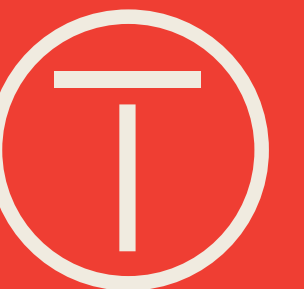




Mentoring Program Best Practices

TIPS ON CHOOSING THE RIGHT
MENTORING SOFTWARE
FOR YOUR BUSINESS



WELCOME

If you've found your way here, you've probably decided that mentoring is the right learning and development opportunity for your company's employees.

Perhaps you've experienced the power of mentorship yourself, or you've seen the power of your company's employee resource group networking, or maybe you just know inherently that having one-on-one relationships focused on growth will round out your existing development program.

Whatever has brought you here, we're glad you've made it.

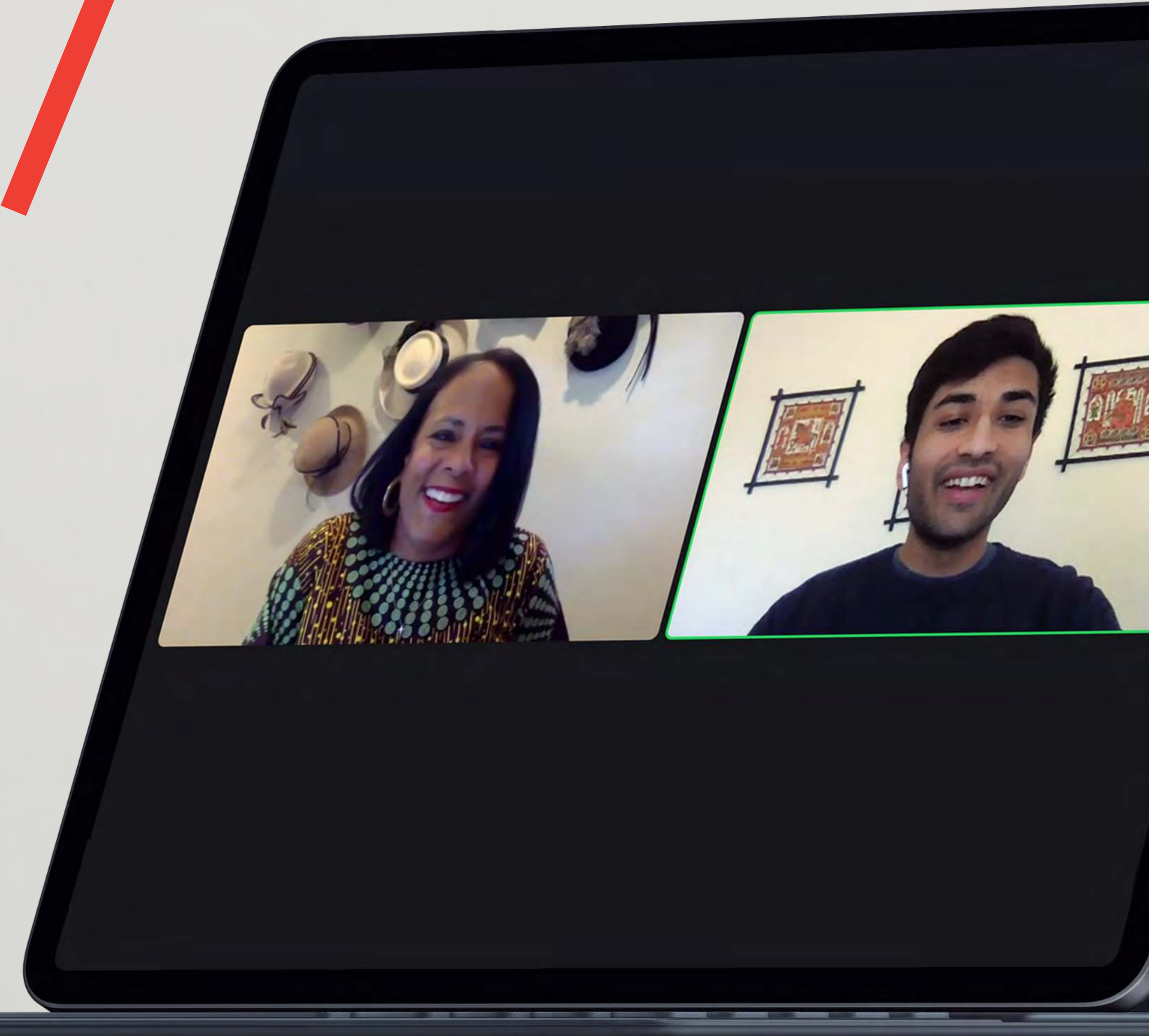
We know there are many different options available to you to support workplace mentoring. Understanding the basics of mentoring software and mentoring program best practices is the first step in knowing which solution is best for your company.

