

Your mentor

David Higgins

Founder, Advice4Europe

David has more than 30 years of Brussels-based EU government relations, corporate affairs, communications and business development experience. His career spans the European Commission, PwC and Deloitte, followed by almost two decades leading government relations, communications and sustainability across EMEA for International Paper DS Smith.

David has spent his career advising senior executives, building long-term relationships at the intersection of business, politics and regulation. A fellow of the Institute of Directors (IOD), he also served on the board of directors for Olmuksan International Paper, a global packaging company in Turkey. He received the Cross of Merit from the Republic of Poland, in recognition for his contributions to public affairs and international cooperation and was elected "Academico Corispondiente" by the Academia dei Geogofili, founded in 1753 the oldest agricultural academy in the Western world.

The mentoring program uses practical examples and case stories covering EU policy sectors including Environment, Energy, Circularity, Sustainability and Trade among others.

The Advice4Europe Academy of Excellence is a practitioner-led programme: practical, candid and grounded in real client situations.

Advice4Europe

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Why it matters

Technical knowledge gets you into the conversation. Trusted adviser skills determine your impact.

For CEOs and Managing Directors, this programme saves you time. It lets you invest in the people you identify with the greatest capacity to grow while freeing your time to stay focused on managing your business. It is designed to help your brightest talent become even more effective with clients - strengthening judgement, confidence, commercial awareness and the ability to build trusted, durable advisory relationships.

For candidates, effective EU advocacy depends on more than knowing the institutions, the file and the facts. High-potential professionals also need to read people, build trust, frame business value, communicate with presence and turn expertise into advice that clients and senior leaders want to hear and use.

The ambition

To accelerate strong performers from capable practitioner to confident counsellor: commercially aware, politically astute, credible in the room and valued as an adviser of choice.

Advice4Europe

Academy of Excellence: Government Relations Mentoring Programme ★

From policy expertise to trusted adviser impact

One-to-one mentoring programme for high-potential professionals in EU government relations, public affairs, lobbying and advocacy.

3 development modules • One-to-one focused sessions
Delivered by David Higgins | Advice4Europe



Who it is for

High-potential employees already involved in government relations, lobbying or advocacy who have strong capabilities and are ready to strengthen client leadership.

The programme is especially relevant for people who need to:

- ★ build credibility with senior clients and stakeholders
- ★ strengthen influence, persuasion and relationship management skills
- ★ develop into a trusted adviser



Personal, flexible delivery

The programme is delivered in person, one-to-one. Sessions can take place at the client's offices or at an Advice4Europe location, allowing the programme to fit around the participant's working schedule.

Each session combines discussion, practical tools, reflection and application to real professional situations.

3 connected development modules

The sessions are grouped into three practical modules, creating a clear progression while keeping each individual session focused and manageable.

CEO/MD sponsor conversation | Before the programme

A confidential discussion about the nominee's strengths, development needs, business context and desired outcomes. The one-to-one mentoring remains confidential.

MODULE 1 | Foundations: Know Yourself. Know the Client

01 Introduction - goals, context and getting to know yourself and each other
02 Shareholder/Stakeholder value - connecting public affairs to client priorities and business value

MODULE 2 | Presence, Trust & Relationships

03 Presence - owning the room; the 30% not on the business card
04 Character vs Capability - why trust changes the client relationship

MODULE 3 | Communication & Persuasion

05 Storytelling to make complex issues memorable and talking like a client.
06 Trusted adviser & persuasion - soft selling without the hard sell.

CEO/MD development wrap-up | After the programme

A closing conversation on progress against agreed objectives, observable development and opportunities to apply the learning, respecting the mentee's confidentiality.



What changes

By the end of the programme, participants should be better equipped to:

- ★ enter senior meetings with confidence and executive presence
- ★ understand the client behind the brief - not just the policy issue
- ★ frame advice around business value, risk and opportunity
- ★ build trust and manage relationships
- ★ tell stories and make recommendations with impact
- ★ influence without over-selling
- ★ build a reputation as the colleague senior leaders want in the room

A personalised programme

The syllabus provides the spine of the course, but the mentoring is tailored to the participant. Real meetings, difficult conversations, stakeholder dynamics and current client situations can be brought into the sessions as practical learning material.

For the sponsoring organisation, the aim is simple: have Advice4Europe develop your high-potential employees saving your time so you can focus on building your business. Advice4Europe can help mentor your most promising employees to help convert strong technical capability into greater client impact, trusted-adviser behaviour and future leadership value.

The Academy of Excellence is to help talented people use their own style more effectively.