



CHICAGO STATE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

How to be a Great Mentor

A Guide for Upnotch Mentors

Unlock your full potential as an Upnotch mentor and empower others to succeed with our comprehensive guide. From cultivating trust and effective communication to nurturing personal and professional development, this resource equips you with the tools to become a catalyst for success in your mentees' lives.

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Upnotch Mentorship

Welcome to the world of mentoring! As a mentor, you have the opportunity to make a positive impact on someone's life and support their personal and professional growth. This guide will provide essential principles and practical tips to help you become a great mentor and maximize your impact as a mentor on Upnotch.

Mentorship is a powerful tool for personal and professional development, but it's crucial to establish a clear understanding of its purpose and what it entails. As a mentor, you should guide your mentee through the following key points to ensure alignment.

Understand the Role of a Mentor

What is Mentorship?

✓ Development Tool

Mentorship serves as a program that fosters knowledge, networks, and career development. It allows experienced individuals to support and develop other employees.

✓ Knowledge Sharing Opportunity

It facilitates cross-functional knowledge sharing, promoting the flow of information and ideas within the organization.

✓ Organizational Culture Enhancer

Mentorship helps employees better understand the organization's operations, policies, and culture.

✓ Candid & Specific

A good mentoring relationship provides honest and specific feedback, enabling growth and development.

What Mentorship *Isn't*

⊖ A Guarantee of Promotion

Mentorship doesn't guarantee promotion or an increase in compensation. However, both mentor and mentee can develop competencies and enhance skills that improve overall job performance.

⊖ Replacement for Formal Development

Mentorship cannot replace formal training programs but should complement them as a supplementary development activity.

⊖ Management Replacement

Mentors should not take on the responsibilities of the mentee's manager but instead provide guidance and support outside the formal reporting structure.

Mentorship vs. Coaching

Mentoring and coaching differ in objectives, impacts, and durations. By grasping these distinctions, both mentors and mentees can navigate their roles effectively:

Mentorship:

- Facilitates a culture of growth and development within the organization.
- Focuses on the individual's development needs and goals based on their career aspirations.
- Mutually benefits both the mentor and mentee, creating a reciprocal relationship.
- Builds long-term connections beyond the formal mentorship sessions.

Coaching:

- Assesses and improves an individual's performance in a specific area.
- Disproportionately benefits the person being coached, with the coach being an expert in their domain.
- Operates within a defined timeline to achieve performance-related objectives.
- Involves evaluation and measurement of performance change.

Evaluation & Relationship Dynamics

Mentoring relationships are non-evaluative, whereas coaching relationships involve performance assessment. Mentors should not serve as direct supervisors or managers for their mentees in order to maintain an unbiased and supportive environment.

Driving the Relationship

In mentorship, the mentee takes the lead by setting goals and seeking solutions to their challenges. Conversely, coaching is driven by the coach or supervisor, focusing on specific performance goals and skill development.

Personalization & Repeatability

Mentoring is highly personalized, addressing individual needs and challenges beyond company-wide initiatives. It also provides networking opportunities and helps onboard new employees. Coaching, on the other hand, targets specific skill gaps and utilizes generalized programs that can be replicated across individuals.

By understanding these fundamental aspects of mentorship and clarifying expectations, both mentors and mentees can establish a solid foundation for a fruitful mentoring relationship.

Preparing Yourself as a Mentor

Becoming an effective mentor requires preparation and self-reflection. Understand different mentoring styles and assess your own preferences to establish meaningful connections and provide valuable guidance to your mentees. Here's how:

Building a Relationship

Experience the power of trust in building strong connections through open communication, vulnerability, and mutual respect. Create a safe and non-judgmental space, actively listen, show empathy, and invest in your mentee's growth to foster a meaningful mentorship relationship.



"I always start out by giving them the advice to listen to their own intuition. There's more than just that one goal. I was on a very direct path to becoming an attorney right up until it was time to apply to law school, I became a chef. Life is going to teach you more about you, and what you want to do in your life."

John Brennan, Executive & Advisor

Providing Constructive Feedback & Guidance

Deliver feedback that is not only constructive but also specific, actionable, and infused with support. Guide your mentee by sharing your personal

experiences, equipping them with resources and tools, and helping them navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

Setting Goals & Tracking Progress

Embark on a collaborative journey with your mentee to establish **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals. Keep the momentum alive by tracking and measuring progress, celebrating milestones, and exploring tailored tools and approaches that best suit your mentee's needs.

Supporting Development

Ignite the personal and professional growth of your mentee. Encourage them to uncover their strengths, address weaknesses, and identify areas primed for development. Foster their growth by recommending relevant books, courses, workshops, and facilitating connections with networks and professionals.

Navigating Challenges & Conflicts

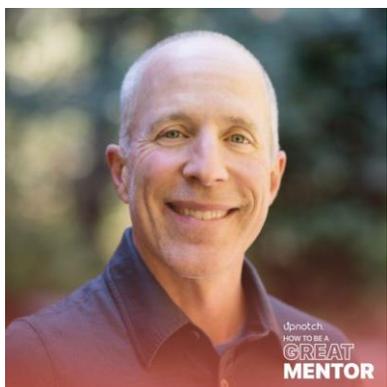
Anticipate potential hurdles and conflicts that may arise during your mentoring relationship. Skillfully manage differing expectations, conflicts of interest, and breakdowns in communication. Equip yourself with conflict-resolution strategies and problem-solving skills, safeguarding the health and longevity of your mentorship.

Balancing Mentorship with Other Commitments

Master the art of time management, skillfully juggling your mentoring responsibilities alongside other commitments. Establish clear boundaries, set realistic expectations, and optimize your availability to create a harmonious mentorship dynamic.



Upnotch makes it effortless with our Google and Outlook sync. You can seamlessly add your availability directly to your profile.