This guide to mentoring program best practices will help you feel more confident in choosing the mentoring software that's right for you.

THE TORCH DIFFERENCE

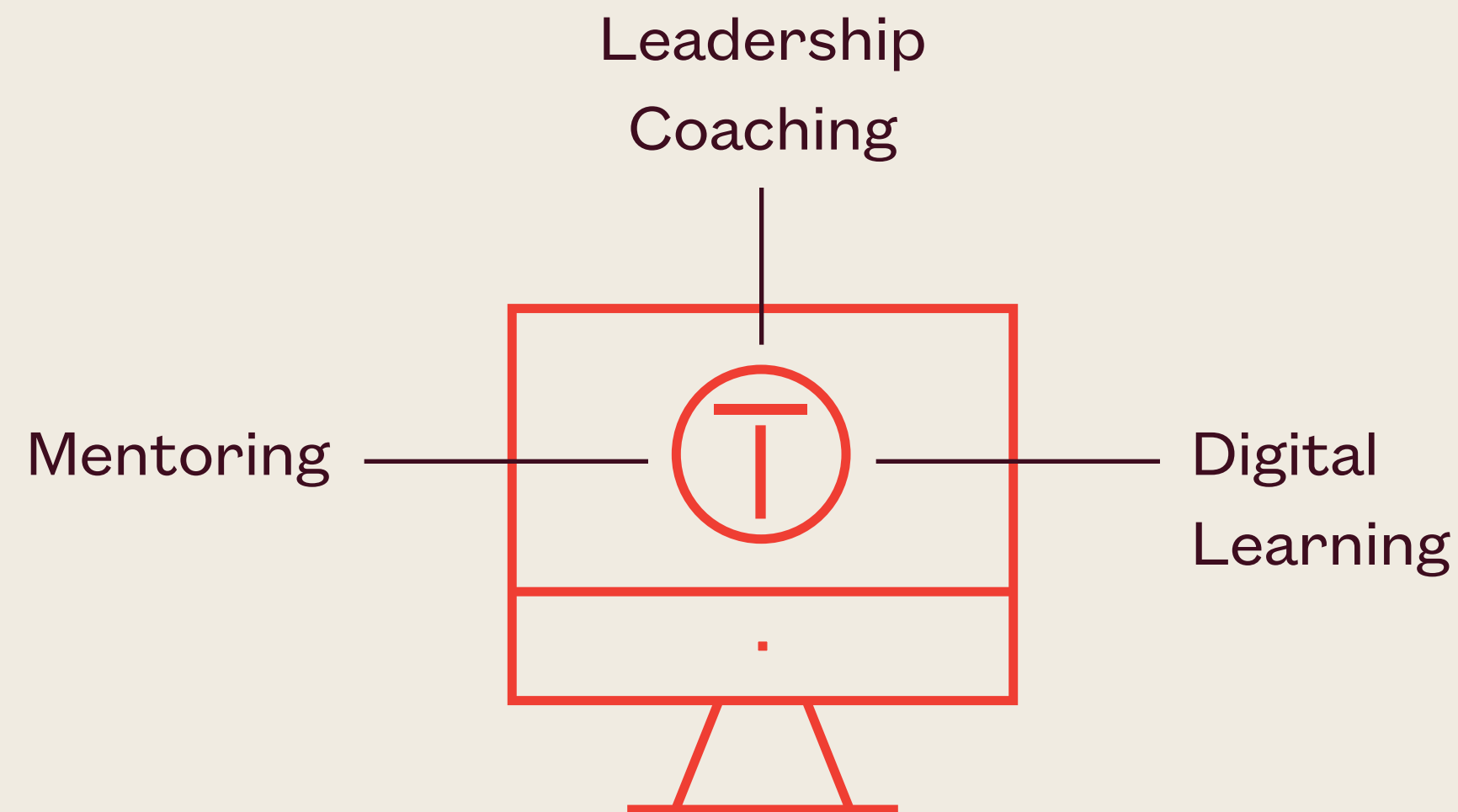
Before we dive in, we'd like to tell you about Torch.

