

Mentoring a Newcomer Entrepreneur

A Guide for CYBF mentors



Celebrating 15 years



cybf.ca

Year of the Entrepreneur
2011

Introduction2

Purpose of this Guide2
The CYBF Newcomer Entrepreneur Program2

1. Mentoring a Newcomer Entrepreneur4

Expectations and Role Clarity4
The Special Challenges of Mentoring a Newcomer5
Communicating with Your Mentee6
Strategies to Address Language Issues7
Mentoring Checklist8

2. Canadian Business Culture Issues9

Communication9
Business Culture in Canada10
General Business Etiquette11
Networking12

3. Newcomer Resources and Links13

Publications13
Websites14



Purpose of this Guide

This guide was created for CYBF mentors who will be working with newcomer entrepreneurs who have received start-up financing from the Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF). It is intended to supplement the materials and tools provided by the Ment2B™ online program.

The goal of this guide is to help you better understand how your mentoring approach can be tailored to meet some of the distinct needs facing a young newcomer entrepreneur.

The CYBF Newcomer Entrepreneur Program

CYBF's Newcomer Entrepreneur Program provides advice, information and support to young people who are new to Canada. Eligible newcomers are between the ages of 18 and 34 who have been in Canada for less than three years and are a Permanent Resident of Canada.

Most young people face barriers to starting their own business. Newcomers to Canada face additional barriers – language and cultural differences, as well as lack of a Canadian credit history and Canadian work experience. CYBF's Newcomer Entrepreneur Program addresses this need.



As a program participant, your mentee has already received the *CYBF Guide for Newcomer Entrepreneurs*. We highly recommend that you review this online guide, which covers:

- Issues unique to newcomers
- Business basics: such as banking, legal issues, business structure alternatives, business planning and financing
- Business culture in Canada: workplace values and etiquette, business clothing, greetings and dining out
- Communication: overcoming language barriers, email and phone etiquette
- Networking
- Mentors: the role of mentors and what to expect from your mentor
- Professional development

The *CYBF Guide for Newcomer Entrepreneurs* also includes numerous links to websites and online publications that provide more details.

As a CYBF mentor, you provide additional guidance and support to help young entrepreneurs in the critical first years of their business. This role is especially important for mentors who are working with newcomers to Canada



Expectations and Role Clarity

At the outset of every great mentoring relationship, the individuals should define roles and discuss how each person will contribute to the relationship.

The Ment2B™ Orientation program provides an opportunity for you and your mentee to discuss, agree and document their respective roles. You may need to invest additional time in this discussion with newcomers to Canada.

Mentors of all young entrepreneurs may find themselves under pressure to take on the role of an instructor as the business owner seeks out specific guidance and direction. Here are a few suggestions to help you clarify roles and expectations:

- Explore with your entrepreneur the role of mentors and advisors in the context of Canadian business. Compare it to how they might view an advisor or elder in their own culture.
- Help your entrepreneur understand the role of the mentor and contrast the mentor's role with other roles that support a business owner (such as an accountant or lawyer).
- Describe what behaviours the entrepreneur should expect from you when you are mentoring. For example, a mentor is someone who is more likely to ask questions than provide instructions. A mentor will share examples from their own experiences only to highlight alternatives, not to direct.



1. MENTORING A NEWCOMER ENTREPRENEUR

- Explain that ultimately the mentor's role is to ensure that the decision-making rests with the entrepreneur. The mentor improves the quality of decision-making by helping the entrepreneur to thoroughly review all considerations and alternatives.
- Discuss your motivation. When mentoring a newcomer, you must also be prepared to articulate the reason that you are volunteering your time as a mentor. The newcomer may find value in better understanding your reasons for volunteering. Explain any tangible skills that you hope to build while mentoring, such as coaching or business marketing skills.

The Special Challenges of Mentoring a Newcomer

As a mentor to an entrepreneur, you will help your mentee understand business concepts and practices. As a mentor to a newcomer entrepreneur, you also have to explain business culture in Canada – everything from manners and language to laws and financing.

