the outcome of the mentorship session.

EDP will match mentors and mentees. Entrepreneurs will be listed on a spread sheet with three columns primary/secondary/tertiary traits. They are ranked based on their business strength score given by EDP.

Primary criteria strength is the specialisation, the industry depth of the mentor based on the years spent in the relevant industry. Secondary criteria strength is the proved range of network, generalist skills of a mentor whether it is a mentor training certification or skills in running an entrepreneurship support program or affiliation with a business organisation. Tertiary skills is the psychosocial skills which are based on previous session scores and the common expectation between mentor and the entrepreneur.

Starting from the top, entrepreneurs will be matched with mentors based on the primary factors. "Strength" of matching will be based on the depth (number of years) of relevant experience times the product score and market potential score added. Therefore, a higher-scored mentees will be matched the deeper experienced mentor in the primary factors. This is to ensure weak or ambiguous business plans are matched with a more generalist mentor profile and strong business models are

matched with slightly less specialised mentors where the discussion can be centred on common product/market knowledge.

EDP will move on to the secondary factors and tertiary factors if the primary factors of mentors with certain mentees do not match. The “Strength” of secondary factors will be based on number of active years in the relevant network/sector times the product score and market score added. If there are no matching secondary factors, finally, an EDP evaluator can review the tertiary factors to make the final matching, or consider waiting to match those mentees with new Mentors at a later date who fulfil the primary or secondary factors.

EDP may find no adequate results based on the primary, secondary or even tertiary factors. In such cases, EDP may match based on reviewer judgment or wait to match at a later date. Mentors may review their mentee candidates and declare their preferences among several of them. If considered adequately qualified and justified by the EDP reviewer, they will try to suit the wishes of the Mentor, based on primary, secondary or tertiary factors.

Mentors with start-up experience in the same technology field with the entrepreneur will likely result in a strong role model relationship improving the impact of coaching. Consultant with technology overlap has a high effectiveness in the prototype stage where as with a market overlap will be effective in the early stage. Sponsors must have a powerful position in the industry in comparison to startups in order to leverage their contacts.

### Matching Process

Master graders form a committee of at least 2 more members to start the matching process.

**1-Rank and Classify Entrepreneurs:** Entrepreneurs are ranked based on their “Total Business Strength Score”

Starting with Star classification (Score higher than 4.5) entrepreneurs are matched based on their primary criteria.

**2-)Match Star Entrepreneurs based on Primary Criteria:** Master grader will initially list overlapping industries. Based on the overlapping industry highest Mentor Strength Score will match with the highest scored Entrepreneur.

So if your top business team scored 4.7 is in working in IOT for automating building HVAC then grader will search for a mentor in the field of wireless communicating devices or someone in the field of managing HVAC in commercial buildings. If found more than one candidate grader will look for industry depth (number of years)

**3-)Match remaining Star Entrepreneurs on Secondary Criteria** Once all entrepreneurs are matched with a mentor, master grader will return to the list to check if there are any unmatched candidates. If there are master grader will check for candidates based on secondary traits (network assets)

Secondary traits will match the phase of start-up with the network of the mentor. Master grader will match mentor and entrepreneurs based on their network. While affiliation with professional bodies will be matched with the target sector of the entrepreneur for “entrepreneur support experience” master grader can use the following classification:

**Idea Stage** – Any program with an experience in supporting idea stage entrepreneurs: Incubation Center, TTO, Hackathons, Design Thinking Workshops

**Project/Prototype Stage** – Any program providing support and advise to project and prototype stage entrepreneurs--Pre Accelerator Programs, TTO, Intrapreneurship Programs

**Early Commercialisation:** Any program that can provide help to early commercialise early stage companies – Accelerator Program, Angel Investor Networks, TTO, Corporate Venture Program, Business Development Agencies

**Mature—** Any program that supports mature startups - Business Coaching, TTO, Advisory Services, Venture Capital

Master grader will also note any applications with valid mentorship training certification such as TÜBİTAK affiliated programs and GCIP. EDC may choose to offer to run its own mentorship training programs to increase its pool in the future.

**4-) Match “Star Entrepreneurs” remaining on Tertiary Criteria:** Master grader will check all applicants and if there are still entrepreneurs remaining unmatched will move to tertiary factors. In tertiary factors mentors are matched based on common interest, school and a positive score from previous sessions. If entrepreneurs are still unmatched remaining pool will be matched based on mentor high total score with no regard to matching criteria.

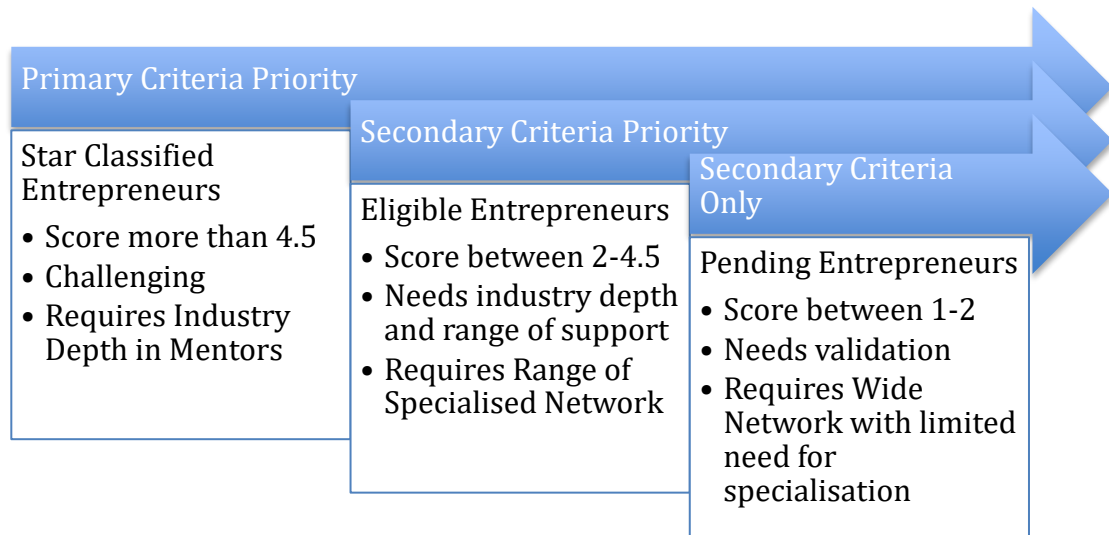
**5-)Match “Eligible Entrepreneurs”:** Master grader will rank all outstanding eligible entrepreneurs based on their business strength score. Starting from the top mentor and entrepreneurs will be matched running the same process of “star entrepreneurs” based on initial primary matching followed by secondary and tertiary criteria highest entrepreneur score matching the highest mentor score.

**6-)Match “Pending Entrepreneurs”:** Master grader will rank outstanding pending entrepreneurs based on secondary matching criteria only. If there are no remaining mentors then master grader will match entrepreneurs based on tertiary criteria.

Once mentors and mentees are matched Mentor Coordinator will send a request to both sides to schedule a time to meet. Mentor or entrepreneur may be unavailable for running the sessions. In such case a rematch may be requested.

**7) Rematching :** Mentor who have agreed to work with more than one entrepreneur enter the rematch pool. In case a mismatch or a schedule clash occurs entrepreneurs

are directed back to the rematch pool. In the rematch pool entrepreneurs are matched with mentors based on the mentor strength school. Star class entrepreneurs are matched with high overall mentor strength score regardless of classification. Eligible class and pending class are matched based on secondary score strength.



## 5. Effective Mentorship Sessions

The session is a meeting between mentor and mentee to share information and build a relationship with a conclusive ending. The process is a series of sessions that build a narrative for the progress of relationship between mentor and mentee. The mentorship process does not necessarily have to have a conclusive ending. It may stop when both parties find it necessary.

Mentorship sessions reflect the mentor's personality and their interactions with the mentee. Although every mentor has their own style and approach to running a meeting, its possible to improve its effectiveness by giving attention to several key dynamics in a session.

Mentors yield authority and build trust to help the mentee reach a goal towards the end of the process. Authority does not rely on an enforceable rule or a sanction. It is based on the agreement of mutual work, the relevant experience of the mentor and the respectful environment created. Trust is built to clear spotlight effect and

mobilise the mentee. Authority coupled with trust will help mentors run a more effective mentorship processes.

Once the authority and trust is set, setting frame in initial sessions form an unofficial pact of process between mentor and mentee. Such a pact is different from the formal rules or the structure set by EDP. It is unique relationship between the mentor and mentee for setting the agenda and the end goal. During the process, the frame may weaken: The mentor and mentee may have different ideas about the agenda, belief in the process and the end goal. Its called "rupture". Rupture is not necessarily negative; it may also be a signal to improve the frame, and/or revision of the unofficial pact. It may lead to conflict. Mentors should best cope with conflict as it may lead to a collapse of authority and trust which the frame is built on. Managing conflict will be covered in detail in the following sections.

### ***Context, Relationship and Communication***

- Ensure trust and authority
- Set up the frame
- Understanding the mentee
- Managing rupture and conflict
- End of process summaries gains and celebrates

### **Authority**

The authority of the mentor is primarily dependent on respect and power. Power is the impression of the mentee that mentor can actually help them to succeed. This impression is primarily dependent on the background of the mentor, network affiliation, track record and the relevance to mentees industry. Respect is dependent on how the mentor runs the session and how much interest is given to the mentee. Respect with power impression will reward the mentor with leverage and a belief in the mentorship process that could help the mentee take the necessary steps towards success.

Mentors should be careful about scheduling. A single change in meeting time is acceptable. Multiple changes in time schedule will lead to a loss of respect for the process.

Mentors should also keep up with their promises. Broken promises show a sign of lack of priority for mentee needs that will lead to a weak leverage over the mentee. Mentors should exert presence during sessions. Beeping cellphones and notification distractions weaken presence. Note taking is useful for reporting but mentors should not forget that the spotlight effect is reinforced when mentees realise most



statements are taken under record. Declaration of ethical guides and strict abidance will make mentees feel in the “safe zone”. Mentees should also be present following the same rules.

There are times when life issues that will make impossible to run the session without notifications. In such cases, mentors should be tolerant and accept the fact that the timing of the session is not right. Its best to accept the situation and agree on a rescheduled date.

Authority will keep the mentee believing in the process, following up on recommendations and investing in their own development.

## Trust

The mentor introduces their backgrounds and purposes in the initial session. Mentor should allow the mentee to introduce their background. This should occur in person despite of sharing applicant information beforehand. Mentor and mentee should exchange expectations. Mentor should gauge the level of formality depending the on the relevant background and the tone of discussion. Introduction and level of formality are crucial in the setting the ground for trust. A trusting environment will help the entrepreneur disclose more information that could be used in identifying priority issues.

The entrepreneur often starts out sessions with their “pitching” mode turned on. They will continue selling and promoting their business to the mentor and avoiding sensitive topics. It is as useful as a start but the mentor needs a more internal insight into the “messy kitchen” of the business to actually identify important issues. Trust plays an important role in transforming the under the spotlight discussion to a sober genuine share of information on which the mentor can act upon.

Trust building is an important part of the process. Not all session discussions are business oriented. When reviewing sessions notes EDP should understand the importance of relationship building in the effectiveness of the sessions.

## Framing

Mentor and mentee set their frames in the initial assessment session. They set the key agenda and the road map. Ethics is reviewed and confidentiality is ensured. It sets the discussion focus given session duration. Framing sets the agenda and help the mentor manage sessions effectively. It is an unofficial pact. It is a mutual setup of

limitations on what the discussion and mentorship can cover with the given duration.

During the process, there could be a key event that forces the frame to evolve to a new agenda. Mentor should take note of the change of framing and invite mentee to change the frame. Management of the frame is a significant mentorship skill.

### **Engagement level of Entrepreneur**

Mentee invests a level of engagement in the sessions. This is translated as time, effort and attention. A highly invested mentee is easier work for mentors and amplifies their supports. Mentor should note the minimum requirements of engagement of the mentee. This should be shared in the earlier sessions. Mentors should work on increasing the commitment level of the mentee in the initial stages. Highly committed and engaged mentee will follow up on validation. With more resources brought to the session the mentor will have more information to work with. As mentor has more to work with, it will increase session effectiveness; thus feeding back into the enthusiasm of the mentee. A session starting out flat with motivation will have scarce insight brought to the session limiting the resources to work with. Having limited resource will make it more challenging for the mentor to strike an interesting discussion that will decrease the interest of the mentee and drag the session quality down further. Mentor must underline the commitment level required in the earlier sessions to avoid a downward trend in engagement.

Mentees always have explanation for the loss of engagement: family issues, busy schedule, and work commitments. Mentors should know that this is always a prioritisation problem. If mentor sessions are not highly prioritised, it is a signal that starting a venture is not highly prioritised. This shows a lack of commitment to start a business. Mentee should think again if starting a business is a second priority in life goals.

### **Understanding**

Mentor should allow the mentee to talk and describe their issues with little interruption. In the initial sessions, the mentor should focus on understanding the narrative mentee who is building on their business. During the mid process, the mentor will discover more about the mentee and will interpret narrative within the context of the entrepreneur. Towards the closure, the mentor will interpret narrative through the context of the entrepreneur with comparison to performance markers to see how the discussion leads to action.

Understanding requires active listening where mentee is directed with questions to build a narrative.

Mentors should avoid normalisation. This phenomenon occurs in mentors with a numerous ongoing sessions. The tendency of mentor is to classify mentees comparing with previous session assessment. This can be very misleading. Every case is unique if the mentor spends time to understand the details. There are similarities that can work as guidelines but no case is ever identical.

### Activities and Goal Setting

Mentor sessions are not only lead through discussion. There are always mutually accepted tasks that are left to be completed outside sessions. If the tasks are difficult, mentees may come up with excuses such as time and commitment. Mentors should be reminded that this is a sign that mentee is not taking activities as a priority. This can occur due to weak authority and trust between mentor and mentee; an indication of “rupture”.