Torch is the only mentoring software provider that integrates mentoring with leadership coaching and digital learning to support your employee development needs.



THE TORCH DIFFERENCE

Instead of managing multiple systems for mentoring, leadership coaching, and digital learning, you can have **everything in one place** with Torch.



By decreasing administrative overhead and increasing program efficiency, you'll be able to **focus on scale and help more employees develop and grow.**

You can **easily customize** features of your coaching, mentoring or digital learning programs. Whether you want to add bespoke leadership evaluation criteria to your 360 review process or add your own content to a digital learning program, it's simple with Torch.

If you choose to leverage Torch, you can also get access to our community of 6,000+ coaches and mentors to ensure a **high-impact experience.**

Torch helps you deliver, manage, and measure employee growth at scale.

INTRODUCTION

What's included

As we've built our software, we've learned a lot about mentoring program best practices by tapping into over 20 years of mentoring data outcomes, staying informed by our team of experts in mentorship and psychology, and listening to our customers and community.

This guide starts with **the basics** by defining mentoring and the different types of mentors, then gets into the **most common use cases** we've seen before delving into the specifics of getting started for admins, mentors, and mentees. Lastly, we tie it all together with guidance on **how to measure the success of your program** and questions to help you evaluate your options along the way.

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Mentoring program use cases

If you're at the point of evaluating different mentoring software providers, it's likely that you have an idea of how you'd like to implement mentoring at your company.



Chances are that idea might fall into three of the main use cases that we've seen most implemented:

- Diversity and Inclusion
- New Managers
- High Potential Employees



MENTORING PROGRAM USE CASES

Diversity and inclusion

One of the most common ways to implement mentoring to improve workplace diversity and inclusion is by supporting Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). ERGs are independent employee-led groups that are formed around an aspect of identity, like LGBTQ or Women of Color. ERGs often begin informal mentoring programs to support the development of members of their group. When these groups are looking to expand their mentoring abilities, they often look to HR or L&D for budget. Mentoring can also help to increase diversity in leadership roles and better retain diverse talent.

[Learn how Best Buy fostered diversity and inclusion through an internal mentoring program with Torch](#)

MENTORING PROGRAM USE CASES

New managers

Mentoring for new managers can be a vital component of the new manager onboarding process. Pairing new managers with mentors who are experienced managers, whether they're internal or external, can help build manager's confidence by focusing on specific areas of growth. According to **data from TalentLMS**, 76% of managers say that they want more training and development opportunities from their companies. And 47% of managers who want more training and don't get it are thinking of quitting their jobs.

High potential employees

Once you've identified the high potential employees at your company, your next step is getting them to stay.

HiPo development programs that create continuity, provide hands on support, and offer a personalized experience tend to be successful.