"I don't take a mentee on unless I have a full open head to actively listen and be there for that person as they need me to be at that moment in time."

Dan Sears, Chief Product & Growth Officer at VolunteerMatch

Continuously Learning & Improving as a Mentor

Cultivate a mindset of perpetual learning and growth in your role as a mentor. Encourage introspection and seek feedback from your mentee, fostering a spirit of collaboration and improvement. Stay abreast of industry trends, best practices, and expand your professional horizons through workshops, mentorship communities, and seeking guidance from experienced mentors.

Session Foundations

By setting clear expectations, exploring different mentoring styles, and assessing your own mentoring style and preferences, you will be better equipped to provide effective guidance and support to your mentees.

Session Expectations

Set clear expectations, explore different mentoring styles, and assess your own mentoring style to provide effective guidance and support to your mentees. Define roles, establish boundaries, and ensure a mutually beneficial partnership.

Different Mentoring Styles

Understand traditional mentoring, reverse mentoring, and different approaches based on the mentee's needs. On Upnotch we want the mentee and mentor to craft the ideal mentorship relationship. Here are some examples of different mentorship styles:

- **Traditional Mentoring (Ongoing):** The mentee is working on a goal and will establish regular meeting sessions.
- **Reverse Mentoring:** A mentee (senior professional) has the opportunity to share their expertise with a more experienced mentor (early career professional). In return, the mentor also shares their valuable experiences. Explore how this unique style of mentoring fosters cross-generational learning and promotes innovation.
- **One-off:** A mentee may have a specific question that requires a single mentoring session for resolution.
- **On-demand:** In some cases, a mentee may prefer to check in periodically, such as every quarter or few months. This approach is commonly adopted when working towards a long-term goal, allowing for regular touch points to track progress.

Assessing Your Own Mentoring Style

Reflect on your communication style, identify areas of expertise, and leverage your knowledge to provide valuable guidance.



"I learned early on in my career that title is not necessarily an indication of culture, class sophistication, or even experience. Sometimes, the title is just in lieu of lack of compensation. My first role in sales was as a VP of Sales of a three-person company. It took me 25 years to get back the VP title. Remember all of us who are there as mentors on Upnotch have decided to be there to pay it forward. So don't let titles intimidate you. We are here to share our experiences with anybody who wants to tap into it. We're here to help you!"

Chuck Marcouiller, VP of Revenue Enablement at FreightWaves

Mentorship Sessions

Begin preparing for your first mentorship session by setting an agenda and goals, using icebreakers to build rapport, and discussing expectations and boundaries. Get ready to make a strong and meaningful impression!



#UpnotchHack: Ask your mentee two simple questions. What's on your mind today? What challenges have you faced this week?

Cultivating Effective Relationships:

Build trust, actively listen, provide constructive feedback, respect confidentiality, and embrace diversity and inclusivity.

✓ Do's:

- Demonstrate active listening, provide constructive feedback, and offer guidance based on your expertise and experience.
- Nurture inclusivity and diversity by embracing different perspectives by respecting and appreciating your mentee's unique background and experiences.

⊖ Don'ts:

- Avoid imposing personal beliefs or agendas on your mentee. Respect their individuality and allow them to make their own decisions.
- Don't assume you have all the answers. Mentoring is a collaborative process where your mentee has valuable insights and perspectives you can also learn from.



"I think the first connection is crucial. It's setting the tone between the mentor and Mentee. Setting expectations, humanity, and setting goals, clear goals. Second, I think building rapport is also very important. Another thing is also establishing the communication preference in terms of the length of the meetings."

Sebastiano Armeli, Engineering Leader

Guidelines for Productive Meetings

Schedule and frequency, create a safe and confidential environment, manage time effectively, keep records of discussions, adapt mentorship approaches, seek feedback, and evaluate the mentoring relationship.

Evaluation & Feedback

Celebrate achievements, encourage mentees to become mentors, sustain relationships beyond the mentorship, and provide additional resources for ongoing mentorship and professional development.