Mentors should be wary of setting goals that are difficult to achieve or too easy to complete. Either case will create a shortfall of engagement. There is no reason to focus on a single goal. Mentors may create steps of goals for the mentee to achieve. Goals captured have no other reward other than the feeling of success. Goals that are not captured will provide fruitful discussion on the barriers to success. In either way, mentees should not be discouraged after failing to achieve a goal. They should be congratulated on risking but also do some sober thinking on why they have failed. Mentors have no way of punishing a mentee when the goals are not met. Mentors can only step in when mentees are not meeting goals due to low level of engagement or losing the frame.

### Rupture

During sessions mentees may choose to resist, pull back or start a conflict with mentors. This often occurs in weakening of the frame, authority or trust. It also occurs when the outside session challenges are difficult. The reactions given by mentees are dependent on personalities. Some personalities react with passive aggressiveness. Brief answers in sessions; frequent framing issues, distraction, and loss of respect (being late to sessions, sending a proxy to meet, keeping notifications open). Some respond with outright confrontation.

Rupture is a term used by Jeremy Safran to describe therapeutic alliance in the field of psychotherapy. Therapeutic alliance is a conceptualisation introduced by Bordin (1979) to describe a change factor between client and therapist. It is composed of three interdependent components: the relational bond between client and therapist, the tasks of sessions and overall objective of the programme. Therapeutic alliance is therefore a dyadic outcome of client and therapist with a common goal. A rupture occurs when one of the components starts to differentiate: relational bond is weakened, disagreement over the objective of sessions and overall the programme (Safran, Crocker, McMain, & Murray, 1990). Alliance and rupture conceptualisation helps in explaining the psychosocial dynamic of a mentorship session.

Mentors may take their time in reminding their mutual frames. If the objective is challenging, the mentor may choose to scale it down to acceptable levels. Mentors may take time to correct misunderstandings. Mentors may take an informal session break to mend trust and authority.

The rupture is not a sign of ineffective mentoring. It is an important part of the dynamic process and is expected as a mentor and mentee relationship is moving to a deeper level of trust and confrontation with challenging business issues. Mentors should be aware of potential ruptures. It is noted that most mentors avoid ruptures because it is indirectly an acknowledgment of their lack of empathy or competence in developing a psychosocial bond. Instead of sweeping it under the rug, mentors should take it as an opportunity to evolve the frame of discussion.

### In-depth Questions

Questions are important to navigate mentorship discussions. Strongly guided questions allow the mentee to describe their business situation. Strong questions not only help mentors to understand but also help mentees to elaborate and organise their thinking. Our classification of questions is based on the qualitative interview techniques (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Qualitative questioning techniques follow an explorative approach to uncovering insights. Qualitative researchers are more involved with understanding “concepts”. A concept is a model of meaning based on the perception of the mentee. Therefore, in-depth questions are different from rapport building questions. In-depth questions focus on a narrower range of in-depth topics (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In-depth questions are important to help mentees share insights and patterns of behaviour that explain their experience of the concept of “entrepreneurship”.

**Touring questions:** These questions help mentors get a feeling of orientation on the business.

Examples could include:

- How do you spend a week in your startup?
- How did you come with this business?
- Tell me a little history of your business?

**Main question:** The question that will set the agenda. Usually a single main question is enough to run a session. They are passed on review of application form or background information gathered on the entrepreneur. They are usually general and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are used for investigating and exploring the thought process of the mentee.

Examples could include:

- What is the value in starting this business?
- What is your marketing plan?
- How do you plan to build your product?

Shorter and on target questions will yield a longer and open response. Long questions take harder to understand and will likely return short answers.

**Follow up questions:** Questions based on responses given to increase definition and add dimension. Special attention must be given to words and terms used by the mentee. Close-ended questions are used for validating. Mentors can use validation questions to increase accuracy. Close-ended questions should not be much relied on; it will sound like your interrogating the mentee.

- Who do you consider “important customer”? What makes them important?
- Describe to me “high technology” product? What do you mean by high technology?

A list of questions can be prepared beforehand to kick start discussions. Do not rely too much on prepared questions. Listening attentively will help them capture recurring themes or intentional gaps. Recurring themes are the overemphasis mentees give in their narratives. Intentional gaps are the under emphasis mentees give in their narratives. Mentors can bring the discussion to important direction by capturing moments of recurring themes and intentional gaps during the discussion. Sometimes contradictory statements can be captured. Without being judgmental, asking for clarification and sharing the puzzling part must be preferred as a step for solution.

**Probes:** These are short questions that will keep the mentee speaking. It shows the active listening and keeping the mentee focused on the topic:

- Interesting. Can you tell more about it?
- Explain yourself. What do you mean?
- Can you give me an example?

Mentors should avoid loading their questions with their own assumptions. Do not take initial answers at face value. Mentees build personal storylines to explain their issues. Based on investigative questions by mentors, mentees may rebuild their storylines opening new avenues for discussion.

Questions are great ways to discover more about the experience of the mentee. They can also be used for reflection.

**Reflective questions:** These questions are not used to find out information but rather used for critical thinking. Socratic questions are such questions that are used for oriented discovery. Mentor would take the time to lead mentee to a discovery through such a system of questions. These questions will get the mentee to think about their experience as an entrepreneur. By using questions, mentor can get mentee to interpret their own behaviours and reflect on the choices they make.

## Collecting Data

Collecting data on the business process can be helpful in goal setting. Collecting and monitoring data are great ways to track performance and conduct metric based mentoring.

One of the major challenges to be faced with is collecting dependable data. Most early stage businesses do not have data collection habits in place like real businesses. Unless a grant programme has requested, most of them hardly have a business plan or an operational plan that makes it extremely difficult to figure out objectives.

Startups are also very skeptical about sharing financial performance data even if they know it would be beneficial for them. You have to have a strong trust relationship in order to deserve such key information.

In cases where collecting data is challenging, it can be preferable to rely on proxy indicators. Proxy indicators are derivatives of outputs in which mentor can infer indicator of performance.

Common proxy indicators are office size, number of employees, patents filed, number of shipments, visitors to website, conversions rates so on. These all indicate

to some extent increase in performance in revenue, research capability, size of orders.

## Feedback

Mentors should avoid being critical and judgmental without first building trust or forming an authority. Mentees may listen to the harsh feedback but often discredit comments and often does not lead to positive behaviour.

Mentors should also avoid empty flatter. Mentees does not find over the board flattering genuine.

Mentors can be more critical after building trust. Therefore, previous trust building is important in being able to give an honest straight feedback.

Carol Dweck's research showed that praising and highlighting effort rather than criticising encouraged the mentee to put more investment into effort (Dweck, 2006). She defines this fixed mindset versus growth mindset. Fixed mindset behaviour focused on problems and believes that intelligence and capabilities are inherent and cannot be improved. They are usually avoidant in failure, very difficult to accept criticism because they take it as a sign of personal hostility. Growth mindsets individuals believe intelligence and capabilities can be improved; therefore, have a positive believe that they can improve. They are usually resourceful, use setbacks as a lesson and enjoy taking on challenges that improve their skills. Now mentees come with either growth and fixed mindset. It depends on a lot of factors, nurturing, education and cultural factors. Mentors will have to figure out based on the reactions of their mentees whether they have a fixed or growth attitude. Harsh feedback based on personalities and not behaviour will stifle fixed mindset mentee more. Growth mindset mentee will take harsh criticism as a challenge and might be even encouraged to work harder. Mentors should be careful to separate feedback and personality in praise and criticism. Mentors should always review the outcome and the behaviour and leave a door open for improvement. It is fair to say that it will be challenging to get fixed mindset individuals to grasp the separation between behaviour and personality so having a clear communication will make it easier.

## Team mediation

Mentors may find themselves in situation where there is a conflict between founders. Each founder may reveal negative feeling towards other founders and ask for mentor's alliance. It is a challenging situation and may lead to disastrous results

in the collapse of framing where the mentor is dragged into an internal rift between founders.

Mentors tend to take the peacekeeping approach, trying positively to mend the relationship. Peace is not necessarily the best outcome for all founders. In such cases, it is the best interest for all parties to break up.

Difficulty in mediating a team conflict is the accuracy of the information shared by founders. Mentors should not forget that such information is likely to be loaded with emotion often manipulative.

Mentors should facilitate a discussion between founders to discuss issues of conflict. Mentor should use authority and trust to set a common ground of discussion between founders. Founders will be taking a competitive negotiation stance often fiercely protecting their positions. Mentors should help mentees generate ideas where new positions are formed by considering the interests of all parties. Mentors should avoid taking sides even it clearly makes more sense. It is a violation of frame and liability.

### **Effective Record Keeping**

Mentors will complete a single page session note for EDP analysis. This form may also be online. Mentors are recommended not to indulge in note taking for too long during sessions because it weakens the rapport building process with the mentee. Once the session is over, mentors are recommended to take time to fill their forms. For scheduling, it is advisable to leave 15-minute breaks between sessions to give time for mentors to complete their notes. Records are also important as a metadata for supervision session organized by EDC.

### **Attitudes**

Mentors approach to sessions defines their attitudes.

**Mentee lead (Soft Attitude):** Mentor and mentee collaborate to build a common structure of plan of action. Structure is revised and updated as the process continues. Mentor does not act intrusive and works within what the mentee has to share. Mentor creates an environment of trust and self-reflection where mentee is expected to discover their objectives rather than be provided with them. A Common assumption is that the mentee has a clear sense of purpose, maturity for self-reflection and a drive for personal development when nurtured. If the mentee is



resistant to self-reflection and drive to face uncomfortable decisions, then, the session will stall until the mentee gains self-confidence.

**Mentor lead (Tough Attitude):** The mentor who builds a structure of plan of actions and keeps it durable. Mentee is confronted with what the mentor believes is their best interests. Mentor leverages authority to push the mentor out of the comfort zone to work out issues that the mentee would rather avoid. Mentor introduces challenges to the mentee. Mentor may pressure the mentee within ethical boundaries and without breaking the frame. Common assumption is mentee accepts and internalises the challenge. If the mentee does not internalise the challenge, it is likely that they will become too dependent on the getting “pushed” stifling their autonomous decision-making and risk taking abilities.

Profile of the mentee calls for soft or tough the attitudes. Some mentees find tough attitude intrusive and are critical of the authority of the mentor. Some mentees enjoy the challenging honest toughness. Some mentees find soft attitude ineffective and boring. Some mentees enjoy a free reign. Attitude can also change throughout the process. Mentor may choose to start with a soft attitude in allowing the mentee to discover own motives. In later stages, mentor may switch to a tough attitude to motivate mentee to execution. Transition from soft to tough is not easy. Mentor by trust building should help mentee understand why they are being challenged and use constructive feedback to help them gain confidence.

## Changing Behaviour and Habits

Part of mentorship is to influence the behaviour and habits of entrepreneurs. This is highly reliant on the authority and trust relationship that have been established. Although there are many models that observe change management, a simple method of change management is presented by Les Robinsons, a well-known community facilitator in Australia. He calls his model “Theory of Change” (Robinson, 2012). It is a simple concept to explain the type of behaviour change mentees goes through. Behavioural change requires step-by-step approach where each step is dependent on the success of the latter.

### Before starting behavioural change:

**1. Knowledge (I know):** This initial stage is the amount of knowledge into the issue. Share information and motivate to collect information in understanding the environment that surrounds the behaviour.

**Example:** Customer Discovery phase where entrepreneur discuss business ideas with customer will get them to understand what type of changes will make their product to be more commercial.

**2. Desire (I want):** Entrepreneurs and founders must agree to make a change. Mentors should coach founders to understand the outcomes that might benefit them for the change.

**Example:** Founders should listen to customer demands to make a change because that is the only way for them to sell their products.

**3. Skills (I can):** Founder must believe that they can make the change or figure out an alternative. Mentors can help by recommending resources or people that can help them gain the skills to make the change. Get them to try the new task and see what they think. Show successful examples that have succeeded.

**Example:** Redesigning the product will not be easy but founder have decided to get training to improve their skills.

**4. Optimism (It is worth it):** Founder must understand the task taken is worth it. Mentors should work with the founders with critical reflection on their decision.

**Example:** Founder has figured out that by training to redesign the business will bring competitive advantage and it is worth the time being spent.

Mentors who would like to help mentees must change their behavioural and they must inform, motivate, support and inspire them.

### During the change

**5. Facilitation (It is easy):** During the change process, founders are likely to feel anxious. Mentors should reassure them that as they progress, the challenge is not as difficult as it seemed before the action.

**6. Stimulation (I am joining in):** As founders feel more positive about their behaviours, they will invest further into improving their behaviours. Mentors should keep them engaged in the change process.

The mentor must support the continuity of the change process until founder is engaged and feel competent about the process. Mentors should make sure the change process does not collapse half way. This will destroy the self confidence of the founder.

## After the change

**7. Reinforcement (Well done):** Founders must feel a sense of accomplishment once the behavioural has changed and brought positive reinforcement. Mentors can outline this process through summarizing towards the end of the session.

Celebration success is an important part of success that creates a closure for the change process. This will reinforce further behaviours in the future when mentee is going to face challenges that will force them to change their habits.

## Resistance

### Before starting change

**1. Ignorance (I don't know):** Founder does not want to change behaviour because they do not understand the conditions. Mentors should give more key convincing insight. If they are not convinced, mentors should bring in an outside opinion to increase authority of information.

**2. Rejection (I don't want to):** Founder understands the situation but does not want to change the behaviour. This could be related to numerous reasons. It could be because of the fact that founders have to let go some other habit that to which they are deeply attached. They don't have time and resources to change behaviour. It might be due to low self-confidence. In any case, mentors must reinforce their behaviour and make sure they are committed to making a change.

