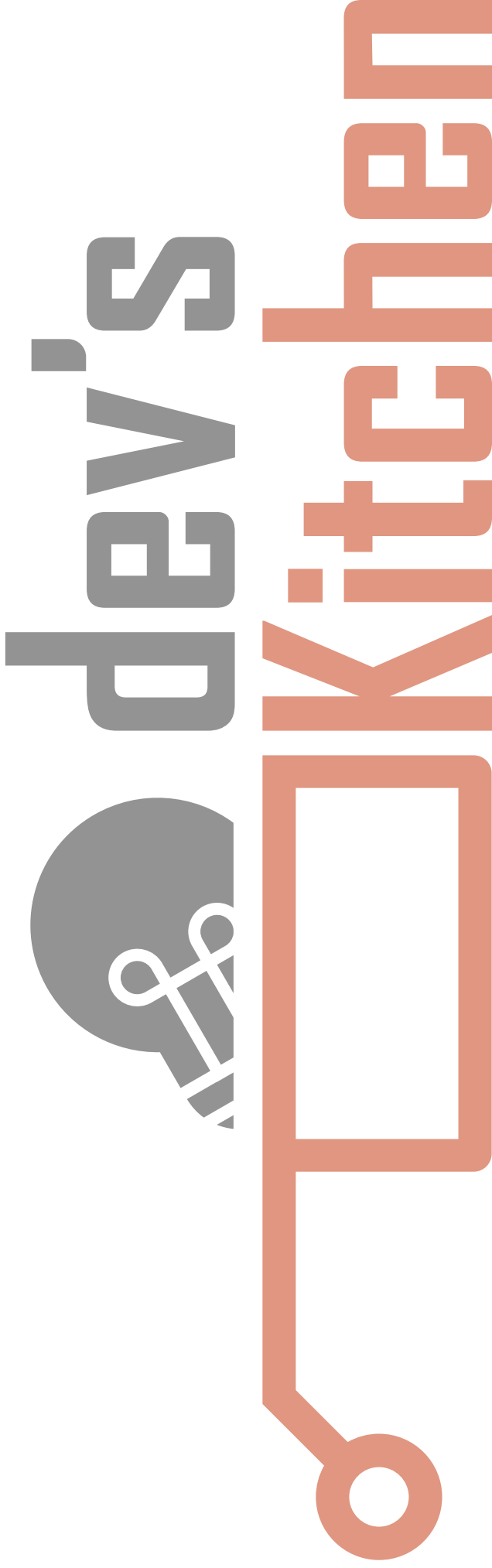


Mentoring



dev's
KITCHEN



Mentoring

Stay awhile and listen

Dev's Kitchen was always about pushing the envelope. Whether it is delivering a proof of concept under the 24h regime or transforming even the craziest ideas into scalable and profitable business, we are there. We're always ready to make it happen

and to provide the necessary recipe and ingredients. In previous articles, we have discussed crucial components like team building, market research and competition reckon, to name the few, and of course fun. One does not simply forget about having

fun. There is one more element however, which simply cannot be left out of the pot.: mentoring.

Dev's Kitchen uniqueness comes, among other things, from the implemented mentoring model. In a typical hackathon formula,

there are several teams and only a few mentors, sometimes it's only a single person. We reversed that and reached the equilibrium. There is only one team and the number of mentors is equal to the number of participants. This way, everyone gets the proper attention they need and the feedback becomes nearly instantaneous. It also blends in perfectly with the agile project management procedures and the iterative character of the whole process.

The model and form are of paramount importance here, because they define the whole course of the Dev's Kitchen. However, a form without content is only a hollow shell, so it's equally significant to fill it with something truly meaningful and that's where the mentors come in. Bear in mind though, that aren't meant to tell anyone "You are a winner" or repeat the motivational videos clichés like Shia's LeBouf "just do it!" They aren't coaches and they're here for very specific reasons. It includes giving a proper feedback, pointing out the mistakes and giving advice on how to solve the constantly emerging problems. In short, they are essentially live action helpdesk and info line merged into one.

Efficient mentoring also needs to fit well the organization culture. Ideally, it should offer professional advice, maximum merit and minimum unnecessary emotions. Mentors are not nannies and it really isn't their job to hug, stroke anyone's head and tell them that everything will be alright. It's very unlikely that this will help find the

solution to a problem. On the other hand, Dev's Kitchen is a tough deal but by all means, it's not a marine boot camp either. Acting like a stereotypical U.S. Army drill sergeant is even less likely to do any good than being overprotective towards the participants. Shouting, yelling and escalating the tension aren't considered the most suitable ways of ramping up the effectiveness. What makes for a great mentor however, is finding a balance and harmony between those elements. Ideally, he or she should be like old sensei: wise, strict or compassionate when needed but most of all, supportive.