



A PERSONAL SPONSOR COULD BE THE KEY TO YOUR CAREER GROWTH

An active supporter from within your business or industry – as opposed to a mentor – can greatly enhance your career prospects and success, writes business leader *Janine Garner*.

The uncertain future and ever changing work landscape that we are all now experiencing require us to step up and become the better someone that tomorrow needs. To meet this challenge we need to embrace curiosity, develop the skills to connect the dots between data, skills and people, be decisive despite not always having all the answers and, ultimately, inspire others to create a new future. Finding your own personal sponsor – the CEO of your own personal cheer squad and support crew – is critical to helping you navigate your success. This person will promote you whenever they can, sponsor your growth, create opportunities for you to shine and push you to do more because they believe in you. Sponsorship is key to your success in these constantly changing times.

The role of mentor

While mentors can counsel an individual, offering guidance and advice based on their own experience, it is more of a softly, softly approach; catching up for chats and being a willing sounding board for thoughts and ideas. Mentoring is more about giving advice and listening to concerns than saying ‘yes, I will help you gain X’.

The role of sponsor

Active sponsorship, on the other hand, is far more targeted and powerful. A large obligation, it involves the intentional support of someone who takes action, collaborates

and shares what and who they know to proactively improve the way in which you operate. The results for those being sponsored are often far greater than for those who are mentored. The renowned economist and business consultant Sylvia Ann Hewlett summed this up perfectly when she said, ‘Mentors advise, sponsors act’.

Usually sponsorship is from someone senior within the company that directs opportunities to a junior employee they believe shows strong potential. Sponsorship requires a significant commitment, as the sponsor essentially is willing to invest in your career growth by using their own social and political capital for your benefit.

In the 2018 TED Talk ‘How to find the person who can help you get ahead at work’, Carla Harris, vice chair and managing director at Morgan Stanley said, ‘You are not going to ascend in any organisation without a sponsor.’

Sponsors:

- take action
- open doors
- make invaluable introductions
- give business/career leads
- are in it for the long haul
- help pave the path to success
- help others to achieve their visions, goals and personal and business success dreams
- build connections that influence activity and decision-making.

Think of a sponsor as your own personal champion. They are with you, by your side, through thick or thin, never giving up on you, always dreaming big with you. Sponsors

pull you towards your future dreams, make a noise about potential opportunities, spend time with you to explore how you’re going to achieve your goals, and inspire you to become more.

But don’t just take my word for it. According to research from the Centre for Talent Innovation (a Manhattan-based think tank), people with sponsors are 23% more likely to move up in their career than those without them. In addition, a 2011 study from the Centre for Work Life Policy published by the *Harvard Business Review* found that active promotion of others can result in a 30% increase in promotions, pay rises and projects for the person being sponsored.

Success is a complex process, but someone who has been there and done that can explain exactly how it is, what to do and how to navigate the journey – from their learned experience. A sponsor can become instrumental in helping build your confidence and supporting the pursuit of your passion. They will help catapult your career, unleash your brilliance so that you are able to surpass your dreams and become what you want to become. **N**



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Janine is a global thought leader on powerful networking, collaboration and transformational leadership.

A sought-after keynote speaker, educator and best-selling author, she works with high-profile global leaders, and helps many of Australia’s top 50 ASX companies and multinationals. Janine’s book Be Brilliant – how to lead a life of influence (Wiley) is available now.