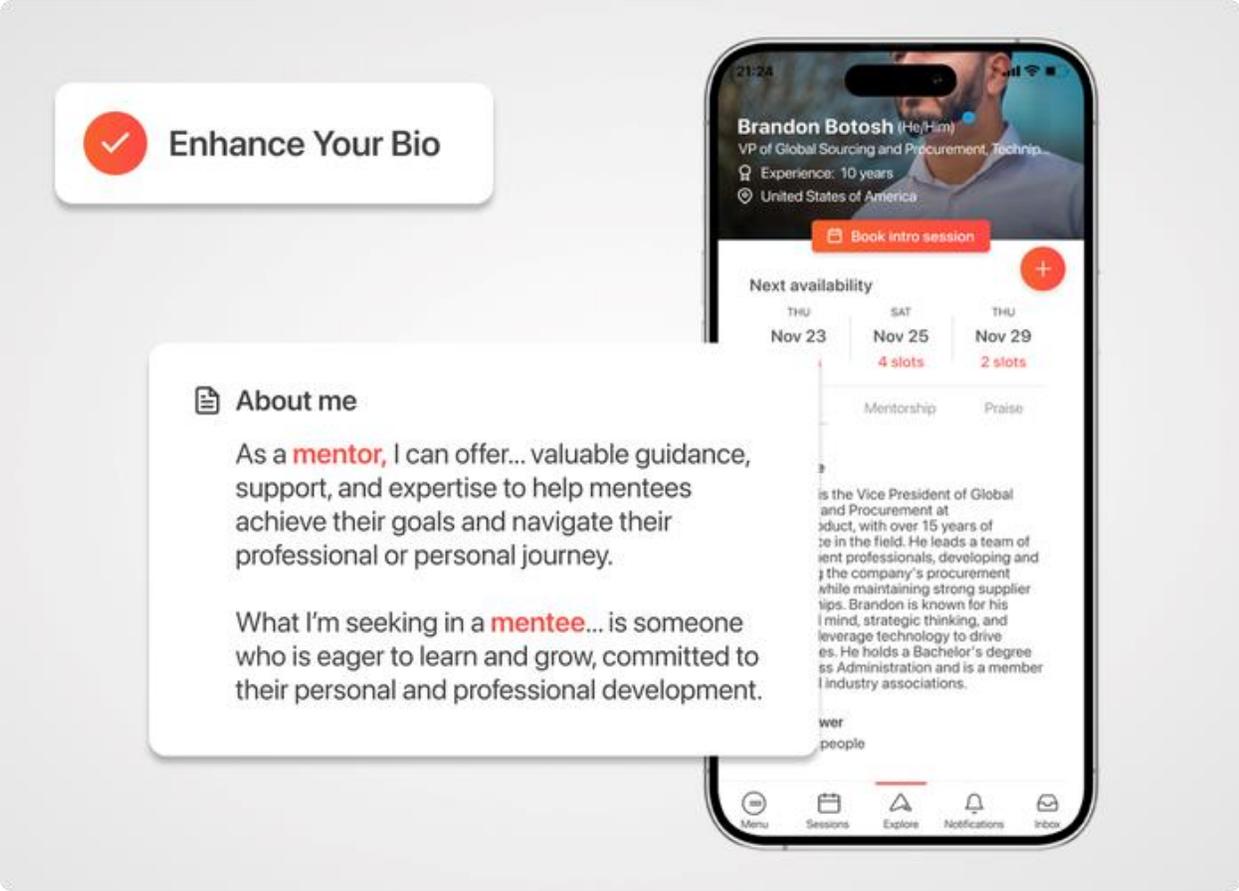
"Are they making progress? If they're not making progress, is it because they're still stuck or am I not doing a good job? Is it because of their organization? Are they just in the wrong place or is it because they're truly not ready? That's when you really have to kind of drill down into what somebody really wants to do versus what they're capable of doing."

Patti Ringo, Regulatory and Gov't Affairs at Sonic

Maximizing Mentorship on Upnotch

Elevate your presence as a mentor on Upnotch. Discover secrets to excelling on the platform, enhance your visibility, customize settings, and curate an outstanding profile that draws mentees seeking your expertise.

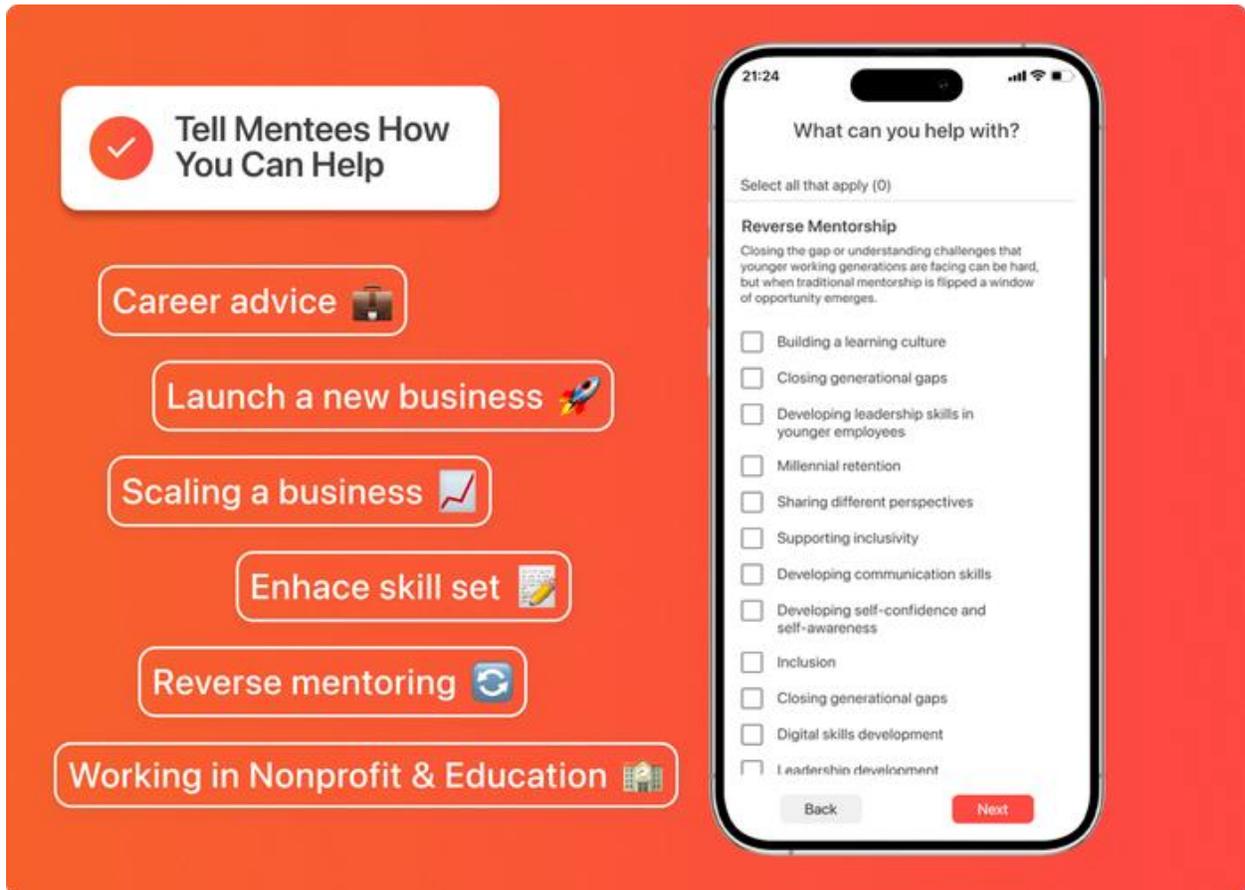
Write Your Bio



In addition to adding all the basics to your Bio, try adding a few sentences on what you offer as a mentor and what you're looking for in a mentee!

