



BUILDING A PERSONAL MENTOR NETWORK



STUDENT PLAYBOOK

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Please note: Each exercise has a suggested time to perform the activity, but these are just recommendations. You should feel free to move at your own pace!

PART 1 – CREATING YOUR PERSONAL MENTOR NETWORK

What is a Personal Mentor Network (PMN)?

When you encounter challenges and issues on your career path, wouldn't it be nice if you had a team of trusted, experienced advisors to help you become the best person you could be? Sure, you have people you can turn to when you need someone to talk to for friendly advice; but imagine having several hand-picked individuals lined up neatly in your contact list who you know are there to guide you through your chosen career path. This is your Personal Mentor Network (PMN)!

Imagine getting that call right now. It's the dream job you've been desperately wanting. However, they need you to relocate to a place you don't want to go or perhaps the salary is nowhere near what you feel your talents are worth. What do you do? Who can you call to talk about this? Your family, sure, but who would better understand your situation? Whose expert advice would you want on this matter? This is the reason why you want a PMN.

Your PMN should contain eight to twelve diverse and trustworthy individuals you believe will guide you toward success. These individuals should be willing to connect with you from time to time to focus on your needs, provide guidance from their experience, and introduce you to people in their network. The goal here is to provide you with the tools and insight to assemble your very own PMN and utilize their collective talents to fuel your success.

Assessing Your Needs: What Tools Do You Need in Your Toolbox
 (Approximate Time: 10 minutes after you complete the assessments)

Sometimes, it is necessary to do a little bit of work to end up with an awesome result!

- ▶ Take the DISC Assessment to better understand your strengths and preferences.
- ▶ Complete the Core Values Exercise to better understand the principles that guide your decision making.

Then, insert your results below.

Here is a sample of the information you will need from the assessments, as well as the links to the assessments (in case you haven't taken them yet). If you need further information to prepare for your DISC assessment, click [HERE](#) to view Student Playbook's DISC virtual training videos.

DISC Assessment (Click HERE to Access)	Discovering and Developing Core Values Exercise (Click HERE to Access)
<p>Sample DISC Career Management Report:</p> <p><i>Your Strengths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Your excellent listening style stands as a model for others to observe and follow. ▶ You are a good listener. ▶ You work hard to achieve the team's goals and objectives. ▶ You are able to reach goals by working with and supporting the efforts of others on the team. ▶ You are able to build positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders. ▶ You demonstrate a high degree of patience in working with others. ▶ Your strong optimism helps motivate the team toward their goals. 	<p>Sample Core Values Output Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Find a Better Way & Share It ▶ Self-Reliance ▶ Long-Term Orientation ▶ Excel & Improve ▶ Serve the Underserved ▶ Continuous Learning ▶ Protect the Planet ▶ Question Beliefs

Write down the results of your completed assessments that will guide you in determining your needs and assembling your dream PMN!

<p>From your DISC Assessment results, write down points from the Your Strengths section.</p>	
<p>From your Discovering and Developing Core Values Exercise, write down your core values.</p>	

Brainstorming PMN Members (Approximate Time: 30 minutes)

Take a few moments to think about individuals you interact with and engage with regularly. Anyone could potentially become a member of your PMN (coaches, teachers, bosses, family, friends, etc.)! Read the descriptions listed below. Add the names of people you know to the statements that “fit.”

- ▶ Each box may contain multiple people.
- ▶ You may add a person to more than one area if you wish.
- ▶ It is okay if an area remains blank.

One thing we want to stress to you: these do not have to be your “best” friends or close relatives! Anyone whose opinion you respect could potentially make a great member of your PMN!

I really appreciate their thoughts/feedback.	This is an extremely creative person.	This person loves what I love!	This person can take criticism with a smile.
This person can be challenging but has some great ideas!	This person is a natural negotiator.	This person is a born leader!	When it comes to business, this person knows what is up!
This person knows all things technology!	This person is very critical, but very constructive.	This person can make any subject make sense to me.	This person really understands me!
The person seems to know absolutely everyone!	This person has my best interest in mind.	This person has remarkable expertise in ONE area I care about.	I am not a fan of this person, but I really respect their views.

Reviewing Candidates (Approximate Time: 45 minutes)

Now that you have some ideas of who would be a potentially significant resource and member of your PMN, it's time to start narrowing down your list of potential team members. Let's start by copying the individuals you wrote down from the Brainstorming activity into the Candidate Pool below (feel free to add new entries or remove some if you want). Candidates that ended up in multiple areas are ones you should focus on!