**3. Inability (I can't):** Founder understands the situation, wants to change the behaviour but they cannot because they don't have the skills or the self confidence to execute. This is a common challenge among entrepreneurs who have to deal with challenges outside their comfort zones.

**4. Pessimism (It wont work):** Founder can change their behaviour but they are not positive about the outcomes of the action. This is due to lack of belief in the outcome of the behavioural. Mentor must be clear about the outcomes. Founders must internalise decisions. Reflective questioning can be helpful in breaking disbelief. There is no reason for mentee to take steps in which they don't believe but feel they should do it out of respect to the mentor.

Mentors will feel resistance from mentees with low motivation, ignorance and pessimistic outlook. Instead of dealing with all problems at the same time and then

blaming the mentees personality, mentors must start out by building their trust and authority base. Once mentor gains leverage they can increase awareness and motivation and then coach them to lift their confidence and faith in the session. This is highly delicate process during which the mentor needs to keep on reinforcing positive outcomes.

### During the change

**5. Complication (It is too hard):** Founders will be challenged with their change of behaviour, as it will take time for them to be competent. During the change, phase of behavioural mentor should be supportive and must be give accurate feedback.

**6. Apathy (I could not be bothered):** Apathy is a sign of lack of investment and engagement on behalf of the mentee. This self-sabotaging behaviour is not uncommon. Founder self-sabotage is the process when the probability of success is uncertain. Yet the outcome of failure can be certain. Founder by sabotaging trades uncertainty of success with certainty of failure in which they can handle. Mentors should remind founders to keep engaging and help them embrace uncertainty by focusing on daily tangible outcomes.

Mentors will face resistance along the behavioural change as mentee revert back on forth on their previous habits. In some cases, mentees will abandon the processes. It is very challenging to keep the process running without having reverse steps. Mentor must keep on focusing on rewards and must reinforce self-confidence.

### After the change

**7. Undermine (I will get back at them):** If the founder has not internalised the change and only did it for the sake of convincing the mentor, the new behaviour will be undermined and abandoned quickly. This is extremely frustrating for mentors who will dupe into believing that the process was actually working. In fact, the mentor has made the mistake of pushing the process without taking the time for the mentee to embrace the change process.

Once the change process is completed, mentors should take time of reflecting on sessions to discuss how mentee has embraced the new way of doing business.

Changing behaviour is a difficult but a crucial task of mentorship. Entrepreneurship is a dynamic and challenging process that will force the mentee to adopt and abandon different behaviours along the process. Training often does not help in building

behaviours. An effective mentorship is the only way to respond to changing requirements of a growing business.

## Summarising Sessions

During the session, mentor should summarise key findings that are discovered with the mentee. Mentor should also receive approval from mentee with mentor's conclusions. This will help mentees internalise discussion and help them progress on a personal level. Towards the end of the session, mentor must leave sufficient time for wrapping up. Mentor must also share a short conclusion and summary for the session and present key goals for the next sessions. This is important for binding sessions and satisfaction of progress of the mentee. Some sessions may have too much material to cover; mentor must try ending the session at a section that would be conclusive and ask to continue the following sessions.

At the final session, mentors must quickly run through the notes of the previous session and share progress through goals and key findings. Congratulating on engagement is preferred. Reflection back on the session and discussion insights must be realized and then following it, making final recommendations and do some signposting must be done.

Signposting is what mentors would like their mentee to do next once the process is over. Mentors may choose to start a new process. Mentors may choose to end your process but recommend a path to continue their developments. EDP can help with signposting by giving a list of programmes and locations where the mentees can be signposted by the mentor.

## Types of Crisis and Resolution

Negative mentorship sessions are expected in a process that depends so much on the psychosocial support provided. Research covers dysfunctional relationships in mentorship (Eby & McManus, 2004). Observation on the toxic role of mentees reveals three categories (In this paper mentee is referred as protégé). Their definitions are a continuum of relationship problems.

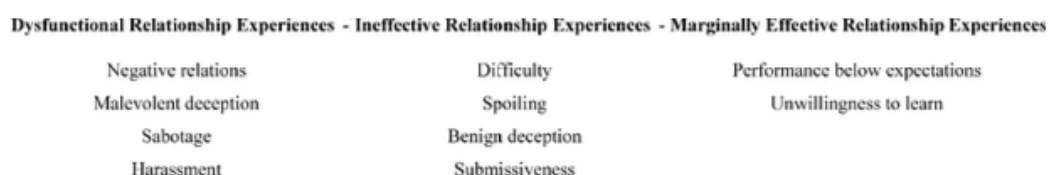


Figure 4: The proteges role in negative mentoring experiences, 2004

Crisis in sessions occur when the mentee is going through a phase that is causing a disturbance in quality of sessions making it difficult to manage. Crisis situations erode trust and authority and cause a collapse in the frame built between the mentor and the mentee.

## **Dysfunctional Relationship Experiences**

### ***Aggressiveness***

Mentee may show anger in different forms. Passive aggressiveness is the most common form. Mentee may discredit your recommendations. Frame may be violated several times. It could also come up in the form of procrastination.

The mentor should not respond back with a personal attack. It will unnecessarily keep aggression active throughout the process. It will invite the mentee to further challenge the authority of the mentor eroding whatever trust is left.

Mentor should create a session of comfort where mentee can defuse their anger. Mentor can pick up the issues of conflict from the anger and act on them by reaffirming the frame.

Entrepreneurs are required to compete at every stage of the startup lifecycle. Competitiveness can lead to aggressiveness and anger at the way rupture has occurred. Mentors should defuse anger by pointing their role as a facilitator not as a competitor or a roadblock for the entrepreneur. They should be advised to shift their fight out in the world rather than in the session.

## **Ineffective Relationship Experiences**

### ***Responsibility shift***

Mentee decides to unload their responsibilities onto to the mentor. Mentee asks the mentor to take up tasks of helping out with writing the business plans, talking to the customers, asking for product requirements, sending out emails for them. This is a huge risk and often-helpful mentors fall into this trap. It is a violation of the frame of relationship formed between mentor and mentee. Mentor must not take tasks that will cause liability in the end to the mentee. It is a double-edged sword: if the mentor succeeds in the task then the task will remain to be lead by the mentor. If

the mentor fails in the attempt then the trust and authority link will be destroyed for good.

Mentor should reserve time to clarify responsibilities and motivate the mentee to take the initiative in taking up tasks. It is possible that the task is challenging but the mentor should keep guiding them and supporting them to take the challenge on their own. Mentors should avoid creating any dependency and rethink on their liabilities.

Entrepreneurs often take up challenges beyond their capability to handle. This is natural in the lifecycle of the startup as entrepreneur feels more challenged with extensive tasks and the skill, knowledge and reputation required. They may feel shifting the burden might actually relieve them. Mentors should remind entrepreneurs that they are there to help them succeed not do the execution for them.

### *Emotional Projection*

Mentees may project emotional figures on mentors who go over the board with their psychosocial bond. Mentees may project some of their roles models such as an authority figure (such as a father, big brother, previous boss) nurturing figure (mother) on to the mentor. Emotional outbursts, sharing personal issues or confessions are some signs of emotional projections; sudden feelings of mistrust can arise from projecting their feelings on a mentor.

The mentor should be observant of emotional projections. No session is devoid of any emotional exchange. What is important is to manage emotional projection within the limits of frame. "Frustrations with a business partner due to family life pressure at home" is an understandable discussion. Frustrations with life overall is a difficult subject to cover and likely to lose the frame. In such cases, it is best to recommend a professional psychotherapist who can help.

Mentor should be careful not to transform business coaching to life coaching. It is intertwined concepts in the entrepreneurship where it is hard to separate each other. Mentors should note that life coaching requires a different set of liabilities. Mentor may be unequipped to coach such issues.

For most entrepreneurs, there are no strong boundaries between personal life and business. Often business has taken over life, a lot of personal sacrifices are made. Business founders are likely to spend more time together than anyone else in their life forming a strong attachment but also a potential for emotional outbursts.

### *Protectiveness*

Mentee may act overprotective and resistant to change in some parts of the discussion. This could be due to over idealisation of the part. It could be the part where the mentee feels has more control over. Mentor should understand the underlying reason for “protection”.

Mentor should identify the protective attitude and by taking advantage of the trustworthy environment, mentor can help mentee to drop their guards on the issue. Mentor should not underestimate or prod the mentee to move away from the issue; it will reinforce resistance even more.

Entrepreneurs have differing skills and competencies. Naturally, they would prefer to remain focused in areas where their domain expertise has the greatest impact. Veteran entrepreneurs understand the multiple skills and expertise required to run a company. Mentors should help entrepreneurs leave their comfort zones and adopt an improvement attitude.

### **Marginally Effective Relationship**

#### *Weakening of commitment*

Mentee is late to sessions or hardly engaged with the sessions. In some cases, mentee may decide to send a proxy to join the meeting. Signposting is somehow ineffective. Mentor finds out that the mentee skipped the meeting directed. Weakening of commitment occurs due to several reasons. The most common reason is the lack of faith in the sessions due to a sudden loss of authority or trust in mentor. Mentor advice could have been invalidated by external factors. The second common reason is that mentee is going through challenging process and does not wish to discuss the issues that evoke feelings of guilt of underperforming. On the mentor side, it could be a lack of frame control where the discussion does not seem to head toward a beneficial direction. It could be caused by a faulty programme design where sessions are too long and too frequent to create any fruitful discussion points. It could be simply caused by many postponements and scheduling issues. The mentor should reserve time to rebuild trust and authority. Discussion on the objective and benefits of the sessions by rebuilding the frame of relationship can be useful.

Mentors should avoid building aggression out of frustration.



Entrepreneurs often cite that they are “too busy” and have “scheduling issues”. This is a common excuse; it is caused by prioritisation problems. If entrepreneurs feel the session is important, they will try all their best not to miss any session. This is strongly tied to the benefit they expect from the end of the session.

### *Avoidance*

Mentee will try to bend or distort the frame by diverting agenda or bloating up unimportant details. This is a polite way of covering real issues that the mentee would rather not discuss to several reasons. Mentor may approach the same issue with different questions and will realise it is deflected.

Mentor should start trust building and gain authority to make a genuine confrontational move. Confrontation if made with sincerity will help the mentee break the avoidant cycle.

Mentor should not start scolding the mentee that will naturally lead to further avoidance.

Entrepreneurs go through phases where they are often confronted with multiple crises to deal with at the same time with insufficient staffing or resources. In such cases, mentors should note that entrepreneurs might use avoidance to cope with the problems one at a time.

### *Managing Conflicts*

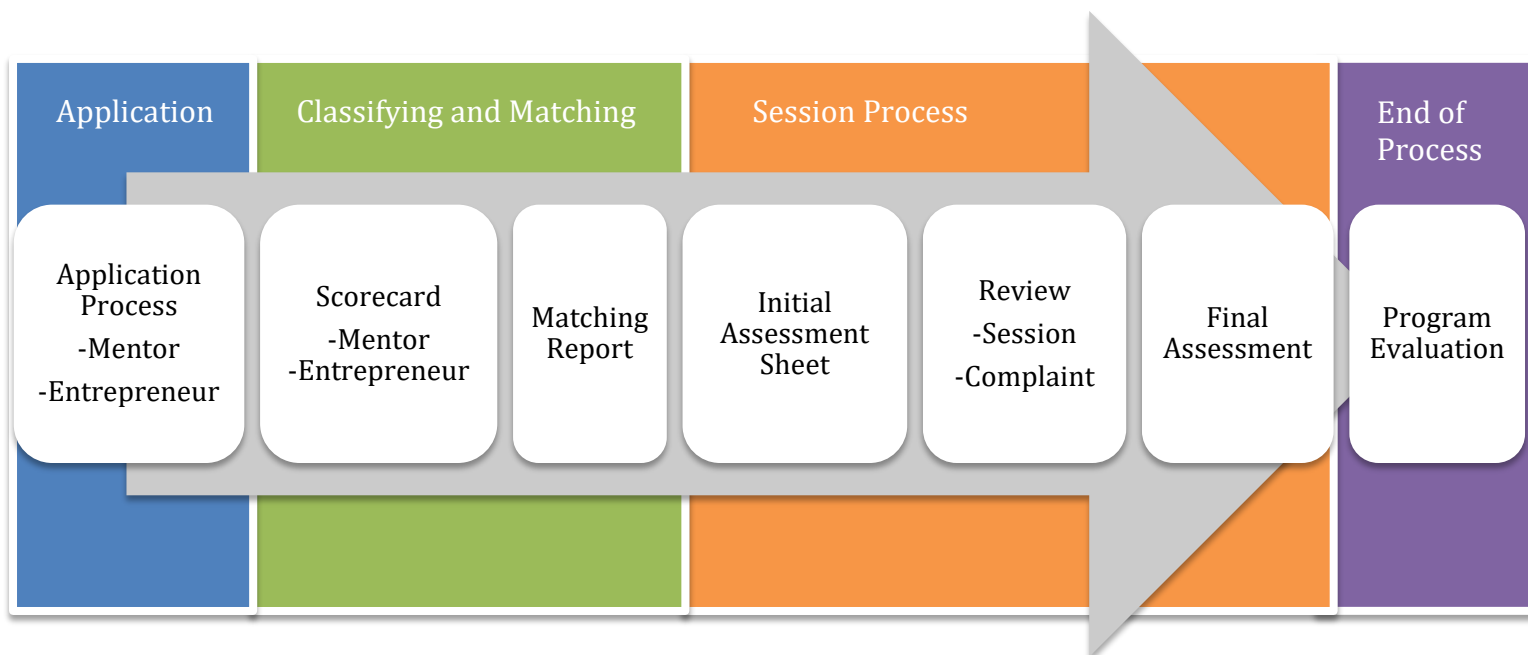
Mentors should note that conflicts are expected, as issues outside the session is expected to infiltrate into the session. The type of reaction given by the mentee is highly dependent on their personality and their mode of reaction in the face of uncertainty and challenge. Mentors can detect the start of a conflict if they are attentive.