Want your Bio written by Upnotch in-house experts? Email them at: support@upnotch.io

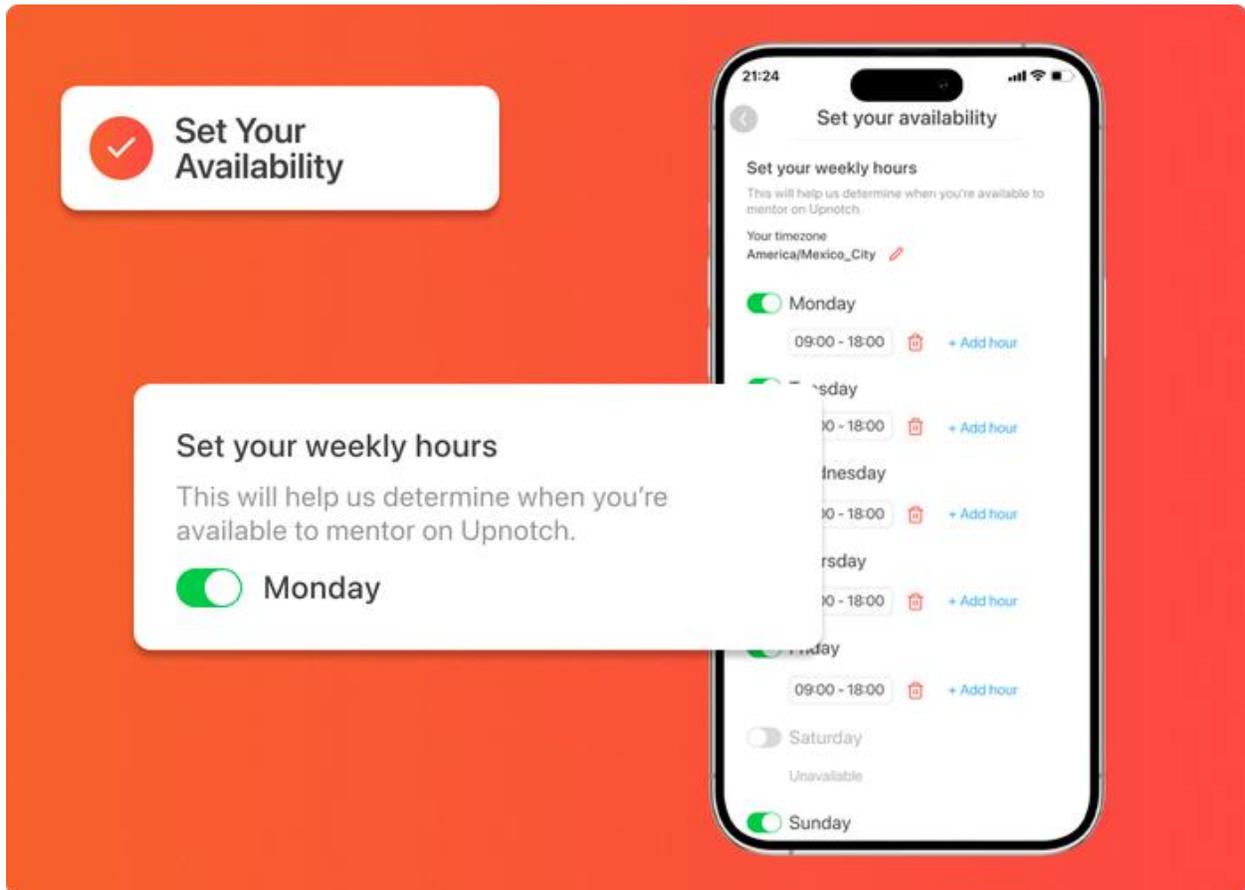
Tell Mentees How You Can Help



Take a few moments to select all the areas and topics that you're knowledgeable in and the topics you'd be comfortable mentoring other people on.

This gives members the information they need to find you.