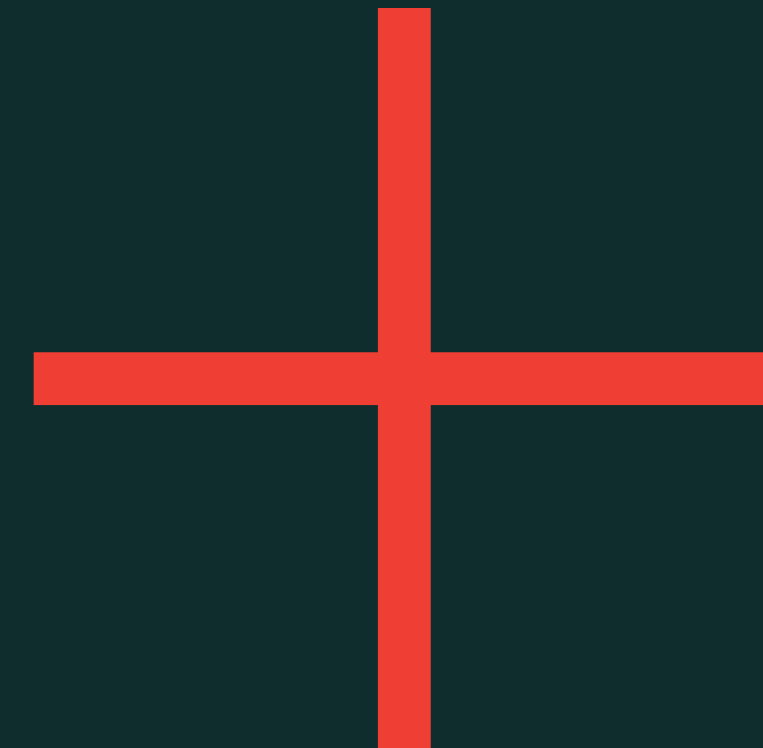
Mentoring ticks all the boxes. In fact, a well known study by Sun Microsystems found that **retention rates are much higher** for mentees than for employees who did not participate in mentoring.



GETTING STARTED

Admin

Whether what you're looking to solve with mentoring falls into the three categories above or is something different, you'll need a **mentoring software platform** that can decrease administrative burden while increasing the impact of your mentoring program.





GETTING STARTED / ADMIN

Administrative burden typically shows up in the form of time spent. This may be time spent on delivery, like manual matching, or sending invitations and program reminders for those who aren't responsive, which takes away time that could be spent on strategy and measurement of impact. In fact, to run a mentoring program for 50 partnerships according to the best practices we follow at Torch, it would take a program administrator roughly 400 hours.

Assuming this administrator has a salary of 150K - that is roughly \$29K of cost.

With a large number of programs and employees, and typically lean teams, HR and L&D leaders like yourself **need a better solution.**

Here are some best practices when it comes to mentoring program management

Automated program delivery

Having the ability to create templates that accelerate the design and scale of your learning programs is ideal. The right mentoring software will help you automate all elements of program delivery, including:

- Tracking of invitations and activation
- Reminders for all meetings
- Notifications for each new learning path section
- Notifications for essential resources such as meetings

Personalized mentor matching

For cohorts of 30 or more, algorithmic approaches to matching are ideal. We've found that at least two or three potential mentors for each mentee is ideal to ensure good matching. Being able to tap into external mentors, gain buy-in from mentors to support more than one mentee, or even offer group mentoring to support larger populations, can help increase program success if your internal pool of mentors is smaller.

Effective matching is about more than just skills, interests and job descriptions. The key is to develop a rounded picture of each mentor and mentee, and make a match based on the goals of the mentee.

Meaningful reporting

With pre-built mentoring reports you can easily determine sentiment, ROI, satisfaction, engagement, and trending focus areas ensuring you can communicate the impact of your mentoring program and make adjustments with the right information.

At Torch, our ROI framework includes participation, engagement, value, and behavior change.

