



**CRITICAL EYE**

The peer to peer Board Community



# Best Practice Mentoring: A First-Time Listed CEO



## What makes a great mentor-mentee relationship?

**At Criticaleye, we believe that true and effective executive mentoring can only be delivered by someone who has been at the coalface of leadership. Someone who has dealt with the same types of issues as their mentee and who can inspire them to succeed from a position of experience as well as understanding.**

It may seem as though CEOs and senior executives are constantly surrounded by people who can advise and support them, but these relationships are almost always tainted by company politics, peer ambitions and hidden agendas, whether you are a seasoned leader or a first-time CEO looking to set out your stall. For an unbiased perspective, based upon a genuine interest and care about your success, the mentoring relationship is entirely unique.

While it can be difficult to articulate the value of a successful mentoring relationship, those who achieve it report significant benefits, both personally and for their organisations. Within the Criticaleye Community, one such relationship between a listed Group CEO (Criticaleye Member), and his Criticaleye Board Mentor, a former CEO within the same industry, epitomises mentoring at its best.



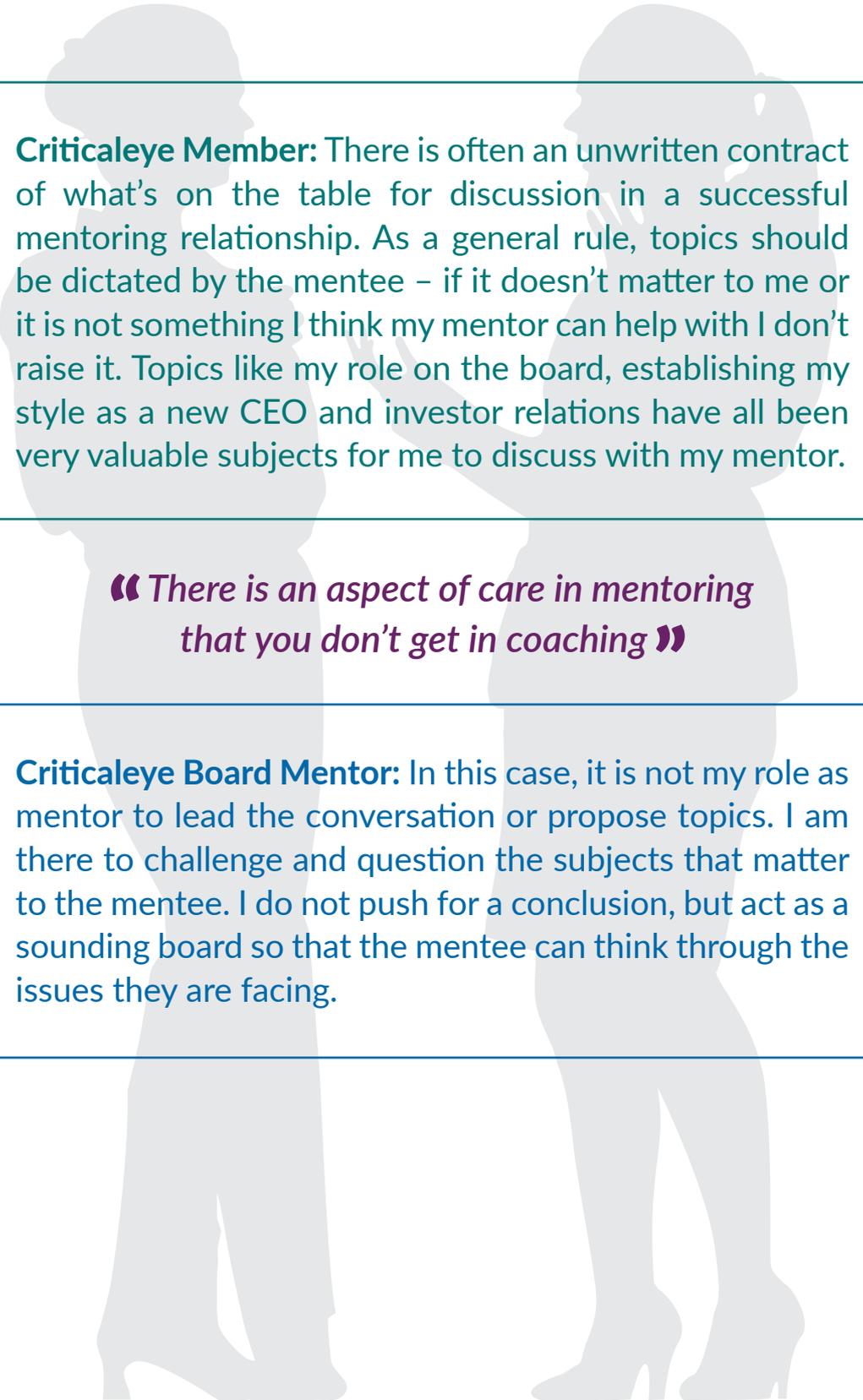
**“As a first-time CEO I knew I didn’t know everything and I needed support”**



