



Understanding the ICSC Research Mentoring Program

How do I become an ICSC Research mentor or mentee?

I'm looking for a mentor!

I'm ready to mentor!

Mentoring is a method for orienting and training people new to shopping center research, as well as a valuable means for supporting the development—even accelerating the professional growth—of more experienced researchers. Individuals who share knowledge, experiences and skills to benefit someone else provide valuable leadership.

ICSC members can benefit from mentoring anytime during their career. Just as we need to be mentored in order to continually learn, we also learn through teaching others. Ultimately, ICSC's value grows as an organization through the performance improvements of our members.

What is mentoring?

ICSC's Research Mentoring Program is simple. This mentoring program links experienced professional researchers with someone looking for help in professional development.

What does a mentor do?

A mentor oversees the development of another ICSC member, usually junior. He or she helps the mentee clarify goals and carry out a plan to reach those goals by sharing the insights and knowledge they have gained through their experiences. Typical roles of a mentor can include being a coach, teacher, motivator, counselor, guide, door opener, advisor and role model.

A mentor:

- Coaches the mentee in enhancing skills and intellectual development.
 - Passes along organizational information (structure, politics, personalities).
 - Provides candid feedback to the mentee about perceived strengths and developmental needs.
 - Points out opportunities for the mentee to develop and demonstrate capabilities (as well as pointing out pitfalls to avoid).
 - Advises the mentee on how to deal with real or perceived roadblocks.
 - Serves as a sounding board.
 - Encourages and motivates the mentee.
 - Builds the mentee's self-confidence.
 - Links the mentee with others who can enhance the mentee's learning.
-



What is a "mentee"?

There are two kinds of "mentees:"

- The person who is new to the retail real estate industry and has a need for a more experienced person to pass on the "organizational savvy," culture, politics and personality of the industry. Not only does this knowledge help the mentee to succeed, but it also helps the established research person to "give back" to the industry.
- A second type of mentee is a more seasoned individual who is seeking professional guidance to reach one or more career goals.

How does someone get involved with the mentor program?

A member of ICSC can become a research mentee simply by applying. An application form for the prospective mentee will ask for some information about their person and the goals in seeking a mentor.

An ICSC member may volunteer to be a mentor by sending contact information to Erin Caffrey (research-mentoring@icsc.org), who is the coordinator for the Research program.

What do mentees want from their mentors?

Typical responses include the following: Encouragement, support, honesty, candid information and advice, a "big picture" view, guidance, suggestions, an honest appraisal of their abilities, help with their "vision," assistance in making good choices, information on opportunities available, help in defining and reaching goals, the benefit of the mentor's experiences, availability without interruptions, non-attribution, honest discussions about tough issues, assistance in formulating a cohesive plan, help developing a network, introduction to key players, idea stimulation, and insight to career paths.

What areas of research are covered under the mentor program?

All aspects of global research—such as market research, geography and GIS systems, benchmarking, demographics, asset management, marketing, running a consulting business for research, economic and financial analysis, and so on—would be appropriate.



Are all mentees guaranteed a mentor?

No. Given the number mentors to mentees, there is likely to be a waiting list for mentees at times.

How does a mentor benefit from a mentoring connection?

- *Personal satisfaction*—mentors typically report a sense of pride at helping a junior person succeed. They also often state they feel they are "giving back" some of what has been given to them.
 - *Sharpened leadership interpersonal skills*—mentors sharpen their own skills as they challenge and coach their mentees.
 - *Source of recognition*—good mentors are well respected at all levels in the organization.
 - *Expanded professional contacts*—mentors develop professional contacts by interacting with other mentors and with contacts they make while seeking referrals for their mentee.
 - *Information gathering*—mentors may be exposed to fresh ideas from their mentees. Because some senior people can be isolated or set in their ways, mentees can offer insight about how personnel at different levels perceive research.
-

What is the time commitment for a mentor?

The amount of time varies depending on the needs, expectations, and desires of the mentee and the mentor. ICSC highly recommend that both parties discuss their expectations at the beginning, and one of the most important factors is time: How often and for how long will they be available? Does one have a commitment at certain times that would make them unavailable? When is it okay to call? The greatest time commitment will generally be at the beginning of the connection, as the focus is on getting to know each other and on building the relationship. The volunteer for ICSC's research mentoring program is asked to provide a commitment of about **one year** to potentially experience working with several mentees.

How long does a mentoring connection last?

It depends on the mentee's needs, remembering that successful connections are mentee-driven. Mentoring relationships may end when the mentee has outgrown the need for his or her mentor's guidance. Sometimes, the relationship evolves into a strong friendship in which the two see each other as peers. ICSC recommends an initial commitment of **six months between the mentee and mentor**. By that time, the mentor and mentee should discuss what they have accomplished, whether it would be beneficial to continue, and what to work on in the future.



How many people can one person mentor?

There is no rule as to how many one can mentor, as each mentor must decide how much time they can commit to mentoring. Because of the time and energy needed to mentor effectively, ICSC suggests that the mentor develop one connection before deciding to take on another.

How should mentors and mentees interact?

Once a mentee is given the name of the mentor, it is recommended that the mentee call or email the mentor to discuss the best way to make this relationship work. It is important to know the “ground rules” that work for both.

Generally, phone calls or email may be the best way to communicate. However, if it works for the individuals, face-to-face meetings could work at times. ICSC Research plans to hold mentoring gatherings at our research conferences and seminars to further facilitate the personal connections.

What if the mentee/mentor relationship is not working well?

Either the mentee or the mentor should immediately advise ICSC and we will either find a new partner or help to resolve the reason for the difficulty.

Who is eligible to participate in research mentor program?

All members of ICSC may participate. This program is not restricted to any specific region.

Who is coordinating the ICSC Research Mentoring Program?

This research program is being coordinated by Erin Caffrey (who can be reached at +1 646 728 3678 or research-mentoring@icsc.org). This program is part of a broader mentoring program by ICSC.

June 5, 2008

Reading List:

Tips for Mentees <http://www.mentoringgroup.com/mentees.html>

Tips for Mentors <http://www.mentoringgroup.com/mentors.html>