CANDIDATE POOL

Next step: Quick categorizations! You want to place your potential PMN candidates into different areas. We have given you some spaces to place your candidates in, along with some explanations. Think about the following as you place candidates in the various areas:

- ▶ What is the candidate's relationship to you?
- ▶ How well does the candidate know you?
- ▶ What is their level of expertise and experience in their given career?
- ▶ What would you want their advice on?
- ▶ How big is their network of connections?
- ▶ Where are they living? What do they know about other areas of the world?
- ▶ What are their perspectives on career, life, and handling challenges?
- ▶ What demographic perspectives are being represented?
- ▶ Why do you respect or admire this person?

As you add your candidates to the columns below, keep in mind your reasons for placing them where you do. If you find you have a couple of candidates that are in multiple boxes, that's okay! Keep track of your reasoning!

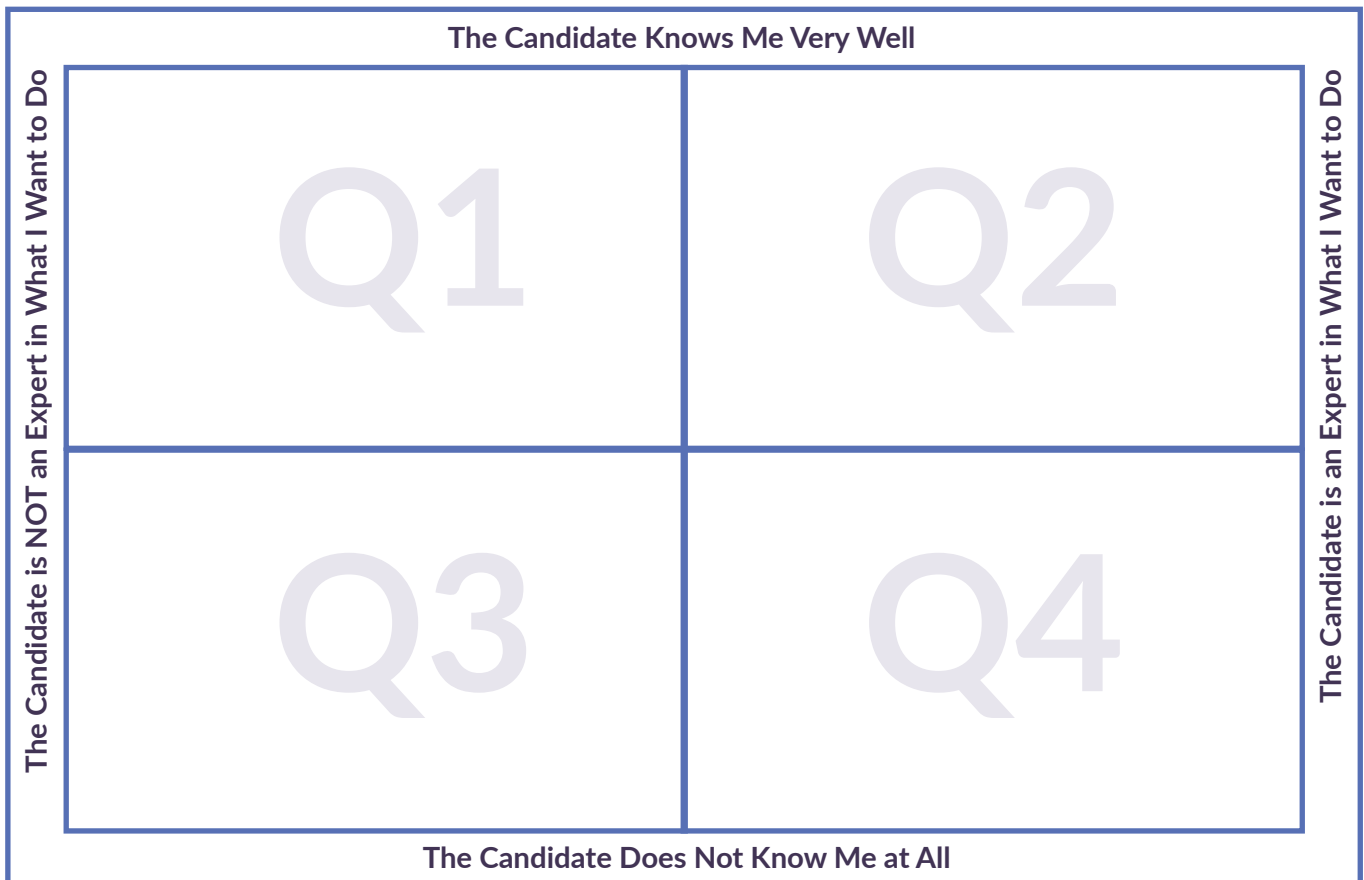
IDEAL	50/50	NOT A FIT	WILD CARD

- ▶ **IDEAL** – This is the PMN member of your dreams! You would have no problem with them on your team!
- ▶ **50/50** – Could be a good fit for your team, but you have some questions and doubts about how committed they may be.
- ▶ **NOT A FIT** – These candidates might not work on your team; **HOWEVER**, don't discount them just yet!
- ▶ **WILD CARD** – Super "Smart" (meaning they know what they know and know it well); Super-Connected (they know all the right people); and Super Helpful (24/7...they have your back). The only reason they are not "ideal" may be because they are just that popular and hard to nail down! Still, this is our PMN, and we would love to welcome them on board!

Enter the 2x2 Matrix (Approximate Time: 30 minutes)

Use this visual tool to organize your candidate pool better.

- ▶ **Q1** – Your candidate is not an expert on your chosen career path but knows you as an individual very well (e.g., primarily family and friends).
- ▶ **Q2** – Your candidate is an expert and knows you very well (e.g., these are your All-Stars, your cousin who happens to be a senior executive, a professor who likes you and is highly regarded).
- ▶ **Q3** – Your candidate is not an expert and does not know you well (e.g., Wild Cards, very smart and well-connected individuals, excellent communicators).
- ▶ **Q4** – Your candidate is an expert, but they do not know you well (e.g., industry leaders, upper management, deans, your parent’s connections, a professional writer).



Selecting Your PMN Members (Approximate Time: 30 minutes)

You have completed several exercises to identify key individuals who would make good candidates for your PMN. Now that you have had time to think about your selections, you should organize your potential PMN members and review your team's strengths and opportunities.

Looking back at our previous matrix, you have placed several individuals in various quadrants. Thinking about those individuals, choose up to twelve individuals to occupy the spaces below.

Here are some things to reflect upon:

- ▶ Is everyone from the same place or business?
- ▶ Do you have any peers from long ago on your short list?
- ▶ Where did they fall on your 2x2 matrix? Does your selection represent multiple areas of your matrix?