The *CYBF Guide for Newcomer Entrepreneurs* explains the issues unique to newcomers. These may include:

- Lack of credit history
- Insufficient information for business planning
- The challenges of not having a strong network of colleagues, customers, friends and family
- Lack of familiarity with business and social environments and systems in Canada
- Language obstacles
- Lack of recognition of credentials



It's important that you recognize the issues that are unique to newcomers. Take time to establish your mentee's awareness of the Canadian business environment and culture – don't assume they are familiar with manners and customs that you take for granted.

Communicating with Your Mentee

Mentors experienced in working with newcomer business owners often say the major adjustment they made to their mentoring style was in how they communicate. Here are a few tips for effective communication with your newcomer entrepreneur:

- Be straightforward and direct in your conversations. Use simple language and getting right to the point. Don't lead in to information with an abundance of context. Begin with your main point, and then ask if the entrepreneur would like to hear an example to illustrate your point.



Avoid adages and sayings: A newcomer may hear you say “customers will be coming in by the busload” and be confused, not encouraged.

- Encourage the entrepreneur to direct the conversation. It often helps to have a standard agenda of topics for the entrepreneur to run through in each mentoring conversation. (This agenda will be built as you go through the Ment2B™ Online Orientation together).
- Another method is to have your mentee identify three questions they would like to discuss with you – getting these questions prior to the mentoring meeting will ensure you have time to prepare with some follow-up questions of your own.



1. MENTORING A NEWCOMER ENTREPRENEUR

- Begin your conversations with “closed” questions to make it easy to respond and then expand the conversation from there. This may require additional preparation on your part but will make a positive difference for the entrepreneur, particularly in the first few mentoring conversations.

OPEN	CLOSED
<i>Open questions deliberately seek longer answers and often require thought or reflection before a response can be given. Often start with Why, How or What.</i>	<i>A closed question can be answered with a short answer and confines the response. They are quick and easy to answer. Often start with When, Where, or Do.</i>
<i>What are your major concerns or obstacles?</i>	<i>When does your advertising promotion begin?</i>

- Introduce the topic of oral and written skills where possible. In many cases, newcomer entrepreneurs have English as their second language and may not be comfortable with either their verbal or written skills. Don’t assume that a strong oral communicator also has strong written language skills. While your mentee may be hesitant to discuss this potential weakness, your role is to be sensitive while also encouraging disclosure. In addition to helping your mentee improve language skills, you can also encourage them to consider additional coaching on business communication skills.

Strategies to Address Language Issues

CYBF tries to match newcomer entrepreneurs with local mentors who share knowledge of their native language, if requested to do so. However, if this was not possible for you and your mentee, or not requested, you may encounter communication challenges. Here are a few tips to help you overcome language issues:



1. MENTORING A NEWCOMER ENTREPRENEUR

- Get it in writing. If you have difficulty understanding your mentee's oral communication, ask your mentee to provide questions or topics for discussion by email before the discussion. In addition to providing clarity for the mentor, the entrepreneur will practice their written communication.
- Ask for permission to make corrections. Agree up front to take a "time out" to correct pronunciation or word usage, as well as errors in written communication such as emails.
- Practice small talk. Each time you meet, whether it's in person or over the phone, engage in personal conversation with your mentee. Discuss appropriate topics and situations for small talk.
- Emphasize accuracy in written communication. Advise your mentee about how to use correct language (such as consulting a dictionary) and provide examples of good business writing.

Mentoring Checklist

Your mentee has been given a **Mentoring Checklist** that includes a list of mentoring discussion topics such as business terms, communication skills and business/social etiquette. You and your mentee should review that list together and determine the priority items to discuss.



Experience has shown that what a newcomer entrepreneur needs most from a mentor is strong knowledge of the Canadian small business market. This information is often best communicated by inviting your mentee to share what the customs and practices were in other countries where they have lived or done business. This will help you to highlight specific differences and prepare your mentee to operate successfully in the Canadian business climate.

Here are some common issues related to business culture that may be relevant to a newcomer entrepreneur. They are all discussed in more detail in the *CYBF Guide for Newcomer Entrepreneurs*, but you can provide valuable local or personal insight.

Communication

As a successful business person, you understand that communication is critical to building relationships in business. An entrepreneur must understand how to effectively use email and the phone to communicate with others. You can help them understand the importance of providing good customer service through prompt and effective communication, as well as best practices in email and phone communication.



