



CAREERS MENTORING PROGRAMME CASE STUDY

Mike Weeks from Iconic Project Management

Mike Weeks is a Senior Project Manager at Iconic Project Management – a construction and management company that delivers projects from large infrastructure developments to retail fit outs – Mike has recently completed a shop fit out at the fabulous new Battersea Power Station.

Good at maths and physics at school, Mike achieved a degree in civil and structural engineering, and then a second degree in finance & investment, and has worked for seven employers before working for Iconic.

What makes a good mentor?

Someone who listens not instructs. With groups we have some who are quiet and some who are more open to chat, so you have to make sure everyone has the opportunity and time to speak. It's important to share your own experiences and thoughts – but I'm keen to point out that these are just my opinions.

Why do you make a good mentor?

I've had some good mentors over my career, so I try and mirror them. Having had a few employers, I've got a wealth of experiences to draw upon. It helps having my own kids too. The lads I'm mentoring are tech focused in their aspirations. That's not my area of expertise so my advantage is that we don't go down technical wormholes - we can be a bit broader in what we discuss and explore.

How have you found your sessions?

I love them – the kids are interested and engaged; they show real interest in what I do. I'm learning from them and it's great seeing them at the start of their journeys –

hard for some of them, being open, honest and authentic in talking about their strengths and weaknesses in front of their peers, but once they see others open up, they are more willing.

What do you want to teach your mentees?

To show them a more personal face of an adult, someone who is not their parents or teachers. It's important for them that when they get to interview, that they see a person across the desk, not a figure of authority.

Hopefully we'll pick out a few points to put on their CVs – for example one of the lads spoke about setting up a football team at the UTC. This sort of thing can be developed into an intelligent and insightful interview answer, so I want the kids to use our time to identify, articulate and evidence their competencies and apply them to application forms and interviews in the future.

Did you have a mentor?

I've had a few line managers who were brilliant – including one guy I still use now to bounce stuff off. Their ability to see a different view of the world really helps me work through challenges and new situations.

Final words?

From my own experience, I'd encourage anyone to do what they love, maybe to be adventurous in those early years instead of focusing on one career path.

It's a long life and there's a wide and varied world out there!.