

The Key Role of Sponsorship

According to research from the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), the vast majority of women (85%) and multicultural professionals (81%) need navigational support to advance in their careers but receive it less often than Caucasian men. However, a 2010 Catalyst study revealed that more women than men have been assigned mentors yet 15% more men won promotions. Why? The findings indicate that having more mentorship did not lead to advancement but having a senior mentor in a position to provide sponsorship did.

What is the difference between having a mentor or having a sponsor?

In short, mentors advise you and sponsors advocate *for you*.

Mentors	vs	Sponsors
Mentors have mentees	→	Sponsors have protégés.
A mentor could be anyone in a position with experience desired by a mentee who can offer advice and support.	→	A sponsor is a senior level staff member invested in a protégé's career success.
Mentors support mentees through formal or informal discussions about how to build skills, qualities and confidence for career advancement	→	Sponsors promote protégés directly, using their influence and networks to connect them to high-profile assignments, people, pay increases and promotions.
Mentors help mentee craft a career vision	→	Sponsors help drive their protégé's career vision
Mentors give mentees suggestions on how to expand their network	→	Sponsors give protégés their active network connections and make new connections for them
Mentors provide feedback to aid a mentee's personal and professional development	→	Sponsors are personally vested in the upward movement of their protégé
Mentors offer insight on how a mentee can increase visibility through finding key projects and people	→	Sponsors champion their protégés visibility, often using their own platforms and reputation as a medium for exposure.
Mentors passively share the "unwritten" rules" for advancement in their organization with mentees	→	Sponsors actively model behavior and involve protégés in experiences that enable advancement

Consider the following questions to help identify a sponsor for your employee (or yourself).

	Potential Sponsors
1. Who makes pay, promotion or project assignment decisions that affect you/your employee?	
2. Which senior leaders could benefit from you/your employee's career advancement?	
3. Which senior leader has a network or platform most equipped to help you/your employee advance in their career?	
Best Choice:	

Contact: Maryann Baumgarten - maryannb@slac.stanford.edu

Sources:

Silva, C., Ibarra, H. (2012) Study: Women Get Fewer Game-Changing Leadership Roles. *Harvard Business Review Blog.* Nov 2012
 Carter, N., Silva, C. (2010) Mentoring: Necessary But Insufficient for Advancement. *The Promise of Future Leadership: Highly Talented Employees in the Pipeline,* Catalyst. Dec 2010
 Hewitt, S.A. (2013) *Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor: The New Way to Fast-Track Your Career.* Harvard Business Review Press. Aug 2013