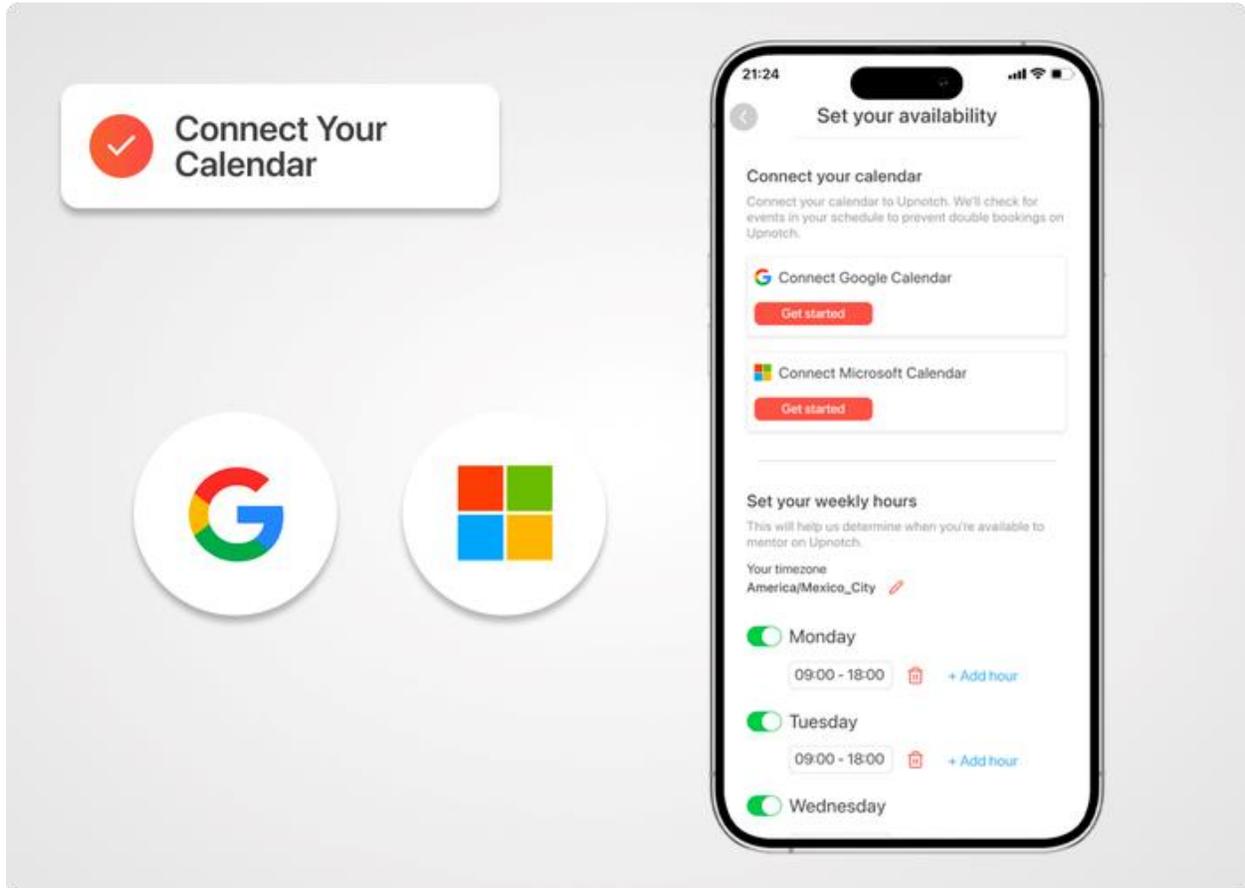
Set Your Availability



Let fellow members know when you're free for mentorship sessions by setting specific days and times each week that you're available.

Once you do this, we'll only show those time slots when anyone is scheduling.

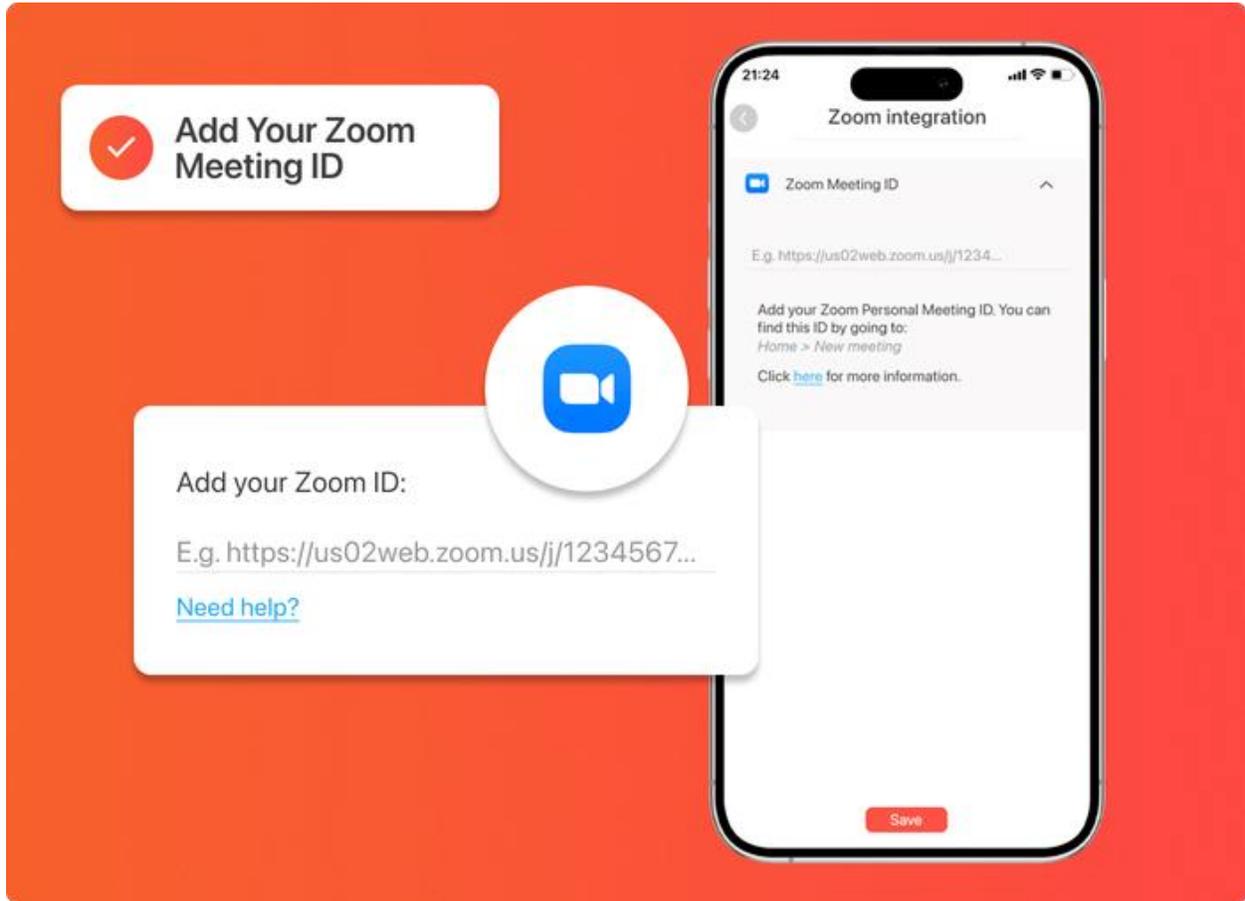
Connect Your Calendar



You can now connect your Google and Microsoft calendars on Upnotch.