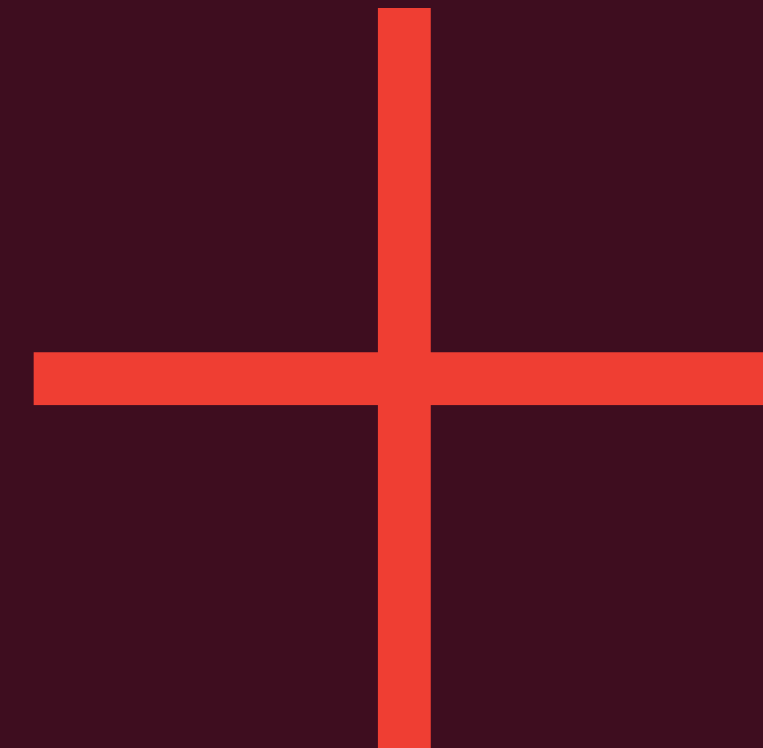
- **Participation:** Users are participating in the program
- **Engagement:** Users are engaged in the program and connecting with their mentors
- **Value:** Users are getting something out of the program
- **Behavior change:** Users report on a change in behavior that supports a business impact

ROI Scorecard

Key area	Description	Benchmark	Customer
Participation	Enrollment completion rate	85%	100%
	Oversubscription rate	50%	15%
Engagement	Excitement about experience overall	93%	94%
	Continued momentum	82%	100%
Value	Match satisfaction	90%	95%
	Willingness to recommend	91%	91%
Behavior Change	Quality of work has improved	89%	87%
	Increased ambition to take on more responsibility	88%	100%

Mentors

How your mentoring program gets off the ground is somewhat dependent on whether you've chosen to use **internal** or **external** mentors, or a combination of both. We outline best practices for getting started in each of these scenarios.



Recruiting internal mentors

Communicate the benefits of mentoring

Your first step is to recruit properly motivated mentors. Many executives are asked to mentor for organizational benefit, but personal enrichment can be a much more powerful and durable motivator. Many mentors report that mentoring provides a unique opportunity to reflect on their own career path and find new inspiration.

Set expectations for involvement

How often will mentors be expected to meet with their mentees? What will the duration of being a mentor be? What sort of topics will your mentors provide input on? These are just a few questions that your potential mentors may have. Get the basics down and you can always evolve these expectations as your program grows.

Don't pressure people to sign up as mentors

It's better to have a smaller number of committed mentors than a large pool of people who only signed up because they felt expected to. Mentoring should be voluntary.

Consider external mentors or group mentoring for scale

Organizations with fewer than 3,000 employees may not have enough managers and organizational breadth to internally support an ongoing program.



Mentees

Setting expectations for involvement with mentees is just as important as setting expectations with your mentors. You'll need to decide how to build your first cohort of mentees.

We typically see selection processes that are manager-led, leader-led or a hybrid of both. Manager-led selection asks a company's managers to nominate participants.

Leader-led allows anyone to self-nominate. A hybrid involves both manager and self-nominated participants.



GETTING STARTED / MENTEES

Perhaps you have a cohort in mind that supports your new managers, high potential employees, or your diverse and inclusive workplace. Having a focus in this way can help you build your first cohort more quickly.

No matter the type of program, communicate the benefit to mentees:

- Reaching clarity on personal and professional development goals
- Developing and sharpening professional skills
- Forming lasting habits that lead to continued success
- A confidential sounding board for your development



Measuring the success of your mentoring program

Tracking results is critical for you to understand the impact of the program and make improvements.



Unfortunately, mentoring program results are rarely measured. This can make it difficult to justify the program for resource allocation in subsequent years, and also can impede the program's evolution over time.

