



## How to Gain & Retain Mentors

### Gain Mentors

- ❑ **Identify what your needs are.**

In order to recruit the right mentor, your VE class should understand where their weak points are. Do they need help organizing their financials? Are they looking for guidance in the marketing department?

- ❑ **Reach out to your Regional Director**

Ask your Regional Director if there are any corporate or college partners that are looking to mentor a VE class. VE has partnerships across the country that may be looking for an opportunity to support a class!

- ❑ **Create an outreach email**

Work with your students to create an email or letter that you can send to local business owners. Be sure to include a description of the VE program (see: [Why VE? page](#)), what business your class is running, and how you would like to be supported by the person or business.

- ❑ **Reach out to local businesses & Chamber of Commerce**

VE Coordinator Chris Powers has a few of his students visit local businesses, handing out promotional items from their firm and a letter explaining what the VE program is and how they could use their help. This helps the students practice their elevator pitch as well as offers an opportunity to make the community aware of the VE program in your school (which leads to potential donors, volunteers, mentors, and sponsors).

Reaching out to your local Chamber of Commerce is another great way to connect with local businesses.

- ❑ **Host an Open House**

Work with your school to set up an Open House event in which parents and local businesses can visit your VE class. Have your students welcome the guests, talk about their role in the company, and show some of the work the class has done.

### Retain Mentors

- ❑ **Meet with your class mentor**

We highly recommend meeting with your mentor prior to introducing them to the class in order to discuss goals, expectations, and time commitment. After the initial meeting, have your executive team meet with the mentor to go over what they need help with and what the schedule is going forward in the school year.

- ❑ **Communicate!**

Keep your mentor up to date about upcoming deadlines, school holidays, and special events.

- ❑ Tip: Share a Google Document where the mentor and the class can post updates progress, questions, and an agenda for each visit.

- ❑ **Updates**

For mentors who only visit occasionally, send updates with pictures of the student's activities and planned events.

- ❑ **Shout-outs**

Acknowledge mentors periodically: in newsletters, with thank you notes, with signed team picture at the end of the year, etc.

- ❑ **Student attendance**

Between AP tests, college applications, and "senioritis," it may be difficult to maintain a full class during the VE year. Be sure to emphasize the importance of being punctual and present on the days that mentors are set to visit. Mentors greatly appreciate when students are making the effort to show up and get right to work when they visit.

### Thank Mentors

- ❑ **Write thank you notes**

Have your class write personal thank you notes to the mentor(s) that helped throughout the year, expressing how their time and support made an impact. Contact your Regional Director to get official VE stationary.

- ❑ **Host a thank you breakfast**

Have your Human Resources department plan an appreciation event and invite your mentor(s) at the end of the year. Students can use this time to talk about their growth, their favorite accomplishments, and what they learned.

- ❑ **Recap the year**

Have the firm present their annual report at the end of the year with acknowledgements to the mentor(s) that helped throughout the year. This gives the students a chance to recap their successes and their challenges, while giving the mentor a chance to learn what worked well and what can be improved.