Make scheduling sessions hassle-free by allowing Upnotch to read your availability and help you avoid conflicts and double-bookings.

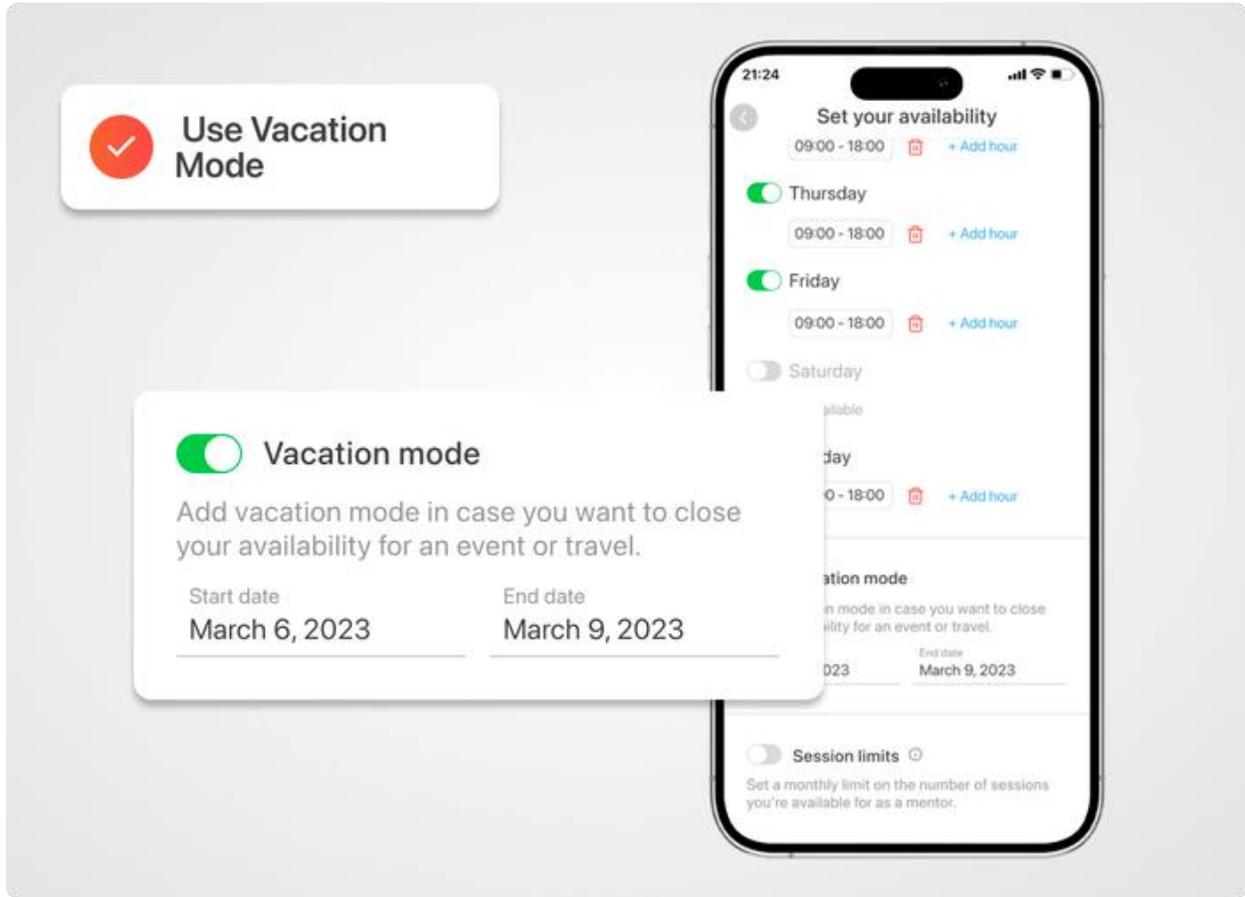
Add Your Zoom Meeting ID (Optional)



If Zoom is your preferred method of meeting, you can now save your personal Zoom Meeting ID under settings.

If you do this, then every time a session is booked on your calendar, we'll automatically add your meeting ID to the invitation so you don't have to.

