

Be a mentee or a mentor - and boost hospitality growth

By [Chef Trevor Boyd](#)

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The need for effective mentoring and developing of young chefs in kitchens around the country is more urgent than ever as the hospitality, food and beverage sector embraces a new reality following the turbulent impact of the pandemic lockdown restrictions.

My many years of experience as both a mentee and a mentor have reliably shown the value of the mentorship process, time and time again. It's equally important to skills development in our sector to choose to be mentored, as it is to be a mentor.

At the start of my career, I took a wrong turn; it was not where I knew I needed to be, and I didn't have the mentors I needed. I decided to go back a few steps to restart my career, this time actively seeking out mentors who would show me the way forward.

I worked for three or four people who engaged with me and taught me different lessons – I have always appreciated that having several mentors throughout your career is extremely valuable. The way one mentor does something may not be how you would approach the situation, and it's always important to be true to your own plans, dreams, and preferences.

How to be a 'growing' mentee

First, recognise that it's wholly your choice as to whether you learn and develop your skills from mentors or not. Too many young chefs are either convinced they know how to do something or are nervous about showing that they lack certain skills, to be open-minded about accepting guidance, advice, and mentoring from someone else.

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Second, acknowledge that you can learn different important lessons from different mentors. In a job that I didn't enjoy as a young chef, I still embraced learning from the catering manager – I learned how to plan and manage a team to get through a week's work successfully.

Third, even as a young mentee, with the right attitude, you can start sharing your learnings as a mentor to others you encounter along your career path.

Be an authentic mentor

I'm convinced that the positive impact on our hospitality sector will be ground-breaking if all our chefs and other food and beverage staff embrace an authentic mentorship mindset – with all of us being prepared to be both mentees (there's a lot that even experienced chefs can learn from the new generation) and mentors, embracing all opportunities to share learnings and encourage each other with honesty and trustworthiness.



Source: Supplied | Chef Trevor Boyd, Hostex Ambassador and CLHG GM food and beverage

City Lodge lessons

I joined City Lodge Hotel Group (CLHG) over a year ago to drive the rollout of the new eat-in restaurants at all town lodges and road lodges, adding lunch and dinner to its existing breakfast offering. Staff training and upskilling has been and will continue to be, founded on mentoring, which is proving to be exceptionally successful.



Source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

CLHG's new food and beverage strategy demanded completely new skillsets from the food and beverage staff. The energy and enthusiasm, the eager desire to learn, the efforts to ensure they meet expectations, by staff across the board has been immensely encouraging and is ensuring a smooth transition into the eat-in offering.

My first steps were to visit all the group's hotels, inducting the staff into the eat-in model. Across the board, the eagerness to be a part of the new offering was positive. I have since discovered that this attitude of genuine hospitality permeates throughout the group.

It has been very gratifying to spend time mentoring staff and then seeing them in action a short time later, producing meals and service of an excellent standard.

Food for thought

It should make very little difference to those of us in cheffing whether we are producing and serving a tasty and hearty meal in a one-star restaurant, or a fine-dining five-star meal – what's important at every level is guest satisfaction and job satisfaction. Other factors will fall into place.

#WinnersAreMentors

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