- ▶ Take another look at those candidates who you thought were not a good fit. Could they perhaps bring some ideas to the PMN that you currently have listed?

Your PMN is almost ready to roll out! Use the area below to list your dream team. We have given you a few slots; use what you need!

Member of the PMN*	What They Bring to the Team

* Potential Member

Recruiting Your Picks and Assembling Your PMN (Approximate Time: 60 minutes)

You are coming to the end of this leg of your journey. You have analyzed, evaluated, and organized your potential group of career-enhancing “super people!”

You are assembling a trusted, carefully selected group of individuals that you can turn to for advice when opportunities arise. When you feel your progress is stalling or when frustration surfaces, these are the people you can talk to for encouragement and motivation. When you just need perspective or guidance with areas you are looking to excel in, you will call on your PMN!

Now, we are ready to reach out to our potential PMN members! How do you go about assembling your PMN? Get them interested! Ask! Let them know what you are looking to do!

We have provided a few examples of simple ways to do this:

- ▶ *“Hey, I really appreciated all the help and perspective you gave me during my time here. I’d love to stay in touch and reach out to you when I have questions about where my career is going. How about it?”*
- ▶ *“I really respect your thoughts on childcare policy. Would it be okay to reach out to you when I have questions concerning those items?”*
- ▶ *“What you taught me about that awesome idea is game-changing! When I leave campus, I would appreciate maintaining a dialog with you. Would that be okay with you?”*

Practice a few of these with your friends and family. Perhaps you may be asking them to join your team!

Ultimately, some of your PMN will need to know more about you, what you have accomplished, what makes you tick, and where you want to go. They will need data and information, like your resume or your LinkedIn profile or a clear explanation of what you want to do, to help them provide the knowledge and guidance you expect from them. Whether you schedule time for a phone call, send a text message, or craft an email, make sure to provide the information your PMN needs.

A Moment of Self-Reflection (Approximate Time: 30 minutes)

You have reached out to the potential members of your PMN, and they said YES! Take a moment to appreciate the work you have done and enjoy the fact that you have put together an invaluable resource for your personal career growth. While you appreciate the work you have put forth, find a quiet, comfortable place and think about this point in your career development.

Ask yourself the following questions (here is some space for you below to jot down your answers so you can review them later):

<p>What did you find easy when asking your potential members to join your PMN? What was challenging?</p>
<p>What could have made your interactions with your potential PMN members more comfortable? More productive?</p>
<p>Would you have benefited from practicing more with friends and family before reaching out to your potential PMN members? Did you need to practice at all?</p>

As you endeavor to add new members to your PMN in the future, make it a point to look back at this moment and see what your thoughts were at the beginning of this journey.