EDP cannot do much to avoid conflict. Conflict is inevitable in sessions. EDP may not interfere unless invited by mentor and mentee by referring to an ethical violation.

Mentors can be trained by EDP to identify conflicts and learn to handle them. Mentors can be introduced to different scenarios or casework of ruptures that will increase their chances of observing a rupture occurring early on before it turns into a crisis. Psychotherapists have a rational model for rupture resolutions (Safran, Muran,

Samstag, & Stevens, 2001). Their concepts can inspire mentor conflict resolution. First step is to recognise the rupture marker as soon as it occurs. Then, mentee is asked to talk about the immediate experience and their feelings on the session. Depending on the attitude, mentee may disclose negative feelings. Mentor can help mentee to clarify negative feelings and reach self-assertion. Once assertion is clear, mentor may validate the reasons and can work together on repairing goals or social bonds. Mentee may choose to avoid and create a block. Mentor should explore the block with in depth questions and ask the mentee to explore the block before acknowledging there is a problem. Repairing a rupture is an important part of psychosocial skills mentors should possess. EDP can help them through training and supervision.

### Design of Mentorship Programme



EDP when designing a mentorship programme should decide on the following factors:

- Structure of Process
- Number of Sessions
- Team of mentors vs single mentor
- Single or multiple mentees
- Distance in Mentorship

## Structure

Design and structure of the mentor programme should be constructed entirely on the goal of the programme. Duration and format offers different possibilities for different startup segments. Kram (1983) defines informal mentoring in four phases of development: initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition.

Initiation phase of an informal phase is the initial meeting where both parties weigh out benefits and costs to fully understand how much commitment they should put into the relationship. Potential benefits of mutual learning, development, successful outcome of collaboration is compared with the potential costs of wasting time, losing reputation and the overall negative experience of working with a dysfunctional or disinterested person. There are studies that observe personality attitudes involvement in mentorship effectiveness that proactive and positive mentee have a higher chance of starting out with a stronger session while introvert or indecisive profiles have a higher chance of having a weak session.

Cultivation occurs when the comfortable environment is set and mentee can open to mentor whom in return gives reliable advice. At this stage, majority of effective mentorship takes place. In cultivation, goals and performance become more visible. Mentor and mentee focus on tangible results.

Separation and Redefinition stage is when mentor and mentee relationship reaches maturity where it is harder for mentor to share information or wisdom and the mentee is ready to act independent without needing the coaching of others. A session can reach maturity early or can go on indefinitely depending on the dyadic relationship dynamic formed.

Structure of sessions should consider initiation, cultivation and separation and redefinition stages of different startup maturity stages and the goal of the programme. Good programme design will give sufficient time for initiation and cultivation to occur and end at the right maturity where the relationship reaches separation. Predicting the life of a mentorship programme is not easy. Young entrepreneurs who consider to start a business and explore for business ideas are going to take longer in initiation to understand and commit to a mentorship session with a higher risk of dropping. A single meeting or a round table meeting will be ineffective because initiation will be limited. At idea stage, it is likely that cultivation will reach maturity quickly because idea development mostly depends on the validation efforts of the entrepreneur. An early commercialization technology business is going to require more time in cultivation before reaching maturity. A mature business is going to need a serious phase of initiation before accepting external expertise. Studies have shown that in formal sessions, the duration and communication frequency (Fagenson-Eland, Baugh, & Lankau, 2005) are strong determinants in the effectiveness of mentorship sessions.

Most mentorship programmes follow two erroneous patterns. Formal programme consists of volunteer mentors, then, they are left free to choose the format of their

sessions that in return creates an inconsistent frequency of dragging duration of a session. Second pattern is the formal programme that consists of incentive based mentors with funding or sponsorship. In that case, the programme shrinks to save costs on logistics and facilitation. Each mentor is matched with numerous mentees. In such a pattern, frequency between sessions is tight and not enough patience is given to initiation and cultivation. Forming bonds between mentors cannot be rushed. A programme without goal and prior commitment cannot be executed on time. Best formulation is to always save space for initiation but always have an end goal or final duration to end the sessions for formal programme.

### **Single Session**

Mentors and mentees develop a frame of discussion to form a narrative between sessions. In single session, building a narrative is not possible. Frame is limited to discussion on current events shared by the mentee without a chance of validation and mostly under the control of the mentee. It is mostly informational. It will be difficult to build rapport and change habits and behaviour. Interpretation of the claims made by the entrepreneur will be difficult. Once the session is over, mentor summarises their meeting outcomes. It is not possible to review the impact of the session. Mentors can only focus on career development in single session mentorship.

### **Short Sessions (2-6 sessions)**

Framing of the common agenda and goal can be formed and shared between the mentor and the mentee. Impact of the session can be observed. Coaching for performance is possible although in a limited area of influence. First session is reserved for assessment. Last session can be used for signposting. It is best for kick starting a mentee into gaining momentum for progress. Short sessions are run like short coaching development sessions with short duration end goal. Mentor can focus on career development based on more information and behavioural observation. Building psychosocial bonds will be difficult.

### **Long Sessions (More than 6 sessions)**

A stronger rapport can be built when there is time for more than six sessions. Issues regarding habits and performance can be investigated. Long sessions are guided business coaching. Long Sessions may not have an end goal but rather milestones set with the mentee. Mentor and mentee can build a psychosocial bond in addition to career development.

Session length is a configurable determinant of the mentorship programme. If the target group is a veteran group of entrepreneurs with a high level of motivation, short duration programme can work effectively just based on career development goals. If the target group is a novice group of young entrepreneurs who are unsure about their commitment level programme configuration needs to involve more role modelling and psychosocial support that will require a longer period of mentorship. EDP should set the duration depending on the expected objectives and the target segment.

### **Group Mentorship**

This is a format where a mentor meets with multiple mentees. Rapport building will be very difficult because participants will act under spotlight effect. It is particularly effective if mentees are within the same stage of entrepreneurship so they can learn from each other's questions and issues. Mentor acts more like a facilitator of information between mentees. Mentor takes a particular issue of a mentee and shares their insight. Mentor may also investigate by asking further question without diving too deep. Once the mentor shares opinion then should move from specific to general conclusion for the benefit of all participants.

### **Time management and capacity**

Effective sessions take around an hour. If there is a rupture or a key issue, it may take longer. As time increases, frame will weaken. Weak frame occurs when grip on the discussion topic weakens. Mentor may take a break in that case.

Mentor may handle maximum 8 sessions a day on average. More than 8 sessions per day will cause mentor to lose focus, inattentive listening and losing grip on the frame. The time duration between sessions also should not exceed more than 2 weeks. Engagement and commitment weakens as breaks between sessions increase.

### **Team of mentors approach**

Mentee may work with more than one mentor. Naturally mentors have diverse opinions and attitudes to issues due to their different life experiences. When a team of mentors work with a mentee usually, there are conflicting recommendations and perspectives. Yet having a diversity of mentors working together can be quiet effective. A term defined by researchers as "development network" defines team of mentors as a social network (Kram & Higgins, 2001). Range defines network diversity: "the number of different social systems the relationships stem from" and

“density, the extent to which the people in a network know and or are connected to one another,”(Kram & Higgins, 2001). More range and less density less redundant will be information shared with the mentee.

An effective team of mentors approach is the “development network”. Single coaching oriented mentor acting, as a facilitator will recommend product oriented and market oriented consultant mentors. Primary goal of the “development network” approach is to decrease redundancy in the network. This is achieved with the facilitation of the initial mentor who will define the range of the mentor network. Kram and Higgins (2001) define this role as “developers” the providers of psychosocial support. Once development objectives are reached, the mentor will be directed to a sponsor mentor who will take the mentee to an investor or a commercial partner. These are the career supporters. Arrowhead approach ensures that focus on coaching and richness in diversity of insight and valuable networking can be achieved. The order in the types of mentorship is important. If the teams are sent to a sponsor, mentor with insufficient coaching or insight a valuable opportunity is lost. If teams are not coached to research on their own, then, time of the specialists will be wasted.

A formal mentor network is advisable in the case of mentor networks. Informal mentors often direct to mentors within the same social circle with a high density thus keeping the range limited and likely causing redundancy in information. A formal mentor network, on the other hand, uses the mentor pool and the facilitator to break the effect of redundancy; thus, helping the mentee to reach a wider range of mentors. Several scenarios of ranges and strength of ties exist to reflect on how EDC can facilitate a stronger development network.

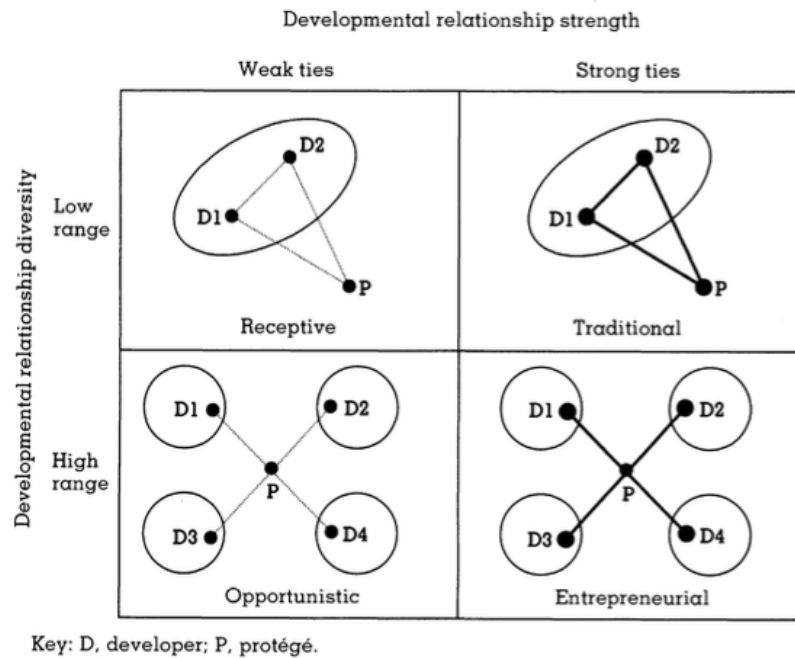


Figure 5: Developmental Network Typology

**Entrepreneurial:** (High Range, Strong Ties): An example of a development network where the trust in the mentee is high (as depicted as p here) with a tight psychosocial bond between mentors who provide unexpected range and access of mentors. It is likely that the trust invested in the mentee allows mentors to share access to their contact with ease. Strength of the ties depends on the cultivation of the relationship on part of the mentee.

**Opportunistic: (High Range, Low Ties):** Mentee possesses an uncultivated relationship with a range of mentors and contacts. It depends on “high levels of reciprocity, frequency of communication and emotional closeness” (Kram & Higgins, 2001). Career support will continue, however, without the psychosocial dimension, the relationship will not grow thus the range of circle will be limited.

**Traditional: (Low Range, High Ties):** Traditionally mentee is in contact with one or few mentors within the same social circle. Information provided will be highly redundant.

**Receptive: (Low Range, Weak Ties):** This is a network of similar peers with weak relationship between the development network. The network will not grow and information possessed will be highly redundant.

Development networks can also influence career identities (Dobrow & Higgins, 2005). A research conducted to understand development networks on the career

choices of MBA students over a longitudinal study of five years showed that relationship between density of network and clarity of career identity is inversely correlated. Although no research has been conducted on the initiation of entrepreneurship, it can be related to the early stages of the entrepreneurial process where the identity has not been informed. A wide range of mentor network with a low density can help idea stage entrepreneurs to decide whether they would like to continue their desire to start a company or go back to their jobs or schools.

EDC should facilitate an entrepreneurial development network. Cultivating a pool of mentors with a wide range of fields that will allow the facilitator mentor to direct the mentee to new area. EDC should also invest in social gathering between different ranges of mentors to increase the social ties between different fields. This could trigger signposting between diverse groups of mentors. A long duration generalist mentor will lose its opportunistic value; thus, this can cause redundancy of information and weakening of range. Mentors should be advised and motivated to signpost out to their ranges to increase the flow of new information for mentee.

### **Mentoring teams**

Mentees may attend mentorship sessions single or as a team. Mentors should not let mentees do a rotation where a different founder shows up. This is against the idea of session continuity. It will harm authority and mentor will lose leverage over the team. Mentoring teams is effective in observing group dynamics.

In some cases, mentees delegate one of their founders (often their business development founder) to represent them in sessions. This is counter intuitive; the founder can only represent themselves and their controls over their founders. Having all the founders show up to sessions may be difficult to schedule.

Mentors may take a mixed approach where one of the founders runs the discussion for continuity and other founders are called in certain sessions to add dimension to the discussion.

### **Conflicting Mentors**

In programmes, where mentees receive support from multiple mentors and join group mentorships, it is possible to have a situation where mentors may discredit each other's opinions. This situation confuses a lot of mentees and they start to lose faith in the programme. Conflicting views are expected. Each mentor has different life experience and attitude to work. Mentees should understand how different views play out. Best way to avoid harm is to make sure every mentor review



previous session notes to understand the current discussion. If mentors are diligent in understanding other viewpoints conflicting views which can turn into a critical debate that is very useful for the mentee.

For coaching based mentors, it is best to have one at a time focused on the mentee. Multiple coaches will diffuse the authority needed to leverage the change of habit or behaviour. A tough attitude mentor can disrupt a soft investigative mentor attitude. A single “lead” mentor who will coach the mentee throughout the programme is the best approach.

What if the mentor is invalidated by mentees research outside the sessions? This will surely result in a loss of trust and authority in sessions. Mentors are not omnipotent beings. Past experience and public opinion of the mentor may not represent the market opinion. Yet once mentees make business decision based on mentor recommendations, despite of their limited liability, mentor carries a certain burden of responsibility. Therefore, it is crucial for mentors to make sure decisions which are filtered and internalized by the mentee. Important decisions have to be slowed down and carefully judged before deciding on the final go ahead.

