



**ESTABLISH OR ENHANCE
LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT,
MENTORING AND/OR
SPONSORSHIP
PROGRAMS
FOR WOMEN**

**BEST PRACTICES
TOOLKIT**

WLI

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WHY IT MATTERS

ENHANCE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, MENTORING, SPONSORSHIPS PROGRAM

Many organizations choose to establish or enhance their mentoring or sponsorship programs. It is important to set a baseline understanding within your organization of the difference between mentorship and sponsorship.

Mentors can sit at any career level. They provide emotional support, feedback and advice. Mentors help mentees learn to navigate corporate politics and focus on mentees' personal and professional development. They serve as role models and encourage competence and self-worth in their mentee.

Sponsors are senior managers with influence. They make sure their people are considered for challenging assignments and promising opportunities. Sponsors protect their people from negative press and fight to get their people advanced. Unfortunately, women are 54% less likely than men to have a sponsor.¹

Mentorship is great to help an employee refine skills, improve production or navigate office politics. Women need both mentors and sponsors. **But studies show it is sponsorship that elevates women to the next level in the workplace.** Seventy percent of men and 68% of women who have a sponsor reported being satisfied with their career advancement. Women with sponsors are 27% more likely than their unsponsored female peers to ask for a raise and 22% more likely to ask for the "stretch assignments" that build their reputations as² leaders.

As part of the ElevateHER™ Challenge, the Women's Leadership Institute presents a tool-kit of best practices to assist in establishing or enhancing a leadership development, mentoring, and/or sponsorship program for women.

Some of these can be implemented in a relatively short time period while others may be practices to adapt over time.

For a complete collection of best practices in all areas of the ElevateHER™ Challenge, visit: WLIUT.com/toolkit

54%

Unfortunately, women are fifty-four percent **less likely than men** to have a sponsor.¹

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT AWAY

Form peer mentoring groups.

Identify a group of peers whose expertise and success would be helpful in a group setting. The group would meet on a regular basis to mentor each other sharing ideas, best practices, contacts and to hold each other accountable for results.

When grouping peer mentors, consider someone who has a shared work experience but can offer a unique perspective on the everyday and long-term challenges. For example, it may be beneficial to link long-term employees with new employees.

Once you've established a peer mentoring relationship, follow these basic guidelines to help participants make the most of the mentorship: ³

- Form a mutual commitment to both giving and receiving feedback.
- Establish a mutual respect of each other's expertise and experience.
- Determine a frequency of communication and preferred way to communicate.
- Look for opportunities for dialogue as they arise – any conversation can be an opportunity to mentor each other.
- Create ground rules regarding confidentiality and any off-limits topics.



"One role of a mentor is to help a mentee uncover the things that are important in their learning objectives. Mentorship is what helps an mentee build skills, sponsorship is what gets them seen."

Leslie Snavely, Chief Digital Office, CHG Healthcare Services

Assign sponsors to rising women.

We know what is most effective in advancing women is having a senior mentor in a position to provide 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.⁴ However, a 2010 Catalyst study revealed that more women than men have been assigned mentors yet 15% more men won promotions.⁵

These findings show **women are receiving endless development without subsequent advancement opportunities.** Advancement opportunities include: large and visible projects, mission-critical roles, international experience and “stretch assignments” that advance careers further and faster.

Consider the following questions to help identify a sponsor for your employee:

Who makes pay, promotion or project assignment decisions that affect your employee?	
Which senior leader could benefit from your employee’s career advancement?	
Which senior leader has a network or platform most equipped to help your employee advance their career?	
Best sponsor match for this employee is:	

Hold quarterly Executive Roundtables.

Executive Roundtables allow high potential employees to interact with the executive team. It also allows the executive team to become more familiar with the talent in their organization.

PRACTICES TO ADAPT OVER TIME

Focus on 3E leadership development for high potential women.

This type of development for both employees and managers, is the foundation of performance management at Stanford.⁶ The three E's include: Education, Experience and Exposure.

