

Mentoring with Bridge for Billions

Building resilient and inclusive startups together. Here you will find some tips to make your mentorship experience easier, better and more impactful.

Mentor-Entrepreneur Matching phase

Exploring startups during Matching

It's always best to send at least 2-3 invitations. The odds you'll get matched increase. Remember that entrepreneurs will be contacted by several mentors.



Booking a first meeting

During this phase, keep an eye on your mailbox. We'll notify you when an entrepreneur has answered your invitation. Don't forget to schedule your meeting during the Matching period. Matching goes by fast so the sooner, the better .

Meeting entrepreneurs for the first time

For your initial meetings with entrepreneurs during the matching stage, a way you can structure the call is the following:

- **5 minutes each for introductions:**
 - i. Who are you? Don't be shy, share a few important life milestones that brought you to who you are today.
 - ii. What brought you to Bridge for Billions?
 - iii. What are you most looking forward to out of the incubation experience?
- **5-10 minutes of the entrepreneur explaining their idea/venture**
 - i. Why did they start this project? What problem are they solving?
 - ii. How far are they currently?
 - iii. What have they done so far?
 - iv. What areas do they feel they need the most help in?
- **5-10 minutes about you to share how you believe you can help the most.**
- **Additional questions you or them might have**



Ranking is choosing your match

Remember to rank the entrepreneurs you met only after you have had your last meeting to take all of them into account; this is what lets us know your preferences in order to match the optimal pairs.

General tips for the mentorship

No one can receive advice before they feel understood: An **empathetic connection** is the starting point of collaboration.

For the **weekly meetings**; let them bring their **agenda** to you (which will be based on whichever tool you're working on at the moment): Ask what keeps them up at night and let them describe a successful outcome to you. Don't predict their most urgent needs.

Questions are more powerful than answers

Asking the right open questions helps founders work through issues in their own head and gently reveals their blind spots.

Stick to the specifics

The more specific the outcomes, goals and actions are, the more engaging they become. At Bridge, we encourage mentors to call out generalizations wherever possible.

Curiosity is the opposite of judgement

Stay curious and ask questions, rather than jumping to a quick conclusion.



Their words out of someone else's mouth

Your words sound different when someone repeats them back to you. Paraphrasing or echoing the founder's ideas enables them to simplify their own thoughts and uncover their own solutions.

Share experiences, not instructions

Sharing a personal story that's rich in detail and emotion is a far better way of communicating than simply listing a sequence of steps. As well as aiding recall later, it helps the founder form their own plan.

Patience is essential

In a single session, the stakes of getting the message across seem high, but great teachers understand true learning takes time.

Give credit where it's due

A founder can be surrounded by problems. Receiving external praise for things they're internally proud of is powerful.

Action and follow-ups

End your sessions with a concrete action item for the founder to take because immediately after the session, they go straight back into the chaos. Follow-up as you see necessary throughout the process while giving them space to act and take ownership of their next steps. Following up shows you care and helps keep them accountable.



How to find the right balance between **giving feedback** of the work done in the tools and other external topics that are worthy to discuss? This is a personal call, but it is ok if you dedicate a complete session to wider topics than the tools, or to personal or team issues. As long as what you discuss leads to them having better businesses, feel free to do so.

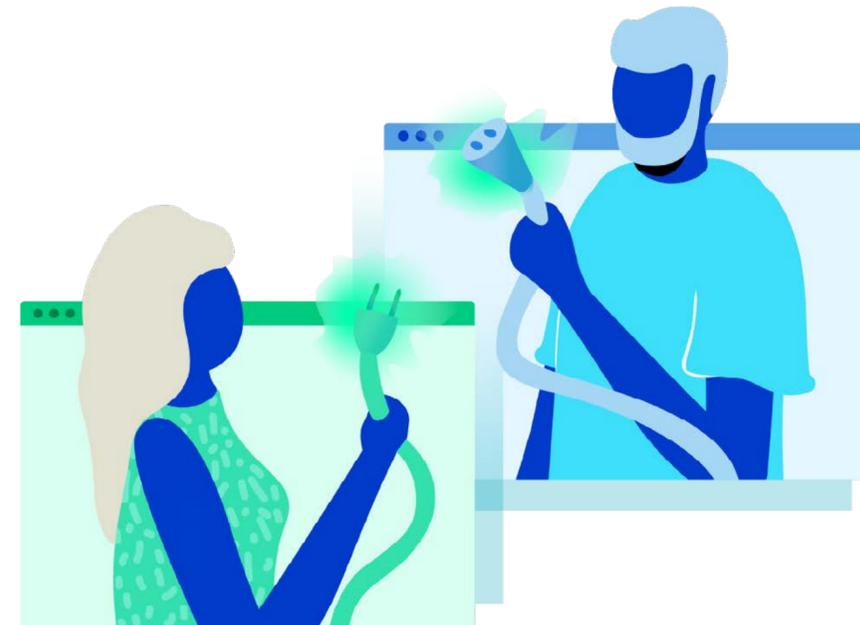
If you have **external resources** you'd like to share with your mentee, please do so. This is part of the magic of mentoring at Bridge.

Advice regarding the work done in the tools

The first tool is very important and there are two weeks to work on it. If the project needs an extra week to delve into the value proposition, that's fine, but try to limit them to no more than three weeks, as you might have to “move faster” in the next two tools. Sometimes it is better to dedicate an extra week to the value proposition to advance with better foundations and a deeper knowledge of the project.

If your entrepreneur is one in an earlier stage then it is a good idea to take some extra time focusing on the value proposition + competition map (those two go together as they lay the ground for what's the product/market fit). It's better to spend some more time here to be sure about this part of the business plan (having interviewed customers, looked for accurate market data, etc), than to do it fast but have to redo it entirely midway.

That being said, the program is built in a way where **entrepreneurs are encouraged to iterate**. Nothing is written in stone. Encourage the mentees to go back and revise the work done in previous tools as their models change and pivot. For



instance, if your entrepreneur gets stuck on needing to craft the ‘perfect’ value proposition before moving on to the next tool, remind them that their ‘aha’ moments with the value proposition can come as they complete other tools that clarify elements of their business proposition. It’s not only allowed but encouraged that they revisit, reimagine, and revise earlier elements as their business plan comes into greater focus.

The tools offer a framework from which to first diverge, and then to converge in thinking and solutions to drill down the specific aspects that make sense for the entrepreneur's venture. In this process, it's always helpful to challenge the entrepreneurs to question themselves and go beyond what they think is necessary; without this, the entrepreneurs end up in an "echo chamber" where they find ideas or perspectives that reinforce their view without considering others that might challenge it.



Encourage the entrepreneurs to **connect with potential clients/customers** early on through customer discovery surveys and exercises. The most important feedback will come from them and will help them challenge or validate the work they've been developing with a market that would potentially benefit from what they're working on.



Good luck on your mentorship!

Remember we're here, only a click away 



Any questions? Email us anytime
info@bridgeforbillions.org