- Find Out More:*
- [*Business Etiquette Quiz*](#)
 - [*Business Communication Etiquette Article*](#)



Business Culture in Canada

Understanding common workplace values can help your mentee develop relationships with customers, suppliers, partners and employees. You might want to discuss some of the attributes that are highly valued in the Canadian workplace such as:

- Team work
- Gender equality
- Creativity, innovation and initiative
- Adaptability
- Solution-oriented
- Positive attitude towards change and uncertainty

A “can-do” attitude is the single biggest factor in a newcomer’s ability to achieve career success in Canada – more influential than professional skills, education and previous work experience – according to a recent study from the University of British Columbia.



General Business Etiquette

Learning the nuances of communication (verbal and non-verbal) and how to deal with clients, suppliers or other partners is a lifelong exercise for even the most experienced business person. Newcomers may find that much of what we do in Canada is new or different.

It may be useful for you and your entrepreneur to discuss some of the following topics and to highlight how Canadian customs differ from those in other countries:

- Use of titles (Mr./Ms.)
- Negotiation
- Handshaking and eye contact
- Dining etiquette
- Business attire
- Gift-giving and hosting customers/colleagues



Find Out More: Helpful links:

- Canadianimmigrant.ca
- [Business Body Language](#)
- [Canada's Workplace Culture](#)
- [Proper Business Attire](#)



Networking

Newcomers face the daunting task of launching a new business venture in a new market. In many cases, a newcomer entrepreneur may start out by focusing marketing efforts on their own cultural group, where they are most knowledgeable.

If appropriate, you can encourage the entrepreneur to stretch beyond this segment of the market. Expanding to a larger market may reduce their overall risk by giving them access to more consumers, and it may involve examining the business plan to look for ways to leverage the larger market place.

Becoming part of the larger business community requires the entrepreneur to expand their existing support network. Here are a few ways you can support your mentee's networking efforts:

- Discuss the role of networking in Canadian business. The concept of reciprocal relationships that support business growth may be unfamiliar to your mentee.
- Identify business associations or groups in the local area that provide networking opportunities. Encourage your mentee to explore these groups and get active in one or more. This may begin by simply attending a local business breakfast club meeting, contacting an industry association group or talking to a local Rotary Club to determine where the best fit is for the individual.
- Explore how your own network may provide opportunities for your mentee to learn about the local business community. Consider inviting your mentee to accompany you as a guest in your own networking efforts to learn by example how networks can help them be more successful.



Publications

- [Start Up Info-Guide for Newcomers to Canada](#)
- [Guide for Canadian Small Businesses](#). Provides useful information on a broad range of issues, such as how to set up a business, the GST/HST, excise taxes and duties, payroll deductions, and income tax.
- [Resource Guide for Business Immigrants to Ontario](#)
- [Canadian Newcomer Magazine](#)
- [Canadian Immigrant Magazine](#)
- Canadian Immigrant Magazine – [Welcome to Canada Guide](#)

- Oxford University Press Canadian Newcomer Series:

Arrival Survival Canada by Nick Noorani and Sabrina Noorani, 2008

This is an immigrant's guide to the first year of life in Canada and covers a wide array of subjects, such as packing before emigrating, opening bank accounts, creating a credit history, and understanding Canadian school systems. The book guides readers through Canadian culture and outlines solutions to the issues that newcomers typically encounter. The book provides new immigrants, and people still considering immigration, with a foundation of information upon which to build their new lives.

You're Hired – Now What? by Lynda Goldman, 2009

This guide will give people from different countries and backgrounds an understanding of Canadian workplace culture and norms. The material is presented as a general guide to adapting to a professional environment and explains common best-practice procedures at work. Examples are given to help explain and illustrate the positive results of working within these general guidelines.



Websites

- [Canada Business – Services for Entrepreneurs](#) - provides customized information, including step-by-step guides, on starting a business in your province. These guides include key aspects of starting a business and the federal, provincial and territorial government programs, services and regulations that may apply.
- [Citizenship & Immigration Canada](#)
- [Settlement.org](#) (Ontario) - a listing of services and websites where you can find information about starting a business in Ontario
- [Connect Legal](#) (Ontario) - provides legal educational services and pro bono (free) commercial legal assistance to qualifying low-resource immigrant entrepreneurs.



Need help?

Contact your CYBF Relationship Manager or call 1-888-646-2922

Special thanks go to:

