

How Speed Mentoring Works

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SEED (Sun Engineering Enrichment & Development) is Sun Engineering's world-wide employee mentoring program, started in 2001. Speed mentoring is one of SEED's offerings: a series of short focused conversations about specific questions. This business method can serve as an introduction for mentees and mentors both to mentoring and to each other. See "Mentoring Resources" below for more.

Experience, Comments and Advice

The first SEED Speed Mentoring session was held at Sun Microsystems on 9 December 2009 in Menlo Park, California. Thirteen mentors and twenty mentees signed up. 88% of the mentors and mentees reported being satisfied to very satisfied with their experience. No one reported being dissatisfied.

Topics most discussed were:

- Career development (77%)
- Improving professional visibility (65%)
- Technical skills development (54%)
- Improving leadership or management skills (50%)
- Discussing best path to success (46%)

Some replies to the question "What would you say to someone who was interested in participating in a future SEED Speed Mentoring session?":

- Excellent service from Sun. Anyone who is interested in career development, should avail this one.
- Go for it but don't expect it to answer all your questions.
- Know what you want to get out of the sessions ahead of time. Try to conduct some research on who the mentors are ahead of time.
- Sure. Do it. It's a few hours that has a decent chance of broadening your perspectives.
- Go in with a plan of what you want to discuss. Be aware of the limitations of such an exercise.
- I would highly recommend it. It doesn't take much time at all but can quickly provide some feedback and give one's thinking process a nudge.
- Please participate, since it inspires you to do routine things differently. It provides useful pointers to making career changes. It helps to make better choices Towards technical skills gained at work.

What To Do - Written from the Mentee's point of view.

Before the Session

1. Mentee/participants need to register in advance using the formal application form. There will not be time for drop-in participants.
2. After registering, participants should create or update their resume. Then, consider the mentors who are signed up for the session. Research their backgrounds and decide which you want to speak with and what questions you would ask each.
3. The Speed Mentoring session will take about an hour per mentee/participant.
4. There will be three groups of mentee/participants. Group assignment is based on the order completed applications are received. The three groups enter the room at staggered times: Group 1 at about 11:30 am, Group 2 at about 12:20 pm, and Group 3 at about 1 pm.
5. Accepted participants are listed on the SEED Speed Mentoring web page
6. Mentees need to bring two papers to the session:
 1. A printout of your **confirmation email** containing the information on the application form. The confirmation email has the subject "SEED Speed Mentoring Program: Application from *Your Name*". The application confirmation contains up to three **questions or learning goals**.
 2. A **current resume**. The resume is to provide a quick background summary and save introduction time. You keep your resume with you: neither the mentors nor the program will collect it.
7. Read the Speed Mentoring Flow Chart (below) and other information on this page so that you can make the best use of your time during the session.
8. Early arrival for your group's start time is recommended. The entry monitor has discretion on when to admit additional participants. If you arrive after your group has gone in, you may be dropped to the next later group, or (if too late) be dropped from the program.

During the Session

1. Upon arrival, register with the entry door monitor:
 - Tell the entry monitor your name, then show your resume and confirmation email.
 - The monitor will give you three coupons of the color of your entry group. Each coupon is good for one mentoring discussion during this session.
 - Write your name on each coupon so your mentors know they talked with you.
2. The session will start with a brief general introduction by the session director.
3. Each mentee/participant can speak with up to three mentors in sequence, for up to 20 minutes each, first come - first served. Please do not queue for your preferred mentor.
4. At the start and end of each Speed Mentoring period during the session, a bell will ring. There will be two minutes to switch mentors, so wrap up and move on quickly.
5. There will be at least ten mentors, each at a table with their name.
6. You can talk with any available mentor. If someone is already at the table with your preferred mentor, find a mentor who is available (no one is sitting with them).
7. Give the mentor a coupon, your confirmation email, and your resume to begin the session. Allow the mentor time to review your materials before asking questions.
8. There may or may not be time to cover all questions with each mentor. You should present questions in order of importance. You can ask each mentor the same question or different questions. If there is time, you may ask additional questions.

9. In the last two minutes with each mentor, each mentee should answer the question:
"What will you do as a result of this discussion: what's next?"
10. When the bell rings, take your resume and move to another mentor until you have spoken with three mentors. Leave one coupon with your name on it with each mentor.
11. The mentors do not have any obligation to follow up with their speed mentees (but they can if they want to).
12. When you are done (you talked with 3 mentors and are out of coupons, or you just feel finished), tell the exit door monitor that you are leaving so that someone else can come in.
13. If all registered participants have already talked with 3 mentors and there is time remaining, the session director may announce that additional mentoring conversation time is available.

After the Session

1. Mentors will keep the coupons after the session so they can remember the names of their speed mentees.
2. Mentors and mentees should reply to the follow up email asking feedback on how the speed mentoring went - so that we can expand and improve.