When considering development activities keep in mind the 70-20-10 rule: 10% development happens in the classroom, 20% in coaching and mentoring, and 70% on the job. It is important to use all three types of development activities when structuring a development plan. Below are some examples of 3E activities:

Experience	Exposure	Education
Projects	Mentors/Sponsors/Coaching	Instructor led courses
Targeted assignments	Employee resource groups	Licensing
Job shadowing	Networking	E-learning programs
Job swaps	Feedback	Selected readings
Expanded roles	Professional organizations	Leadership programs



"Good sponsors can supercharge a woman's career by providing her with access to essential networks, bringing her achievements to the attention of senior-level executives, and recommending her for key assignments."

Ilene H. Lang, President & CEO Catalyst.

Create a formal mentoring program or reevaluate your current program.

We know what is most effective in advancing women is having a senior mentor. Why do mentoring and women make such a good pair? A study in the Academy of Management Journal found that **career development for women is tied more to attachment and relationships**, whereas career development for men means increased autonomy and separation from others.⁷ This is one reason women respond so favorably to mentoring programs.

But proceed with caution, **a check-the-box mentoring program only gets an organization halfway**. A program that is set up and not monitored will not provide value and can even leave women employees even more unsatisfied at work.

Successful programs focus on engaging participants beyond simply matching mentors and mentees and scheduling their first conversations. A successful mentoring program is embraced by the entire organization, from the top down. Without this commitment, programs will have a hard time launching, running, and being properly measured.⁸

Do:

- Create a mentee application form to understand the desired needs of the mentee
- Make thoughtful matches when pairing mentees and mentors
- Provide structure - how, when and how often will you meet?
- Determine the length of the mentoring relationship - we suggest 9 to 12 months.
- Set goals and measure results

Don't:

- Match entry-level employees with highest level employees
- Act too passive or aggressive
- Leave future contact vague
- Forget to follow through
- Assume the program fixes all problems in your organization

Implement a 30-5-1 Sponsorship Program.

Do you have 36 minutes a week to advance women? JPMorgan Chase has developed an initiative they call 30-5-1 to support rising stars who are women.⁹ This program encourages both men and women to participate with the goal of helping sponsors connect with the next generation of superstars.

- Spend 30 minutes a week having coffee with a talented up and coming woman.
- Spend 5 minutes a week congratulating a female colleague on a win or success.
- Spend 1 minute a week talking up the woman who had that win to other colleagues around the firm.

Sponsoring Resource:

- Hewitt, S.A. (2013) Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor: The New Way to Fast-Track Your Career. Harvard Business Review Press. Aug 2013

Mentoring Resources:

- “Tips to Help You Create a Successful Mentoring Program” – www.mentorscout.com/mentoring-tips-and-frequently-asked-questions.cfm
- “Creating a Mentor Program” – www.shrm.org/Pages/mentorprogram.aspx
- “How to Start a Mentoring Program” – <https://www.inc.com/guides/2010/04/start-mentoring-program.html>
- “How to Start a High-Impact Mentoring Program” - <https://chronus.com/how-to-start-a-mentoring-program>
- “How to Build a Successful Employee Mentoring Program” - <https://www.insperity.com/blog/how-to-build-a-successful-employee-mentoring-program/>
- “How to Create a Women’s Mentorship Program in Your Company” - <https://recruiterbox.com/business-guides/women-in-business/create-womens-mentorship-program-in-your-company>

RESOURCES:

1. <http://30percentclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/The-Sponsor-Effect.pdf>
2. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3050430/why-women-need-career-sponsors-more-than-mentors>.
3. <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7719-peer-mentoring.html>
4. <https://www.talentinnovation.org/Research-and-Insights/index.cfm?sorter=Women#list>
5. <https://www.catalyst.org/research/good-intentions-imperfect-execution-women-get-fewer-of-the-hot-jobs-needed-to-advance/>
6. <https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/learning-stanford/performance-management/process/3e-development>
7. https://www.jstor.org/stable/256606?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
8. <https://www.td.org/insights/why-mentoring-women-in-the-workplace-spurs-greater-innovation>
9. <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/corporate/news/stories/how-long-to-advance-women.htm>

For more resources
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six ElevateHER™ Challenge
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