**Congratulations on completing Part 1!
You now have a game plan and your very own PMN!**

PART 2 – MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL MENTOR NETWORK

You have assembled your PMN, an awesome team of experts, motivators, creative minds, and information resources at your disposal! Now what? What can you do with all this talent at your fingertips?

Your PMN Engagement (Approximate Time: 60 minutes)

The simple answer is “everything!” Your PMN should be ready to assist and mentor you when challenges arise in your ongoing career journey. When those challenges do arise, you will be able to call on various members of your PMN for guidance.

Here are a few scenarios that illustrate times when reaching out to members of your PMN would be a great idea.

Scenarios

- ▶ After a lot of thought, you have decided it might be the right time to attend grad school. But maybe you shouldn't go or maybe you should wait a few years.
- ▶ You receive a call from a headhunter out of the blue. He describes an opening that sounds great. He wants your updated resume and to schedule an interview for next week. You've only been in your current role for nine months and you like your job and prospects ... for the most part.
- ▶ Your boss calls you into her office and berates your work on an important assignment. She doesn't make any threats but makes it very clear that she expected better.
- ▶ Your manager does not provide you with any feedback ever! The best you get from him is a “thanks.” You want to grow at the company you are with, but you just don't know how you are doing or where you are headed.
- ▶ You've been with your current company a few years. You respect your boss, you like your team, and you know you are considered a rising star. However, you realize that this work is NOT what you want to do. What you really want to do is completely different.
- ▶ You have landed your dream job! This is what you have been studying, practicing, and striving toward. Now, you are here. Six months later, you realize you can't stand the people you work with.
- ▶ You like the work you're doing. You like your team. But you are beginning to sense that the leaders of the organization don't share your commitment – or the company's stated commitment – to customer service or protecting the environment.
- ▶ Your best friend at work just got the promotion that you thought you would get. You're frustrated and may say something that will anger your boss and jeopardize your friendship.
- ▶ You just **have to** get a job at StartUp X. It's trying to solve exactly the problem you are most passionate about. Its CEO inspires you. It's getting rave reviews. You know no one at the company and it's located 3,000 miles from where you live.
- ▶ You've been in your new job for two months and you're just not figuring things out as quickly as you should be. You are excited about the role and eager to succeed, but you're very concerned that you're headed for trouble.

To begin this activity, pick three scenarios and answer these three questions:

1. Which PMN member should you reach out to?
2. What is the best way to contact them (e.g., direct phone call, email, text message)?
3. What are you going to say?

Next, choose one scenario and grab a friend or family member. Role play the scenario and take a few moments to reflect on how it went:

1. What part of the conversation did you find easiest? Hardest?
2. Would you change anything you would have said to your PMN member? Anything you would have added?

MAINTAINING YOUR PMN CONNECTIONS

Maintaining your connections to your PMN is an important activity! You should make every effort to stay in touch once you've assembled your team!

1

Nurture Your Connections

Even when you don't have news to share, check in. Share a relevant article. Remind them of something they taught you. Just say hi.

Report Your News
Keep your mentors up to date on your progress and your victories. Let them know how their support helped you, how your challenges and opportunities played out.

2

Don't be afraid to rely on certain mentors more than others or in different ways than others or to adjust members' roles. Remember, it's your PMN.

3

Manage Your PMN

Support Your Supporters

Be there for your mentors. When one of them has news – good, bad or otherwise – reach out. Show that you care and want to help them.

4

5

Say "Thanks" Often

Show your appreciation to your mentors as frequently as you can. Let them know how much you value their time and support.

MANAGING YOUR PMN

In order to maintain a functional PMN, you must properly manage your team and reevaluate your goals on a regular basis!



Preparing for Your Future

Always keep thinking about your future and where you want to be! Make sure you keep your PMN in step with those future goals.



Reassessing Your Situation

As you follow along your career path, you may find times you want to change course. Think about what you want to do and what you will need from your PMN.



Realigning Your Interests

One day you may decide to realign the things that interest you! When you do, you may need to realign your PMN members to cover those new interests.



Reorganizing Your PMN

Sometimes it may become necessary to let one of your PMN members move on. Although you never really say goodbye, scheduling conflicts, new priorities, or the emergence of different needs may require finding new members to join the team.



Expanding Your PMN

As your interests evolve, so should your PMN membership. Find opportunities to add individuals to your team. Having a robust and diverse PMN is imperative to your success!