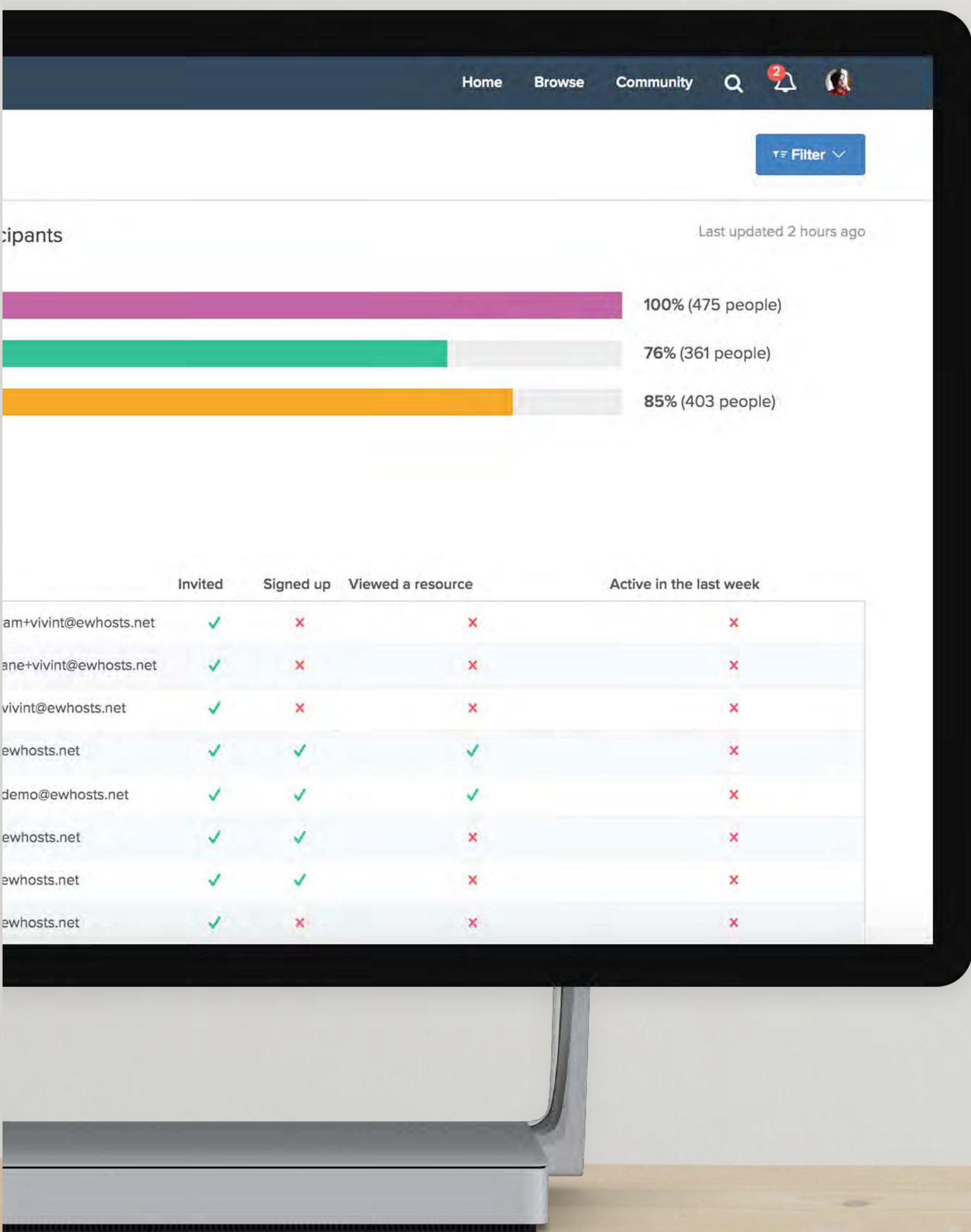
The best practice solution is to keep track of progress at the partnership and cohort level, as well as building a baseline for improvement over time.

Partnership-level progress

This is where clear goal-setting between the mentor and mentee matters along with visibility into this process for the program admin. If mentees have established clear partnership-level objectives, then the best software helps the mentee and their mentor track progress and share those insights with the admin.

Cohort-level progress

Effective programs also track progress at the group level to ensure that there's a good return on the continued investment. Mentoring software is ideal for this. Common metrics to track include engagement, progress against goals, match satisfaction, and participants' desire to continue in the mentoring program.



Torch

We hope this guide to mentoring program best practices has helped you feel more confident in choosing the mentoring software that's right for you.

If you'd like to find out more about implementing a successful mentoring program in your organization, request a demo today and see how Torch can support you.

[Request a demo](#)