### **Mentors with multiple roles**

It is always a bad idea to have mentors as jury members in the same programme. Mentors form an intimate bond with their mentees to build trust and authority. They are biased from the start. It is also a bad idea to use initial assessment sheet as an indicator for performance of mentees. Initial assessment does not indicate future performance and a lot of key changes can occur in the end (change of founders, pivoting business models so on).

Some mentors with funds decide to invest in companies. This is also a conflicting role. Mentees share key information about their business that will make it very difficult to negotiate with an angel investor role. It is not impossible but it will be a difficult role transformation. It is best for mentors to disclose such role in the beginning if possible.

The mentor may decide to stay with the team as a paid or equity based consultant. Consultancy has different professional standards than mentorship; therefore, it is best to receive legal consultation and have an agreement on paper when transforming to a consultancy role.

## Distance Mentorship

Online mentoring has increasingly become a tool to help with the increasing the range of social network and reduce costing of one on one meeting. Decreasing cost and increasing range will benefit the pool of mentors and help EDC with a higher matching accuracy.

Distance mentorship can be listed as telephone, skype, email where interpersonal social cues are limited. Unless mentor and mentee met in an earlier one on one session and invested sufficient time to improve rapport distance sessions, they have the risk of establishing a bridge of trust. If possible, a videoconference is always a step ahead in terms of social cues comparing to email or phone. Mentors should pursue eye contact in videoconferences as often they lose concentration due to “multitasking” on the laptop desktop.

Online mentoring has some obvious drawbacks (Ensher, Heun, & Blanchard, 2003). Lack of social cues and the intimacy of shares space can stifle the psychosocial effects that form the bonds between mentor and mentee. It is also difficult to tell the formality level of the session by communicating through email. Social interactions have an inhibitor factor to confrontation and aggressiveness. Online medium provides a protection that can motivate the mentor and mentee to act more aggressive. This can especially be harmful with the “hard” style mentorship.

In one on one session, it is important for the facility to have discreet areas and make sure mentors are not distracted. Meeting rooms and cubicles may provide the privacy mentor is seeking. A cafe or lunch meeting may also work as these areas are also socially isolating but also has the informality advantage that could be used in building rapport.

Mentor may choose to run the session in the workshop of the mentee. In such case, being clear and stern about privacy requirements are recommended. Mentor may gain a lot of advantage for discussion by observing the work environment. Most mentees feel the benefit of hosting a mentor; therefore, rapport advantage can be gained.

EDP has a physical facility where mentors and mentees can conduct meetings. EDP should also have an online appointment system where participants can reserve tables. EDP will have a library of tools entrepreneurs can use. It is highly recommended to conduct the first assessment session and the wrap up session in the facility so that entrepreneurs can be introduced to the tools in the facility.

Mentors and mentees should have the choice of having in between session's offsite. This flexibility in scheduling will be important to run sessions effectively.

EDP should utilize distance mentorship as a complementary option to decrease the cost of logistics for mentors. All sessions must have a face-to-face emphasis to build a relationship. Yet specialists or mentors part of the development network can be accessed via distance as long as there is an ongoing face-to-face value. The strength of bond can be improved while using distance mentorship to increase the range.

### Session notes for programme

EDP may ask mentors to fill a one-page session review report. The report should detail time / place / mentor and mentee involved / method of conduct (direct, distance) / signposting. It should summarize discussion points in bullet points and detail any performance marker that occurred.

Mentors reports are notorious for being filed but never analysed. In order to avoid such problem, EDC should collect all session files once completed and draft a summary report of the whole mentorship process. Key coaching, information and sponsorship discussion should be underlined. Recurring themes should be form based on codifying underlined discussion keywords.

Recurring themes should be reported back to mentors every six months during a supervision meeting. It will help to facilitate approaches and discussion between mentors and increase the quality of the programme.

### Mentor Auditing

Mentoring sessions are difficult to standardise. It relies on the unique relationship formed between the mentor and the mentee. Series of sessions can pass with no progress but very important trust building elements that are not visible in session reports. Sessions with a numerous performance markers can pass, reach maturity in halfway and leave nothing to work on the rest of the procedure. A supervisor cannot predict and prevent a rupture or conflict occurrence.

Interventionist supervision will undermine the authority and intimacy built between the mentor and the mentee. Supervision should only interfere in cases of ethical violation reported by the mentor or the mentee. Best approach to improving quality

of the programme is to follow the methods of psychotherapists and coaches: regarding supervision.

EDP should offer supervision through selected exit interviews to discuss and understand session quality and offer seasonal mentor skill trainings to improve overall quality of the programme. EDP staff may join and observe mentorship sessions with permission of the mentee and mentor. EDP staff may not join or comment on the discussion during the process. EDP may not video or audio record the session without mentors and mentees permission.

Mentor performance may improve by supervising before sessions and reviewing process through exit interviews. It is important to collect negative mentee experiences, device trainings and supervisions to help mentors overcome factors that caused negative feelings.

Mentees can have many reasons to develop negative feelings towards their mentors. Researchers have worked on taxonomy to identify negative experiences in mentees (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000) Taxonomy can be useful in developing targeted supervision and trainings programmes for mentors.

156 mentees were interviewed in an executive development programme. Their negative experiences were listed and categorized. Top negative experience is Neglect (%16). This is summarized as lack of interest, insufficient feedback and evasive attitude. Neglect can be sign of lack of motivation by the mentor due to mismatch. They might not find the mentee with potential and does not feel benefitting from the potential outcome of the interaction.

Second negative experience is lack of interpersonal skills (%13) which is described as a difficult person to talk, insensitive, having communication skills. EDP can improve interpersonal skills by supervising and training mentors on listening, evaluating and questioning skills. It can be also faulty design that does not spare enough time to build a relationship in initiation to form a social bond.

Third negative experience is Tyranny (12%) that has a close percentage with the following Value (%11). Mentees find mentors authoritative, old school toughness, used authority, mismatch of values about work. Generational differences and values are difficult predictors in initial assessment; therefore they can evade matching process. Ethics and respect to boundaries are set to guide the border for intrusive behaviour that can irritate mentees.

Work style (%10) and Personality (%7) are reflections of different approaches to attitudes and habits. Mentees in work style complain, for example, about lack of

proactive attitude by mentor or personality differences. This is also a mismatch predictor that is hard to capture. EDP in the future can develop and ask psychometric questions such as attitude to work and personality types to increase accuracy in the matching process.

Bad Attitude (%5) and Technical Incompetency (%4) are in low percentages and their influences in bad experiences are weak. Bad attitude is an overall negative approach to issues and technical incompetence shows a lack of respect in mentor background. Bad Attitude can be corrected with supervision. Technical incompetence can be corrected with more accurate matching decisions.

Responses were collected in a western culture. Further studies can reflect on the taxonomy in eastern culture and in the cases of entrepreneurship mentoring.

Primary issues can be resolved through effective matching and a correctional procedure in case of a mismatch. Reducing the neglect in mentors and increasing the motivation of mentee by respecting competency level will ease negative experiences immensely. Primary mentorship skills such as interpersonal skills, listening and analysing attitudes, session management techniques and success and fail cases in the programme should be given to mentors to improve their effectiveness. Ethical standards and their applications will bring different values of mentors and mentees to agree on common guidelines to minimize distress.

Collection of exit interviews will help EDP to determine what type of programmes to implement whether its orientation to ethics, share of successful and failed cases, close supervision with troubled sessions, training in interpersonal or communication skills.

## **Session Troubleshooting**

### **Transforming sessions:**

Sessions with the highest performance markers and pivots. EDC should review matching scores; assessment scores and EDP review of the mentee. The conditions that resulted in the transforming sessions should be reported and used as an input in the future for the design of the mentorship programme.

### **Reinforcing sessions:**

Sessions with a high performance markers and revisions in the business plan. EDC should review matching scores; assessment scores and EDP review of the mentee. It is important to note whether mentor and mentee ever faced the weak dimension in

the assessment. A distribution map of validations on the assessment dimension can be useful.

#### **Explorative sessions:**

Sessions with high performance markers but no revision or pivoting. EDC should review matching scores; assessment scores and EDC review of the mentee. EDC can review whether the programme was too short or the business field was difficult to conduct validations or an issue of “chemistry” between mentor and the mentee.

#### **Inactive sessions:**

Sessions with low to none validation points and no revision and pivoting. EDC should review matching scores; assessment scores and EDC review of the mentee. Naturally a significant correlation between low matching scores and inactivity should be observed. If not, influencing conditions should be discovered.

#### **Out of guideline sessions:**

Sessions with pivot or revision but no pivoting. EDC should review matching scores; assessment scores and EDC review of the mentee. Mentor may not agree with the guidelines finding it “unnatural”. The development of relationship may take longer or shorter for the mentor and mentee. All information is important to understand why the guidelines were not covered and reason behind.

#### **Troubled sessions:**

Sessions with a request for reassignment, absenteeism on mentor/mentee, over rescheduling of sessions, complaints, fallout of sessions. EDC should review matching scores; assessment scores and EDC review of the mentee and reassignment sheets. Its correlation with low matching scores should be reviewed. Unexpected elements should be reviewed. Sustainability of the framing between mentor and mentee should be discussed.

It is highly recommended to conduct an “exit interview” with a mentor and a mentee separately for at least each type of session, so as to explore the conditions and reasons behind the different outcomes. The EDP will use these findings to design and adjust the mentorship programme after the pilot group.

### **Tracking Mentor Performance**

Are mentors comparable in terms of performance? Can EDP rank mentors according to performance? It is hard to say. No session is identical. Every session has different challenges. EDP does not have the right to delist anyone off the mentor pool unless

there are serious ethical allegations. But EDP can consider previous session notes and post assessment scores in matching with mentees.

**Discordant mentors:** Mentors with a significant number of troubled sessions where discordant behaviour is observed can be a reason to mark them off when matching. They should never delist but can be brought back to the programme occasionally.

**Low performance mentors:** Mentors with historically higher than average dropout rates, low engagements, reassignment requests (must have at least a sample of five mentees to decide) is a sign of low performance. This could be happening because of mismatch of backgrounds, low authority, and difficulty in forming a trust relationship.

**High performance mentors:** Mentors with high session satisfaction scores. It could also be a sign of efficient matching. Note that high satisfaction by the mentee is not necessarily a strong sign of high performance unless it has been translated into major performance markers. It could be a case that mentors are playing it safe and keeping mentees just happy but not pushing them out of their comfort zones. High satisfaction scores should be read together with performance markers.

EDP mentor pool will have a variety of discordant, low and high performing mentors. EDP should analyse and utilise the whole pool by applying effective matching policies. While low performance mentors will require rigid matching rules, high performance mentors may adapt to a variety of profile; therefore, having more flexibility with matching rules.

### **Incentives and keeping commitment of mentors**

There has been an increasing interest in mentorship research to understand and identify how mentors benefit from sessions. According to researchers, mentors are motivated primarily by “self focused” and “other focused” (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997). “Other focused” is the sense of altruism the benefit of helping others while the other is to learn and gain benefits from mentees. In indicated case, helping young startups is the main altruistic goal with a wider goal of helping Ankara economy to adopt more innovative companies. For the “self focused” interest, mentors who are interested in talent hunting, looking to invest in potential startups increase their reputations of helping successful company and practice their consultation skills. Mentorship programme when inviting mentors should rely on designing messages focused on appealing to both dimensions. The research points out that mentors with “other focused” motivation is more likely to mentor others than “self focused” mentors. Finally, mentees who benefited from mentorship are

strongly motivated to become mentors. It is important for EDC to track mentees and bring back successful mentees for potential mentors.

Mentors are also attracted to mentee motivation and capability. If the mentee is highly motivated with great potential, mentor is also motivated to continue. Reciprocal relationship underlies the true importance of having a strong assessment coaching session before matching with mentors. Low engaged mentees must be filtered and matched with mentors who are interested in their potentials. Effective filtration and matching will increase the chances of high reputation mentors to stay in the programme.

In the research, senior mentors also pointed out that they learn from mentorship process that is in line with Kram and Hall (1995) who defines the process as “co-learning”. Innovative startups can inspire senior business man to gain new perspectives on their own businesses.

Mentors benefit has also been reviewed through the social exchange theory pointed out Olian et al. (1993) where the cost of mentorship sessions is compared with the benefits. The economics of cost benefit will show the sensitivity of the mentor relationship. A line up of star mentors will be occupied; thus, this brings a high rate of cost to their mentorships. Successful startup founders coming back to mentor is also very effective but very difficult to keep them engaged due to the level of commitment involved. It can work but continuity problems are often observed. Expectations from mentees will be very high with a star, founder or academic line up. Retired business people and white collar professionals and civil servants are likely to have more control over their time; therefore, it is important to have a lower cost of time that they can use to benefit mentees.

Utilizing specialist and sponsor mentors for long process of mentorship is difficult. Their time is competitive and expensive; therefore, they can only on average contribute at 2-3 sessions per team. If specialists and sponsor mentors are incentivized with pay, it might send the wrong signal and attract consultants only as a market for business. Also it will put EDP in a difficult position to having to make choices to “hire” mentors. If the programme is voluntary only, it will make it difficult to attract and recruit required specialists. The only balanced approach is to have an open volunteer application pool for mentors with EDP leaving the choice open for purchasing specialist services if required.