**Criticleye Member:** There is an aspect of care in mentoring which you don't get from other sources, such as your Chair. You might still have a very good relationship with your Chair but at the end of the day they are still your boss so there is always going to be an edge to any conversation. Trust in your mentor is vitally important if you are going to share confidential information. Plus, in my case, a similar background in terms of industry means my mentor fully understands the challenges and issues I'm facing.

*“ You may have a strong relationship with your Chair but there is always an edge to it – they are still your boss ”*

**Criticleye Board Mentor:** As a mentor you have to slot into your mentee's extremely busy life. Because of their limited time, it is vital you say something of value, identifying what the mentee is, or should be, concerned about and providing constructive challenge. In my experience, for any mentoring relationship to work the mentor has to have a genuine interest and care about their mentee's success.



**Criticaleye Member:** There is often an unwritten contract of what's on the table for discussion in a successful mentoring relationship. As a general rule, topics should be dictated by the mentee – if it doesn't matter to me or it is not something I think my mentor can help with I don't raise it. Topics like my role on the board, establishing my style as a new CEO and investor relations have all been very valuable subjects for me to discuss with my mentor.

*“ There is an aspect of care in mentoring that you don't get in coaching ”*

**Criticaleye Board Mentor:** In this case, it is not my role as mentor to lead the conversation or propose topics. I am there to challenge and question the subjects that matter to the mentee. I do not push for a conclusion, but act as a sounding board so that the mentee can think through the issues they are facing.

## Why is it Important for a CEO or Senior Executive to Have a Mentor?



**Criticaleye Member:** Even if you have great relationships with your Chair and your senior team, there is always an edge to any conversations you have in the boardroom. My mentor enables me to have honest and open discussions on subjects which matter to me. Overall, I am able to rehearse conversations I plan to have in the boardroom and get honest, challenging feedback. As a CEO, there is nowhere else I can do this.

*“ Mentoring offers an outlet for you to reflect and think, which you don’t get from the Chair relationship ”*

**Criticaleye Board Mentor:** As a CEO you are very exposed, plus you can live and die by your decisions. This is especially true for a first-time CEO establishing their leadership. A successful mentor-mentee relationship can make a huge difference to their success as long as the partnership is based on a deep understanding by the mentee of what they need from their mentor, and a real sense of care and interest by the mentor about the CEO’s success.

Collectively our  
Mentors have held  
more than **100**  
CEO roles

## About Criticaleye Board Mentors

Having led organisations throughout their operational careers and now executing purely at Board level, our Board Mentors are perfectly positioned to offer the credible challenge and hard-edged conversations needed to be a successful leader. As a trusted reference point and impartial sounding board, Criticaleye Board Mentors help navigate the many challenges of leadership, so executives know what questions to ask.

They have held in  
excess of **300** Chair and  
Non-executive positions



## Inspiring Leaders to Succeed

### Respect

We advocate high levels of respect internally and amongst our Members so that there is value and appreciation of the various opinions, experiences and roles in the Community

### Collaboration

We work together by sharing knowledge and expertise to achieve results

### Challenge

We provide a safe environment where ideas and strategies are challenged, actively inspiring leaders to think differently

### Trust

We provide a trustworthy platform for peers to share knowledge and inspiration openly

### Integrity

We promise to drive results whilst honouring confidentiality

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