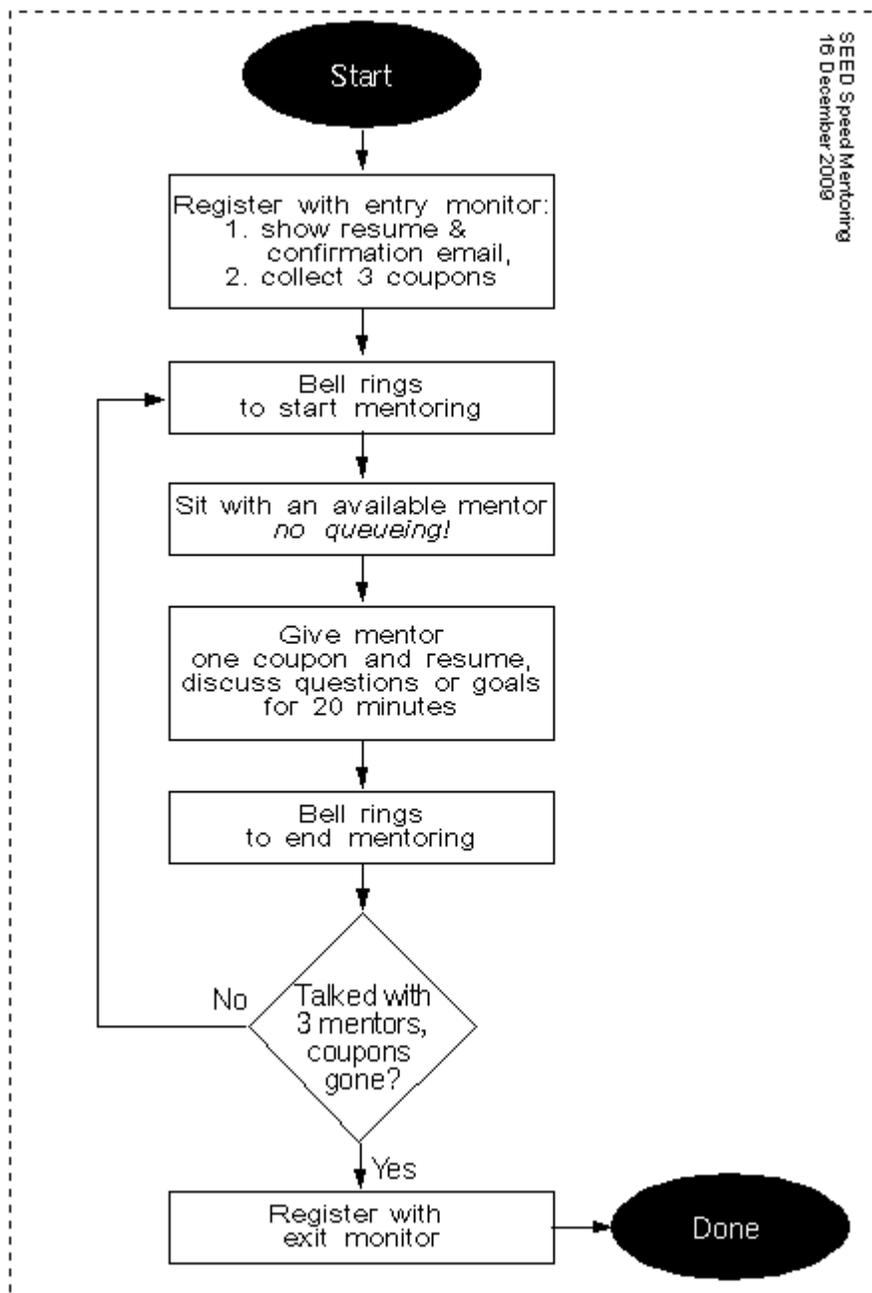
Suggested Questions, Learning Goals for Speed Mentoring

- How can I best communicate with customers?
- How can I improve my professional visibility?
examples: publications, patents, professional organizations
- How can I improve my leadership or management skills?
examples: inspiring innovation, improving team communication, organizational design
- What soft skills should I develop or seek experience in?
examples: composition/writing, negotiation, public speaking, influence management, change management
- What technical skills should I develop or seek experience in?
examples: usability design, software programming, project or program management, reliability analysis
- What professional skills should I develop or seek experience in?
examples: financial analysis, quality management, product marketing, field sales, strategic planning

Mentoring Resources

- <http://research.sun.com/SEED/>
 Engineering Mentoring: SEED Sun Engineering Enrichment & Development, home page
- http://research.sun.com/spotlight/2009/2009-08-28_TR-2009-185.html
 "Sun Mentoring: 1996-2009" Sun Labs Technical Report by Katy Dickinson, Tanya Jankot, and Helen Gracon, August 2009
- http://www.ncwit.org/images/practicefiles/SunEngineeringEnrichmentDevelopmentSEED_MentoringTechnicalWomen.pdf
 "Sun Engineering Enrichment and Development (SEED) Program: Mentoring Technical Women at Work", National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT), 2006

Flow Chart for SEED Speed Mentoring



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