TOBB University technology transfer office conducted a workshop in 2016 to understand Ankara mentor ecosystem (TOBB TTO , 2016). Participants agreed on a per diem model of payment that should be more 75 TL. Over incentivizing was also



discovered as a problem. Entrepreneurs were happy with the TÜBİTAK subsidized mentorship programme but they honestly pointed out that they would not pay for the service if necessary. Entrepreneurs until they are in early commercial or mature phase do not want to pay for mentorship phases. Mentor's getting paid by the mentee (which translates the service into consulting) is found harmful by most participants. In the end, participants agreed that mentor institutions must cover the cost of per diem of mentors. For the sustainability of the programme, more private and corporate involvement must be motivated according to the workshop outcomes. Potential investors can also finance the mentorship programme to assign mentors for helping the startup increase, its performance and success rate.

Coaching sessions that require continuity up to 5-6 sessions must be paid per diem to ensure continuous commitment. EDP must have in house coaching oriented mentors or subcontract the service from a credible coaching network.

There are unique examples where some mentor networks are given equity. Such incentive rewards the mentor if the mentee receives investment. In such case, EDP must ask for equity for the mentorship service given which is legally challenging.

## **Programme Design**

EDP can take two approaches to developing entrepreneurship ecosystem: Development or Reinforcement.

### **Development Approach**

EDP focuses its mentorship programme on early stage companies by increasing the quality of idea stage and prototype stage, entrepreneurs by coaching them to validate the market accurately, learning and creating new business ideas with innovative value proposition and increasing its likelihood of commercial success by reaching customers earlier through networking. Validation approach is customer centric; therefore, a mentorship programme focused on idea and prototype stage will increase the commercial survival rate of innovative startups.

### **Reinforcement Approach**

EDP focuses on pushing its resources to improve competitiveness and commercial performance of its early commercial or mature startups. Reinforcement programmes are particularly interested in helping early stage startups jump "death valley" by

helping them to reach customers through networking and finding commercial value proposition. Helping them discover competitive and scalable business models can reinforce mature start-ups. It will directly increase the investment deal flow quality of the region.

EDP can design horizontal programmes where an idea stage entrepreneur can enter the pipeline and develop through prototype, early stage and mature. EDP can also design vertical programmes focusing on increasing the innovation potential of a particular market.

- Horizontal mentorship programmes should follow the development phases of the entrepreneurship: Ideation, Prototype Development, Early Commercialization and Maturity. It should be ongoing application with a focus on improving investment capacity of Ankara. Mentees should be able to take an online reservation. Once approved by the center, they should be able to take a 3 step prescriptive mentorship session followed by signposting to a voluntary specialist pool and depending on performance finally reaching to a “sponsor” mentor.
- Vertical mentorship programmes should have an industry / technology focus. Vertical mentorships should be programmed with a time scope involving various industry actors as mentors to facilitate the increase in entrepreneurship activity in the target industry, to faster adoption of new business models and to increase collaboration between entrepreneurs and the industry.

EDP will have staff that will give a 3 step mentorship session (Assessment-Validation-Signposting). It will be given by full time staff as part of development agency service to prescribe solutions for entrepreneurs seeking investment. EDP Staff will train as coaching oriented mentors. In the near future, EDP can separate coaching oriented mentors into different stages: ideation mentors, project mentors, sales mentors and innovation mentors. EDP staff mentorship should be delivered in the center in the Ankara Development Agency.

EDP will also have a pool of specialist mentors who entrepreneurs can access on a voluntary basis. It will be an online listing of mentor profiles. The EDP staff can recommend them or the entrepreneur can pick themselves. Anyone from the city of Ankara with sufficient requirement may apply and join EDP pool. The majority of the pool should be located in Ankara. For mentors that are outside Ankara are required to conduct first one on one session in Ankara. Rest of the session can be conducted through online mentorship. Volunteers will not be paid but a small stipend can be reserved for logistical costs.

EDP will have a separate pool of “sponsor” mentors. These profiles cannot be picked by entrepreneurs but can be accessed when EDP organizes a “mentor day” or an open office hour. It will be a single session financed by EDP through “event budgeting” covering logistical costs. Sponsor pool is not open to application. It is exclusive and invite only. EDP should appoint a coordinator for networking.

EDP mentorship platform by utilizing a team of coaching oriented mentors in its facility will help accumulate and monitor “diagnostic” information through collecting performance markers on different stages of startups. Coaching oriented mentors will match mentee with a pool of specialist mentors. Matching and supervision of effective mentors will increase the delivery of value between mentors and mentees. Seasonally sponsor oriented mentors will give credibility to the improved mentees thus increasing the likelihood of attracting investment.

EDP through mentorship should guide entrepreneurs to programmes and services that can have the most benefit. There are local, national and international startup programmes that entrepreneurs can benefit. The EDP diagnoses and helps entrepreneurs to understand their stages and their priority needs to be directed to programmes. In this way, EDP does not compete with a startup programme in local region. EDP by utilizing effective mentorship matching integrates different programmes together to help entrepreneurs finding the best programme to join.

### **Programme Success and Sustainability**

EDP should set its goal for success and sustainability. On average, every year, there are 500 startups that have the potential for idea stage and prototype stage. There are around 100 startups in the pool for early stage and mature startups. The amount of target pool changes from year to year increasing incrementally influenced by market conditions. One full dedicated or two part time dedicated EDC coaches can apply 3 step initial assessments and validation steps to startups. One full time or two part time dedicated EDC coaches can focus on early stage and mature startups. A staff of 2 full times or 4 part time specialists can work to diagnose entire ecosystem throughout the year.

In our model, it is assumed that each startup will receive benefits equivalent to minimum wage per person no higher than 1500 TL. If the calculated benefit exceeds 2000 TL, it is best to be recommended to a consultant. EDC coach team including a supporting staff may cost up to 120 000 TL per year. That is 200 TL worth of dedicated service per startup. Each specialist mentor service economic value is 200 TL per session at minimum. According to our model and assumptions, our specialist mentors should give no longer than 6 mentorship sessions in total within one year

per startup. 6 sessions per year is also not a costly time weight for mentors if viewed through social benefit theory. Within the context of benefits, out of 600 startups with initial assessment what percentages are worth the attention of mentors who can offset the cost of hours spent.

The TÜBİTAK BİGG Programme uses between %10-%15 average rate of high potential startups in their entire pools. So EDC will pick 60-90 startups to external mentors. In our model, each mentor is assumed to handle one startup per year as a volunteer and no more. Our pool of external mentors should be 60-90 in number.

For sustainability, it is important to understand programme success threshold. If the total investment in programme is 120 000 TL in EDC funding and economic value of 900 000 TL (not necessarily paid out but in social capital if mentors are volunteers), the programme has to attract 5 000 000 investment to its startup ecosystem at minimum.

Annual target of 10 early stage funds invested at a rate of 200 000k per company. 3 mature company investment at the ticket size of 1 000 000 per company together can cover the economic cost of running a mentorship programme. Yet the programme should target at least 10 more early stage or 2 more mature company to show growing return on investment.

This is a model; therefore EDC management should play around with assumption, forecasting and modeling to figure out how much funds are needed. Important part is to show a relationship between parameters of EDC budget, economic value of mentors, target reinvestment objective and target pool size.

The formal programme used in our model is a short-term duration mentorship programme with emphasis on meeting with investors in the end with self-funding. As a bonus, programme can offer to agree with entrepreneurs for an equity sharing modeling with their mentors after six sessions if they receive investment. (This is still an untested approach)

### **Process of Mentorship**

- Collecting applications. Applicants pick the type of mentorship track they are seeking: Ideation / Prototyping / Early Stage / Mature.
- Reviewing applications. EDP Staff will review and filter applicants.
- Matching applicants with EDP mentors.
- EDP mentors conduct assessment session.

- EDP mentors match Mentee with a pool of specialist mentors. They can only pick two. One from business pool and one from technical are picked.
- Mentee returns with validation. Validation is reviewed with EDP mentors.
- Mentee can continue unsupervised validation. Once validation is ready, mentee is invited to mentor day where they can pitch their ideas to angel investors or sponsor mentors who can direct them to sources of funding.

### Process of developing mentor pool

- Potential mentors are invited to join the specialist mentor pool.
- Mentor completes a form profile.
- Mentors are invited to a social gathering every 6 months to discuss findings of session analysis.
- EDC matches a mentee a notification is sent to mentor.
- If the mentor is not responsive, EDC picks another mentor.
- Mentors may choose to be temporarily off the list or join back to the list. When they are off the list, EDC will not match them. Mentor may not be off the list for a longer duration of 12 months or they are dropped out of the programme and must reapply.
- Mentor receives a soft copy of session review. Mentor must fill the session review and send it back to EDC.
- Mentors fill a hard copy in EDC and drop it off in the bin for review.
- Mentor and mentee may meet as long as they like.
- During sessions, if there is any foul play that violates ethical rules, mentor or mentee may consult EDC.
- EDC will review and decide whether there is violation. If there is, then mentee and mentor may be re-matched.
- Once process is over mentor, and mentee receives an assessment sheet that is sent back to EDC.

## Final Words

Mentorship programmes are a great way to accumulate and pass on business knowledge and network. It helps the local business ecosystem to be more inclusive for entrepreneurs with lack of access to capital or know how helping them transform the local economy. Most incubation and accelerator programmes are primarily built on the value of mentor networks. While entrepreneurship training is increasingly becoming a commodity, access to mentors is what makes an accelerator programme different from another. Mentors working for EDP should feel that the real value created in improving the entrepreneurs is celebrated and brought back to the mentors in terms of reputation, network and new resources.

Successful mentees should be invited back as mentors. Recruiting and inviting new members to keep it fresh with new ideas and new contacts should help EDP cultivate Mentor pool.

A mentor platform for Ankara will help with the experience of mentors and the energy and fresh perspectives of mentees to work and collaborate and co-learn on how to deliver better value to the city and improve the international economic competitiveness of Ankara as the leading city, the capital of Turkey.

## **Appendix**

- 1.1-) Entrepreneur Application Form
- 1.1.2 Additional Question Set for Project/Prototype Stage Applicants
- 1.1.3 Additional Question Set for Early Stage Applicants
- 1.1.4- Additional Question Set for Mature Applicants
- 1.2-) Entrepreneur Application Scorecard (Only for EDC)
- 1-3) Mentor Application Scorecard (For EDC)
- 1-4) Matching Scorecard
- 1-5) Mentor Initial Assessment Form
- 1-6) Mentor Session Evaluation Form
- 1-7) Mentee Session Evaluation Form
- 1-8) Mentor Complaint form for Mentee
- 1-9) Mentee Complaint Form for Mentor
- 1-10) Programme Evaluation Form By Mentor
- 1-11) Programme Evaluation Form Mentee
- 1-12) Mentor Final Assessment Form
- 2.1) Mentor Validation Questions

<b>1.1-) Entrepreneur Application Form</b>	
Name and Surname	
Government ID	
Name of Company/Project	
Position in the project	
Physical Address	
Cell phone	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
Secondary Email Address	
Skype Name	
Birthdate	
Gender	
LinkedIn Profile	
Target Sector	
Team Skills and Capabilities	
Summary of the Business Plan (No longer than 550 words )	
Stage of your start-up	
Idea Stage Project Stage Prototype/Product Stage Early Commercial Stage Growth / International Stage	
<b>Additional Question Set if Startup cannot define their stage: (Optional)</b>	
Do you have a Business Model or a Business Plan?	
Do you have a registered company?	
Are you a partner in an existing company?	
Do you have a proof of concept?	
Do you have a product mock up?	



Do you have a working prototype?
Do you have a prototype that has receive user/customer feedback?
Did your company earn any revenue?
Did your company earn any revenue from your innovative product?
How many people are employed in your company?
What is innovative about your start-up ? (No longer than 550 words)
What are the areas you need mentorship for?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Model Development</li> <li>Marketing Strategy</li> <li>Sales Channel and Sales Strategy</li> <li>Technology Validation</li> <li>Customer Validation</li> <li>Partnership with Public Sector</li> <li>Partnership with Defense Industry</li> <li>Partnership with Private Sector</li> <li>Partnership with Infrastructure Providers</li> <li>Need for funding and investor</li> <li>Expanding to international markets.</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>

<b>1.1.2 Additional Question Set for Project/Prototype Stage Applicants</b>
What is the phase of your product?
Please share key team roles in your start-up ?

--

Who is your 1<sup>st</sup> customer? Define your next 5 group of customer segment? Did you reach them? What is their interest level? Cite your discussions

--

Tell us about your own insights about your target market?

--

**1.1.3 Additional Question Set for Early Stage Applicants**

What is your value proposition?

--

What is your go to market plan? How far have you progressed in reaching customers ?

--

What is your current largest revenue generating business line?

--

What is your predicted monthly burn rate in 12 months?

--

What is your predicted average revenue growth rate per week ?

Are you looking for funding? If so how much and what is your justification.
How many products can you produce in a month with your current capacity ?
Who is your key staff ? What is the role ? Why is it important ?
Share the roles and skills of the managerial team

<b>1.1.4 Additional Question Set for Mature Applicants</b>				
What is your current source of financing? Rank them in their size if you can (Grants, Credit, Investment, Personal Equity, Company capital)				
Leadership, Managerial Board and Board of Advisors				
Your Target Market and Customer Segment (Size and Growth Rate)				
What are the key regulations that govern your market? Are you complaint with current regulations?				
Who are your current competitors?				
	1	2	3	4
Company Name				
Market Share				
Key Product				

What is your competitor advantage?

--

Is there any barrier to market entry ?

--

How strong is the negotiation power of your suppliers ?

--

How strong is the negotiation power of your customers ?

--

How many substitute products are out there in the market ?

--

What is your average sales cycle ? What is the percentage of repeat sales ?

--

What is the percentage of complaints in relation to your sales? What are your customers mostly complaining about ?