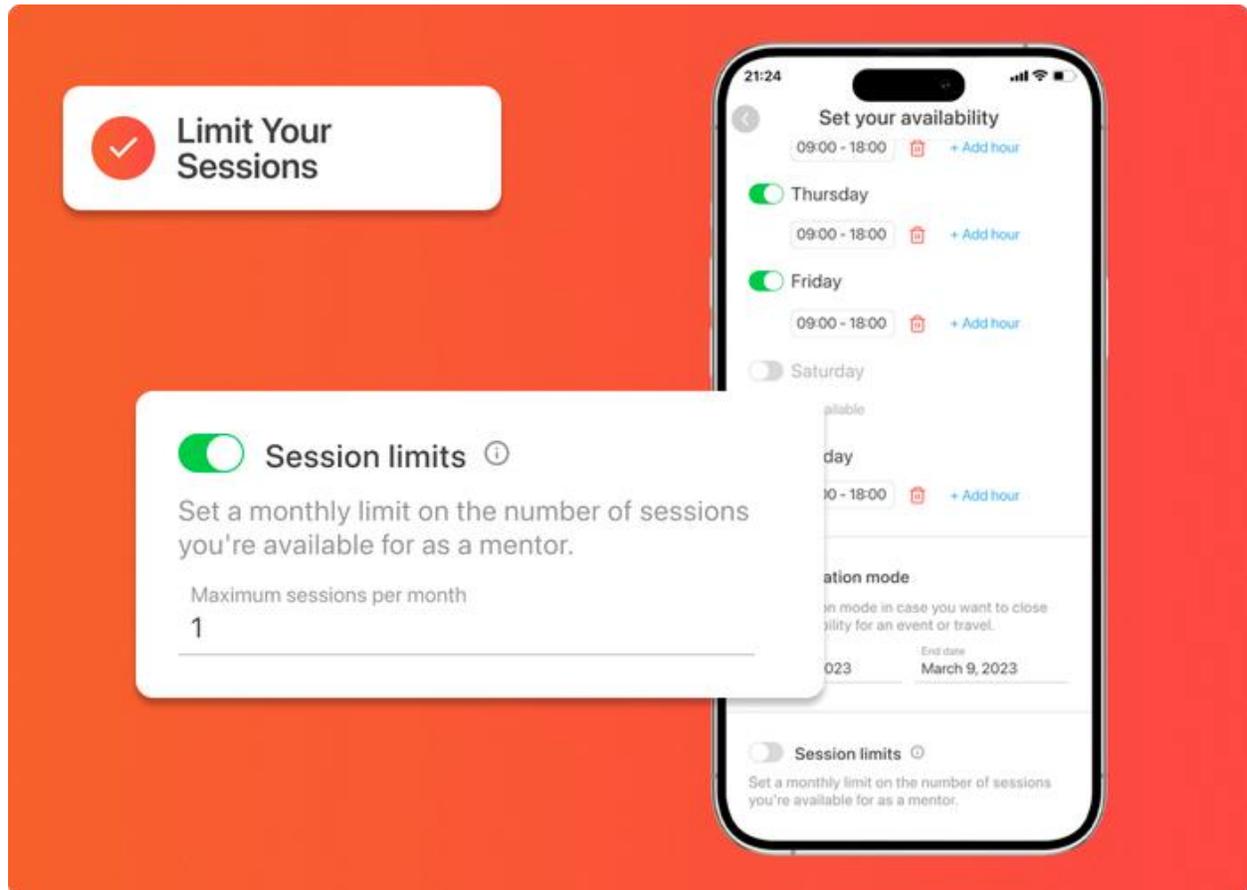
Use Vacation Mode



Going away and need to block your calendar?

We've got you covered! Mentors can now apply Vacation Mode to their calendars to ensure that no meetings are scheduled when you're not available.

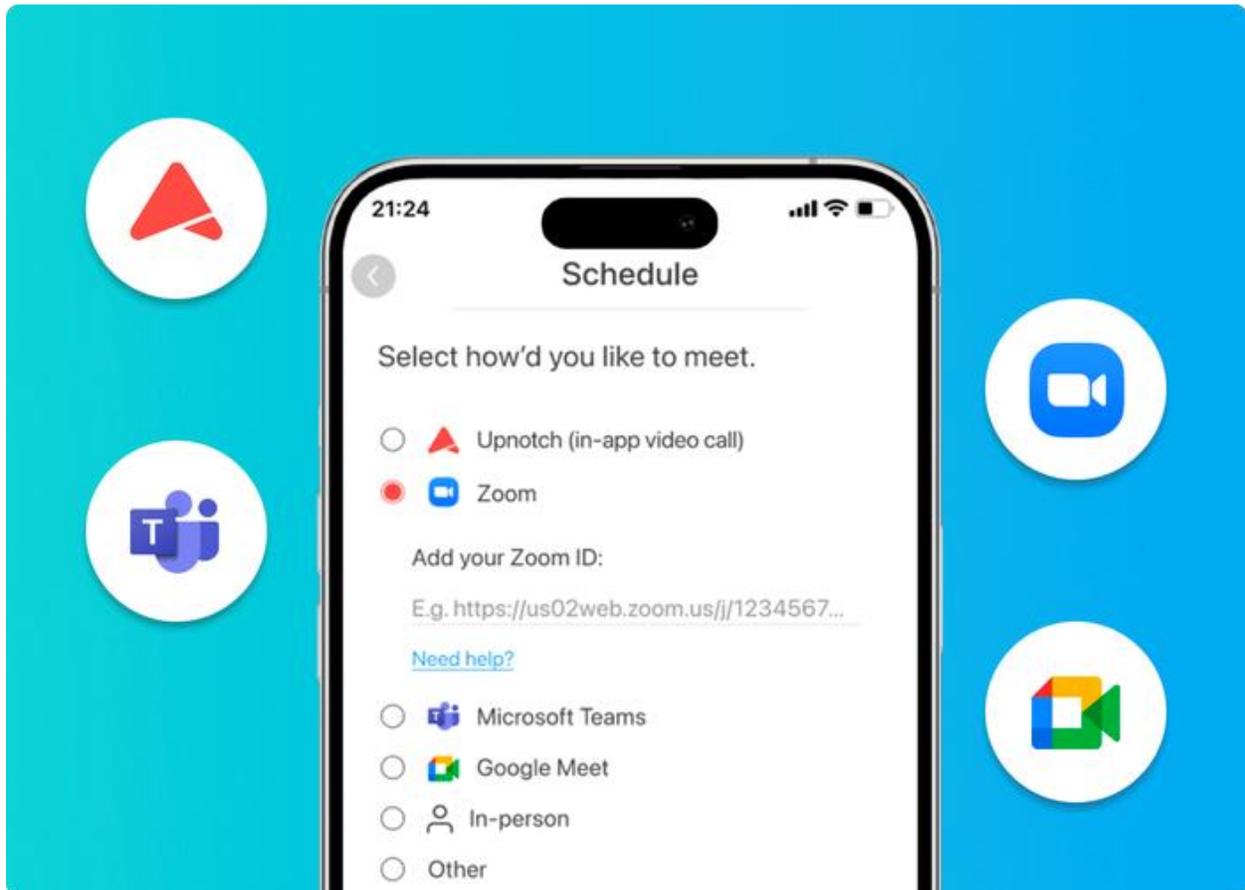
Limit Your Sessions



Set a limit on the number of sessions you're available to mentor each month by adding your session limits.