--

Revenue Performance

	Sales	Revenue
Year 1		
Year 2		
Year 3		
Year 4		

Cost Performance

	Cost of Supplies	Cost of Labour	Overhead	Total Cost	
Year 1					
Year 2					
Year 3					
Year 4					
Year 5					
Operational Cost Performance					
	RnD Costs	Marketing Costs	Staff Costs	Financial Costs	Administrative Costs
Year 1					
Year 2					
Year 3					
Year 4					
Year 5					
Export Performance (If any international sales occurred)					
Period	Number of products sold	Revenue	Total Cost	Region	
Year 1					
Year 2					
Year 3					
Year 4					
Year 5					

<b>1.2-) Entrepreneur Application Scorecard (Only for EDC)</b>							
Name and Surname							
Name of the Project or Business							
Target Sector (Primary Matching Criteria)							
Stage of Start-up (Secondary Matching Criteria)							
Idea		Prototype		Early Commercial		Mature	
Mentorship Needs (Tertiary Matching Criteria)							
High School / College / MS MA / PHD							

Schools Attended (Tertiary Matching)						
	Yes	No	Unclear			
Clear business idea						
Business Model or a Business Plan in print						
Registered Company in the relevant field						
Partnership in a company in the relevant field						
Proof of Concept						
Mock up or a model						
Prototype (Not commercial)						
Company with a consulting/services sales record						
Company with product based sales record						
Just partners as employees						
Employee size 1-10						
Employee size 10-30						
Employee size more than 30						
<b>Business Strength</b>						
	None (0)	Low (1)	Medium (2)	Medium (3)	Strong (4)	Proven (5)
Problem-Solution Fit						
Team Strength						
Competitive Advantage						
Commercial						
Funding						
Total Business Strength Score (Average of all scores)						

<b>Business Strength for Prototype</b>						
	None (0)	Low (1)	Medium (2)	Medium (3)	Strong (4)	Proven (5)
Product Maturity						

Team Maturity						
Customer Maturity						
Market Maturity						
Funding						
Total Business Strength Score (Average of all scores)						

<b>Business Strength Scorecard for Early Commercial</b>						
	None (0)	Low (1)	Medium (2)	Medium (3)	Strong (4)	Proven (5)
Value Proposition						
Team Strength						
Go to Market Strategy						
Scalability						
Funding						
Total Business Strength Score (Average of all scores)						

<b>Business Strength Scorecard for Mature Startups</b>						
	None (0)	Low (1)	Medium (2)	Medium (3)	Strong (4)	Proven (5)
Strategic Advantage						
Financial Performance						
Market Performance						
International Competency						
Leadership						
Innovativeness						
Total Business Strength Score (Average of all scores)						

<b>Mentor Application Form</b>	
Name and Surname	
Government ID	
Current Company	
Current Job Position	

Physical Address	
Cell phone	
Other phone	
Email Address	
Secondary Address	
Skype name	
Birthdate	
Gender	
LinkedIn Profile	
Target Sector	
Technology Field	
Previous Mentorship Experience / Certification if any	
Time availability for Mentorship	
Full Time	
Weekend	
Weekdays after work hour	
Online meetings	
Not clear check before each session	
Other	
Mentorship Special Interest	
Woman entrepreneurs	
Young entrepreneurs	
Entrepreneurs seeking international business	
High tech entrepreneurs	
Entrepreneurs seeking investment	
Creative industries	
Other	

<b>1-3)Mentor Application Scorecard (For EDC)</b>	
Mentor Name	
Birthdate	
Gender	
<b>Primary Matching Criteria</b>	
Target Sector (Primary Matching Criteria)	
Years of experience in the target sector	
Technology Field (Primary Matching Criteria)	
Years of experience in the technology field (Strength)	



Mentor Primary Strength Score	
<b>Secondary Matching Criteria</b>	
Previous Mentorship Experience (Secondary Matching Field)	
Active total number of years mentoring (Strength)	
Previous Entrepreneurship Support Program Experience	
Active total number of years in Entrepreneurship Support Program (Strength)	
Affiliation/Network / Professional Body membership if any (Secondary Matching Field)	
Active total number of years of membership (Strength)	
Mentor Secondary Strength Score	
<b>Tertiary Matching Criteria</b>	
Mentorship Special Interests (Tertiary Criteria)	
High School / College / MS MA / PHD Schools Attended (Tertiary Criteria)	
Previous Techankara Mentorship Score if any (Strength)	
Mentor Tertiary Strength Score	
Mentor Total Strength Score ( Primary + Secondary + Tertiary = TOTAL SCORE	

<b>1-4) Matching Scorecard</b>							
<b>Key Primary Matching Criteria (Professional Matching)</b>							
Mentor Relevant Field				Mentee Relevant Field			
Total Number of Years in the field				Mentee Score (Total Business Strength)			
<b>Mentor Expertise</b>							
Production		Market		Technology		Management	
Professional				Entrepreneurial			
<b>Strength Score ( Mentor years in field x Mentee Score)</b>							

<b>Key Secondary Matching Criteria (Network Matching)</b>			
Mentor Relevant Field		Mentee Relevant Field	
Total Number of Years in the field		Mentee Score (Total Business Strength)	
<b>Mentor Expertise</b>			
Membership to Professional Bodies			
Work Experience in Entrepreneurship Programs			
<b>Strength Score ( Mentor years in field x Mentee Score)</b>			

<b>Key Tertiary Matching Criteria (Relationship Matching)</b>			
Mentor Relevant Field		Mentee Relevant Field	
Total Number of Years in the field		Mentee Score (Total Business Strength)	
<b>Mentor Expertise</b>			
Common area of interest			
Common affiliation (School, Institution etc.)			
Previous average Techankara post review score if any			
<b>Strength Score ( Mentor years in field x Mentee Score)</b>			
<b>TOTAL SCORE (Sum of Primary + Secondary + Tertiary Score )</b>			

<b>1-5)Mentor Initial Assessment Form</b>	
<b>Mentor Name Surname:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Mentee Name Surname:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Startup/Project Name:</b>	
<b>Session Date &amp; Time :</b>	

<b>Session Location:</b>						
<b>Phase of the Startup</b>	<b>Idea Stage</b>	<b>Project Stage</b>	<b>Prototype Stage</b>	<b>Early Commercialization Stage</b>	<b>Mature Stage</b>	<b>Scale-Up Stage (Being Global)</b>
<b>Patent Potential</b>	<b>No Patent</b>	<b>Patent Application Completed</b>	<b>TR Patent (Pending)</b>	<b>Global Patent (Pending)</b>	<b>TR Patent</b>	<b>Global Patent</b>
<b>Evaluate the following topics. Please mark only one choice.</b>						
<b>Idea: Problem-Value</b>	<b>Undefined or Unexpressed</b>	<b>No Value Proposition</b>	<b>No Unique Value Proposition</b>	<b>Good Value Proposition with New Business Model</b>	<b>Good Value Proposition with Improved/New Product &amp; New Business Model</b>	<b>Huge Value Proposition with Disruptive Idea (Gamechanger)</b>
<b>Idea: Originality of Idea</b>	<b>Undefined or Unexpressed</b>	<b>Copycat too Many Competitors</b>	<b>Minor Changes on Current Products at Market</b>	<b>New Business Model on Current Products at Market</b>	<b>New/Improved Product</b>	<b>Disruptive Idea (Gamechanger)</b>

<b>Market: Market Potential</b>	<b>Undefined</b>	<b>No Market Potential</b>	<b>Market Size is Too Small</b>	<b>Not a Growing Market</b>	<b>Growing a Market and Market Size is Huge</b>	<b>Creates a New Market (Gamechanger)</b>
<b>Market: Customer Validation</b>	<b>Undefined</b>	<b>No Customer Validation</b>	<b>Not Enough # of Customer Validation</b>	<b>Enough Customer Validation with Lack of Diversity</b>	<b>Too Many Diversified Customer Segments (Local)</b>	<b>Too Many Diversified Customer Segments (Global)</b>
<b>Team: Commitment</b>	<b>Team Members Have Other Full-Time Jobs &amp; Commitment</b>	<b>Team Members Look Other Opportunities During Working On Business Idea</b>	<b>All Team Members Have Half-Time Commitment</b>	<b>More Than Half of Team Has Full Commitment</b>	<b>Full-Time Entrepreneurs with Full Commitment</b>	<b>Full-Time entrepreneurs with Full Commitment &amp; Capital</b>
<b>Team: Experience &amp; Diversity</b>	<b>Undefined</b>	<b>No Experience and Lack of more than 1 Core Talent</b>	<b>No Technical or Business Team Member</b>	<b>Team Members Have No Experience about Business Idea (UG Students)</b>	<b>Team Members Have Experience on Related Business Area (Employers)</b>	<b>Team Members Experienced &amp; Successful Entrepreneurs on Related Business Area</b>

<b>Overall: Rating of the Business Idea &amp; Team &amp; Startup</b>	<b>0: No Potent ial</b>	<b>1: Low Potenti al</b>	<b>2: Mediu m Potent ial</b>	<b>3: High Potential</b>	<b>4: Huge Potentia l</b>	<b>5: Distrupt ive Startup with Huge Potentia l (Gamec hanger)</b>

**Please give detailed comments about the start-up (mentee).**

**Please define sustainability and scalability of the start up:**

**Define main areas to be addressed over the remaining sessions (Action Plan):**

**What are the desired outcomes for each of the areas defined above?**

**Are there any other points agreed during the first session?**

**1-6)Mentor Session Evaluation Form**

<b>Mentor Name Surname:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>		
<b>Mentee Name Surname:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>		
<b>Session Date &amp; Time:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>09:00-13:00</b>	<b>13:00-17:00</b>	<b>17:00-21:00</b>

Session Location:					
Session Topic:					
Evaluate the session topics from 1 to 5.	<b>1: Definitely not Agree</b>	<b>2: Not Agree</b>	<b>3: Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>4: Agree</b>	<b>5: Definitely Agree</b>
Team asked related questions.	Comments:				
Team answered questions correctly.	Comments:				
Team was open to feedbacks.	Comments:				
Team completed their assignments.	Comments:				
Evaluate your mentee from 1 to 5 according to the following criteria.	<b>1: Definitely not Agree</b>	<b>2: Not Agree</b>	<b>3: Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>4: Agree</b>	<b>5: Definitely Agree</b>
Market Know-How (about business idea)					
Experience about business idea					
Tech Know-How (about business idea)					
Desire / Enthusiasm (to business idea)					

<b>Team</b>					
<b>Are there any other things you want to add about the team?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>				
<b>In which areas team should get more mentoring?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>				
<b>Define main areas to be addressed over the remaining sessions (Action Plan &amp; Assignments):</b>	<b>Comments:</b>				

<b>1-7)Mentee Session Evaluation Form</b>					
<b>Mentee Name Surname:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>			
<b>Startup/Project:</b>					
<b>Mentor Name &amp; Surname:</b>					
<b>Session Date &amp; Time:</b>					
<b>Session Location:</b>					
<b>Session Topic:</b>					
<b>Evaluate the following topics from 1to5.</b>	<b>1:Definitely not Agree</b>	<b>2:Not Agree</b>	<b>3:Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>4: Agree</b>	<b>5:Definitely Agree</b>
<b>Mentor had read the documents related to business idea before the session.</b>					



	<b>Comments:</b>				
<b>Mentor comments were related, directing and constructive.</b>					
	<b>Comments:</b>				
<b>Mentor was a guide to my needs and challenges.</b>					
	<b>Comments:</b>				
<b>Evaluate your mentor from 1 to 5 according to the following criteria.</b>	<b>1:Definitely not Agree</b>	<b>2:Not Agree</b>	<b>3:Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>4: Agree</b>	<b>5:Definitely Agree</b>
<b>Know-How</b>					
<b>Experience</b>					
<b>Preliminary</b>					
<b>Encouragement / Support</b>					
<b>Quick Solution Maker</b>					
<b>Are there any other things you want to add about the mentor?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>				

<p><b>In which areas do you want to get more mentoring?</b></p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p>
<p><b>Are there any other points you would like to add about mentoring program?</b></p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p>

<p><b>1-8) Mentor Complaint form for Mentee</b></p>			
<p><b>Name Surname:</b></p>		<p><b>Signature:</b></p>	
<p><b>Startup/Project:</b></p>			
<p><b>Mentor Name Surname:</b></p>			
<p><b>Please choose the reason of your request to changing your mentor. You can choose more than 1 reason. Write comments about your request.</b></p>			
<p><b>Which Ethical Code do you believe mentor have violated.? Please try to provide proof.</b></p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p>		
<p><b>Conflict of interest (Working on same/close business ideas)</b></p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p>		
<p><b>Insufficient Comments &amp; Feedbacks</b></p>	<p><b>Comments:</b></p>		

<b>Mismatching (Different areas)</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Are there any other things you want to add about your request?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>In which areas do you want to get mentoring? Please write more details.</b>	<b>Comments:</b>

<b>1-9)Mentee Complaint Form for Mentor</b>			
<b>Name Surname:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Mentee Name:</b>			
<b>Project/Startup Name:</b>			
<b>Please choose the reason of your request to changing your mentee. You can choose more than 1 reason. Write comments about your request.</b>			
<b>Which ethical code do you think mentor have violated ? Please try to provide proof</b>	<b>Comments:</b>		
<b>Conflict of interest (Working on same/close business ideas)</b>	<b>Comments:</b>		

<b>Insufficient Works, Knowledge or Not Completing To-Do's</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Mismatching (Different proficiency areas)</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Are there any other things you want to add about your request?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Are there any other things you want to add about your mentee?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>

<b>1-10) Programme Evaluation Form By Mentor</b>					
<b>Name Surname:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>			
<b>Mentee Name Surname:</b>					
<b>Project/Startup Name:</b>					
<b># of session that you completed:</b>					
<b>Evaluate the following topics from 1to5.</b>	<b>1: Definitely not Agree</b>	<b>2: Not Agree</b>	<b>3: Neither Agree Nor Disagre</b>	<b>4: Agree</b>	<b>5: Definitely Agree</b>

<p><b>Mentor-Mentee matching was fit.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b># of sessions and frequency of sessions were adequate.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Mentoring program helped develop startup's business idea.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Mentoring program helped develop core abilities of team.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Expectations were met throughout the program completely.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Impact of the mentoring program was very useful.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Overall value of the program was high.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Please add your overall comments about the program</b></p>					

<p>In which areas the program should focus and get more mentors?</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Do you have any specific comments and reviews for your mentees and startups?</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Are there any other points and feedbacks you would like to add to make mentoring program more effective?</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

**1-11) Programme Evaluation Form Mentee**

<p>Name Surname:</p>		<p>Signature:</p>			
<p>Project/Startup Name:</p>					
<p>Mentor Name Surname:</p>					
<p># of session that you completed:</p>					
<p>Evaluate the following topics from 1to5.</p>	<p>1: Definitely not Agree</p>	<p>2: Not Agree</p>	<p>3: Neither Agree Nor Disagre</p>	<p>4: Agree</p>	<p>5: Definitely Agree</p>

<p><b>Mentor-Mentee matching was fit.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b># of sessions and frequency of sessions were adequate.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Mentoring program helped develop my business idea.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Mentoring program helped develop core abilities of our team</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Expectations were met throughout the program completely.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Impact of the mentoring program was very useful.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Coordination of the program was trouble-free.</b></p>					
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>					
<p><b>Overall value of the program was high.</b></p>					

	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Please add your overall comments about the program</b>	
<b>In which areas the program should focus and get more mentors?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Do you have any specific comments and reviews for your mentors?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Are there any other points and feedbacks you would like to add to make mentoring program more effective?</b>	<b>Comments:</b>

<b>1-12)Mentor Final Assessment Form</b>		
<b>Mentor Name Surname:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Mentee Name Surname:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>



<b>Startup/Project Name:</b>						
<b>Session Date &amp; Time :</b>						
<b>Session Location:</b>						
<b>Final Phase of the Startup (End of the mentoring program)</b>	<b>Idea Stage</b>	<b>Project Stage</b>	<b>Prototype Stage</b>	<b>Early Commercialization Stage</b>	<b>Mature Stage</b>	<b>Scale-Up Stage (Being Global)</b>
<b>Final Patent Potential (End of the mentoring program)</b>	<b>No Patent</b>	<b>Patent Application Completed</b>	<b>TR Patent (Pending)</b>	<b>Global Patent (Pending)</b>	<b>TR Patent</b>	<b>Global Patent</b>
<b>Evaluate the following topics according to progress of the startup (mentee). Please mark only one choice.</b>						
<b>Idea: Problem-Value</b>	<b>Undefined or Unexpressed</b>	<b>No Value Proposition</b>	<b>No Unique Value Proposition</b>	<b>Good Value Proposition with New Business Model</b>	<b>Good Value Proposition with Improved/New Product &amp; New Business Model</b>	<b>Huge Value Proposition with Disruptive Idea (Gamechanger)</b>
<b>Market: Customer Validation</b>	<b>Undefined</b>	<b>No Customer Validation</b>	<b>Not Enough # of Customer Validation</b>	<b>Enough Customer Validation with Lack of Diversity</b>	<b>Too Many Diversified Customer</b>	<b>Too Many Diversified Customer</b>

			on		Segment s (Local)	Segme nts (Global )
<b>Team: Commitme nt</b>	<b>Team Membe rs Have Other Full- Time Jobs &amp; Commi tment</b>	<b>Team Membe rs Look Other Opport unities During Workin g On Busines s Idea</b>	<b>All Team Member s Have Half- Time Commit ment</b>	<b>More Than Half of Team Has Full Commitm ent</b>	<b>Full- Time Entrepre neurs with Full Commit ment</b>	<b>Full- Time entrepr eneurs with Full Commi tment &amp; Capital</b>
<b>Overall: Rating of the Business Idea &amp; Team &amp; Startup</b>	<b>0: No Potenti al</b>	<b>1: Low Potenti al</b>	<b>2: Medium Potenti al</b>	<b>3: High Potential</b>	<b>4: Huge Potential</b>	<b>5: Distrup tive Startup with Huge Potenti al (Gamec hanger )</b>

**Evaluate the following topics from 1to5.**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>1:Definitely not Agree</b>	<b>2:Not Agree</b>	<b>3:Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>4: Agree</b>	<b>5:Definitely Agree</b>
<b>Mentee joined all sessions on</b>					

<b>time.</b>	<b>Comments.</b>			
<b>Mentee completed the To-Do's.</b>				
	<b>Comments:</b>			
<b>Mentee worked hard between sessions.</b>				
	<b>Comments:</b>			
<b>Please give detailed comments about the start-up.</b>				
<b>Please define sustainability and scalability of the start up:</b>				
<b>Please define the abilities and proficiency of the core-team:</b>				
<b>Define action plan of the team.</b>				
<b>Short Term (6-12 Months) Action Step</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Deadline</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	

<b>Mid Term (6-12 Months) Action Step</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Deadline</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Long Term (6-12 Months) Action Step</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Deadline</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Do you have any suggestions to the program managers about the team?</b>			

**Are there any other points agreed during the mentoring sessions?**

### **Appendix Mentor Validation Questions for EDC**

Session takes 30 minutes to 60 minutes.

**First 10 minutes:** Introduce yourself and EDC programme. Your job is to help the entrepreneur help improve their idea through validation.

**Next 5 minutes:** Ask them about their idea. The idea should have the following information. Entrepreneurs either share their thoughts or their actions. Please make sure you understand whether the information is their opinion or its based on an action.

**Remaining 15 to 30 minutes:** Ask questions for evaluation. If you find a weak section ask more questions for the entrepreneur to think about it.

**Last 15 minutes:** Recommendation before the next session.

Customer Validation : A well defined customer and their problem based on real examples

## Thoughts

**Q1:** Who is your customer?

**Q2:** What is their problem?

**Q3:** What is their need?

**Q4:** Why do they need this product?

**Q5:** Which customer group would benefit from this product the most?

**Q6:** What are some substitute products?

## Action

**A1:** Tell me which customer did you speak to? What did they tell you?

**A2:** How do you know this is a need? Do you know any real life examples?

**A3:** Did you find any similar products? List them.

## Evaluation

**E1:** How strong is the desire of the customer for the produce idea? (If weak apply recommendation)

**E2:** How clear is the problem description? Can they give any examples? (If weak apply recommendation)

**E3:** How clear is the customer definition? Is it specific or general? (If weak apply recommendation)

## Recommendation

**R1:** Speak to one customer.

**R2:** Speak to five customers and tell me about the most interested one. 3 of them you must meet them for the first time (could be a friend of friends)

**R3:** Go back to your customers and ask who would be interested in paying for the product.

**R4:** Try collecting preorders from your most interested customers.

**R5:** Take a photograph of your competitor products.

**R6:** Talk to a seller of competitor product and find out what is missing.

**R7:** Buy a competitor product and test on a customer.

**R8:** Speak to a market expert and take their opinion on the competition.

**Product Validation : A benefit provided by a product well designed.**

## Thoughts

**Q7:** What is your product?

**Q8:** What is unique about your product?

**Q9:** Tell me a competitor that does the same thing as your product.

**Q10:** What is the benefit of your product?

**Q11:** Is it one product or multiple products (a basket)?

**Q12:** Did you build the product? Is it an idea? A sketch? A prototype? A concept?

### **Action**

**A1:** Do you have a product description?

**A2:** Do you have a sketch of the product? 2D or 3D?

**A3:** What features does your customer like the most?

**A4:** Did you talk to a specialist mentor? What do they say about your design and packaging?

**A5:** Did you build a pre prototype of your product? What do your customer say

**A6:** Do you know who you will partner and work with? Did you call them? Did you make interview them?

### **Evaluation**

**E1:** Does the features of the product match customer expectations? Are they redundant or insufficient features (If weak apply recommendation)

**E2:** Does the product have any dominant features compared to competitors? (If weak apply recommendation)

**E3:** Is it product idea clear? Can this team build it? (If weak apply recommendation)

**E4:** What makes the product high quality? Supplies? Skills? (If weak apply recommendation)

### **Recommendation**

**R1.** Please write a one page product brochure and share with potential customers and get their feedback

**R2.** Please open a website or a Facebook page of your product or store and collect reviews. Collect feedback

**R3.** Please have a design of your product and package made (Sketch or 3D Visual). Collect Feedback from customers.

**R4.** Please produce a sample or demo of your product. Collect Feedback from customers.

**R5.** Please prepare a competitor comparison table.

**R6.** Make a list of work required to build the product. Call potential suppliers and partners.

**Team Validation: A well rounded team information with relevant skills**

### **Thoughts**

**Q13:** Do you have the skills to build this product?

**Q14:** Why did you choose this business? (Kalbfleisch, Appeasing the Mentor , 1997) (Gibb, 1999)

**Q15:** Who are your team members? Are you partners? Employees? Colleagues?

**Q16:** Do you have any potential investors?

**Q17:** Are you working full time on the business idea or part time? How much time do you spend on the idea in a week?

### **Action**

**A1:** Did you invite anyone to join the team?

**A2:** Do you have a job description for the positions you are looking for?

**A3:** How are you going to improve your skills? What do you do improve them?

**A4:** How are you going to keep the team together? What is the compensation plan?

### **Evaluation**

**E1:** Does the team have the skills to build the product? If not who will build it?

**E2:** What is the strength of the team? Does it benefit the business

**E3:** Are job descriptions clear? Do they know what type of people they are looking for?

**E4:** Are team members committed and motivated?

### **Recommendation**

**R1.** Make a list of jobs needed for the product. Underline key skills.

**R2.** Write a job description. What type skills and experience will you need for the product.

**R3.** Prepare an offer page. Why should they work for you? What is the benefit? What is exciting about your job?

**Market Validation : A well defined market information with market opportunity for growth potential**

### Thoughts

**Q18:** What is the target market?

**Q19:** What is the business mission?

**Q20:** Who is the strongest competitor?

**Q21:** Do you think the market is big enough? Can you find enough customers?

### **Action**

**A1:** Did you do market research? Is it news story or analysis report? What is source of market information? Is it credible? What do you understand?

**A2:** Did you interview a specialist that knows about the market? What did they tell you? How is that useful?

**A3:** Did you watch your competitors? Did you talk to them? Read their interviews? What does it tell you about the market?

**A4:** Did you visit chamber of commerce or a third party industry expert? How do they see the market?

### **Evaluation**



**E1:** Is the market big enough for the business to grow? (More than at least 20 million TL, small if 50m-100m, sufficient if more than 100m-500m and very big if more than 500m)

**E2:** Does the entrepreneur understand what market category they belong to? (Name of sector)

**E3:** Does the entrepreneur understand the properties of the market? Such as

- Are there any problems in entering the market?
- Any legal requirements?
- Who commands more power? Buyer or seller of the product?
- Who commands more power? Supplier of product inputs or buyers of components?
- Does the entrepreneur have any barrier to protect against competition
- Is it a crowded competitor market or only few players?

**E4:** Does the entrepreneur know the growth of the market? Is it slow market (less than %1 annual growth) medium (%5) or high growth (more than %10)

### **Recommendation**

**R1:** Collect 5 pages of information from web that is related to your market. Filter down to 1 page that is relevant to what you want to do? Underline keywords that repeated in the report. What do you understand from the market?

**R2:** Interview one market specialist and ask them about risks of the market. What are some of the items that make you scared of entering?

**R3:** Interview one business in the market and ask them about the risks of entering the market. Is it a big, medium or small market?

**R4:** Build a model. Guess the number of customers in the market. Calculate the average purchasing price and quantity for the year. Make a list of your competitors. Pick top %30 and give them %50 of the market. Pick medium size %50 and given them %40 of the market. Pick %20 and give them %10 of the market. Does it make sense? Can you change the numbers to reflect the market? Does it match with interview and research findings? How much market share can pick out of this.

### **Business Model Validation : A business model (how they are going to earn money.)**

#### **Thoughts**

**Q23:** How are you going to earn money? Will you paid in advance, on the point of sale or collect your money later? Will it be in installments or a single payment? Will you use credit card or cash? Is there free use before payment?

**Q24:** Is the product and market sufficient to grow your business? Do you have any plans to expand your product line or market in the future?

**Q25:** Can you personally survive on your expected income? When do you expect to break even?

**Q26:** How much do you need to start? How are you going to finance your startup?

**Q27:** What is your profit margin? What is your product capacity? Does your expected maximum income cover your costs and help you grow your business?

### **Action**

**A1:** Did the entrepreneur calculate the cost of producing per item and the price? Did the entrepreneur prepare a table comparing different prices?

**A2:** Did the entrepreneur fill a business model canvas form? How many times did they revise it? Did the business model change?

**A3:** Did they research payment methodology of their customers? Did they talk to a payment service company?

**A4:** Did they talk to an accountant? Are they aware of the costs of setting up a new company?

**A5:** Did the entrepreneur complete the business plan?

### **Evaluation**

**E1:** Does the entrepreneur have a convincing business model? (A way of earning money to support the business)

**E2:** Is this business worth doing? Can the entrepreneur survive just based on selling the product?

**E3:** Is the business sustainable in the long run based on the cash flow?

**E4:** Does the capacity of the business make sense? Can the business produce at the actual amount?

**E5:** Can this business grow? Is there a plan to drive costs down? In the future and increase income through a unique value proposition?

### **Recommendation**

**R1:** Please calculate your cost per product and your price.

**R2:** Make a sales forecast for 12 months. Base your sales forecast on expected demand and your capacity.

**R3:** Please work on your business model. Revise your business model based on new information you collect from customers and profit calculation.

**R4:** Please fill and revise your business plan. Spend more time with financial plans. Complete your survival budget, cost table, sales forecast, cash flow.

**R5:** Please talk to a potential investor? What are their questions based on? What type of investor did you speak to? Were they interested?

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