Once you hit your limit each month, anyone looking to schedule will be redirected to your next month's availability.

What Else Can I Add?



The more info the better. But Mentors specifically receive up to 5x more visibility when they have:

- A Profile Picture
- Current & Past Employment
- Education & Certificates

Inspirational Quotes by Top Upnotch Mentors

Gain wisdom and inspiration from the best in the field as we present a collection of quotes from top mentors on Upnotch. Here you'll find valuable insights and pearls of wisdom shared by experienced mentors who have achieved success in their respective fields. Feel free to reach out to these mentors at any time on Upnotch to tap into their expertise and embark on a transformative mentorship experience.

Answers provided by Upnotch Mentors. [Click here to watch the full event on How to be a Great Mentor.](#)

What would you recommend to mentees that feel intimidated to talk to somebody with a much higher role?



“Remember, anybody who's a C-suite, a higher title level, or has more experience, they were a mentee at one point themselves. We've all been mentees. We're on the platform to help and to pay it forward and I think that's the beauty of this platform. It creates the opportunity for people to connect. Don't be scared, don't be afraid. I know it might feel that way, but reach out. Don't think your hands are gonna get bitten. I

think you're going to find it's more of a handshake or a hug.” **Dan Sears, Upnotch Mentor, Product Leader**



“I always start out by having an answer to the question. If you want someone to be your mentor, why is that? What's your reasoning behind it? Don't just go and say, you know he's the CEO, and I wanna go on that track so I'll ask him to be my mentor. Why do you want to go on that track?”

Dan mentioned somebody who's in a higher role was also a mentee at one point- I'm here to tell you I wasn't. I didn't have a mentor. Especially if you are a person of color like myself. It's very hard to find a

mentor that looks like me and most people that look like me want to have a mentor that looks like them.

I didn't have a mentor. No, I just had people that gave me advice, but they were not mentors. Always go with why do you want this person to be your mentor? What are you trying to achieve by having this person be your mentor?" **Billie Wright, Upnotch Mentor, People Leader at AustinSHRM**

What would you do differently on your first connection or session with a mentee?



"I think the first connection is crucial. It's setting the tone between the mentor and Mentee. Setting expectations, humanity, and setting goals, clear goals. Second, I think building rapport is also very important. Another thing is also establishing the communication preference in terms of the length of the meetings." **Sebastiano Armeli, Engineering Leader**

When giving advice, would you suggest mentees search for mentors within the same department or industry



"One of the best pieces of advice that I ever got was to look at mentorship as sort of treating yourself as a company and you have a board of directors, and like any company, has a board of directors. You have people from your company that are on your board, and you have outside expertise on your board. I recommend to anybody who's looking for mentorship to get one mentor within your organization who's not your boss to be your mentor, somebody who can see how you're being developed and tell you when you're in line, someone able to give you advice within the organization, and give you insight to grow within that organization. But then outside the organization, think of specific skills or experiences that you want and go find the best person." **Chuck Marcouiller, VP of Revenue Enablement at FreightWaves**

How should one prepare to mentor somebody?



“Preparation is key. I recommend reading the profile of your mentee. I like asking the mentee to provide an initial description of what they need or they’re looking for.”

Sebastiano Armeli, Engineering Leader

How do you measure effectiveness?



“One of the reasons I enjoy being a mentor is, I actually get a lot more because I also see myself in a reverse mentee position. I equally get a lot of things back from the mentee, I get a different perspective which I love.

I love sitting down with people. Actually, a successful conversation is when the person has a completely different opinion than me and is able to give me a different perspective.” **Chuck Marcouiller, VP of Revenue Enablement at FreightWaves**

What are some of the ground rules established with your Mentees?



“The first thing that I always make sure is my mentee understands that they own this process. They are the ones scheduling the meetings, not me. It’s not my role as a mentor to track them down to say, ‘Hey, we haven’t had a meeting.’ There’s a level of accountability right off the bat, they need to own the process and also own the agenda. I think a lot of times mentees confuse coaching with mentorship. There’s some overlap, but they’re very different. Mentorship is really about taking advice from me on the path that I’ve taken so they can glean from my experiences.” **Billie Wright, Upnotch Mentor, People Leader at AustinSHRM**

What are the most important characteristics of a mentor?



“Typically communication skills. You need to be a good communicator. Ask questions, provide feedback, and guide. Empathy is important too. You need to be patient and have a positive attitude.” **Sebastiano Armeli, Engineering Leader**

What to do if the Mentee is stubborn?



“My first recommendation is to ask more questions, understand where the person is coming from, and try to empathize. Be patient and find some common ground. In some cases, it could just be that it's not a perfect match and that's fine.” **Sebastiano Armeli, Engineering Leader**

How do you handle helping your mentee if they seem to be experiencing something beyond your expertise?



“If they seem to be experiencing something beyond your expertise. I think one of the things you've got gotta recognize as a mentor is part of your value is not only the advice that you can give, but your network of contacts that you could plug them into, and so I like making introductions. Be honest, I think you're gonna build more credibility with them when you're honest and vulnerable.” **Chuck**

Marcouiller, VP of Revenue Enablement at FreightWaves

What do you do if you feel like a mentee is not open or receptive?



“It depends on what they're not receptive to. Is it the core thing that they've come to you for? Or is it some adjacent thing? Dig deep, try and find out what it is that seems to be the blocker or the barrier. Is it your communication? Is it a lack of understanding of their issue?” **Dan Sears, Chief Product & Growth Officer at VolunteerMatch**