

MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Management without theatre.

ROLE

MENTOR AND SPONSOR

Kram's two kinds of help, high potentials who were mentored but not promoted, what a sponsor does that a mentor does not, what the meta-analyses find, assigned or chosen mentors, and a card for one relationship.



72%

of the men with an active mentor in 2008 had been promoted at least once by 2010; of the women, 65%.

IBARRA, CARTER & SILVA, 2010

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Most people who move up can name someone who helped them. Two kinds of help are often mixed up: a mentor talks with you about your work, a sponsor talks about you where decisions are made. This issue separates the two and asks what each is worth.

Kathy Kram described what mentors give: career help, sponsorship among it, and personal support. In a Catalyst survey of more than 4,000 high potentials, more women than men had mentors, yet fewer of the mentored women were promoted. Two meta-analyses find mentoring linked with better careers, but with small effects on pay and promotion. People who found their mentors themselves did better than those who were assigned one, and in formal programmes a say in the process and good training made a difference.

Stiven Janaqi EDITOR · STIVEN CATALYST

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HOW TO READ THIS ISSUE

Figure

Every figure has its source and year at the foot of its page.

Our reading

Where the editors interpret rather than the research, it says so.

Practice

The steps and the card are proposals to try, not research results.

COVER STORY

Two kinds of help

Kathy Kram studied 18 pairs of junior and senior managers in mentoring relationships, and in *Mentoring at Work* (1985) she sorted what mentors do into two groups: help with the career, and help with the person.

Career functions

Sponsorship

Exposure and visibility

Coaching

Protection

Challenging assignments

Psychosocial functions

Role modelling

Acceptance and confirmation

Counselling

Friendship

Twenty-five years later, Herminia Ibarra, Nancy Carter and Christine Silva met a senior marketing manager who had been matched with a high-level mentor and invited to a programme for high potentials:

“I'd been here for 12 years, and nothing happened. Now I am being mentored to death.”

OUR READING

A mentor talks with you. A sponsor talks about you, in rooms you are not in.

Sources: Kathy E. Kram, Scott, Foresman, 1985 (via Kram & Isabella, 1985; Allen et al., 2004; Ibarra, Carter & Silva, 2010); Kathy E. Kram & Lynn A. Isabella, *Academy of Management Journal* 28(1), 1985; Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter & Christine Silva, *Harvard Business Review*, 2010 (via Full text in a reprint of the article hosted by BIO (bio.org))

The functions as Kram and Isabella list them (1985); the 18 pairs are Kram's earlier interview study. We could not see the book itself. The authors disguised the manager's name.

THE NUMBERS

Mentored, not promoted

In 2008 Catalyst surveyed more than 4,000 high potentials who had graduated from top MBA programmes worldwide between 1996 and 2007. In 2010 it asked the same group about promotions since.

HIGH POTENTIALS IN THE CATALYST SURVEYS, 2008 AND 2010

■ Men ■ Women

Had at least one mentor in their career**Mentor was the CEO or a senior executive****Mentored in 2008, promoted by 2010**

The women's mentors were less senior, even allowing for their lower starting posts, and the more senior the mentor, the faster the advancement. Both made as many lateral moves, but the men were promoted after them. By 2010 the men had 15% more promotions.

OUR READING

More advice did not close the gap. What was missing was someone senior to vouch for them.

Source: Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter & Christine Silva, Harvard Business Review, 2010 (via Full text in a reprint of the article hosted by BIO (bio.org))

Self-reports; rows two and three cover those with an active mentor in 2008. A survey shows links, not causes; mentoring predicted promotion for the men, not for the women.

THE MODEL

Mentor and sponsor

Ibarra and her co-authors define sponsorship as a relationship in which the mentor goes beyond feedback and advice and uses influence with senior executives to advocate for the person. In Kram's terms it is one of five career functions; the authors found it was what the women lacked.

Mentors

can sit at any level

give support, feedback and advice

serve as role models

help read company politics

Sponsors

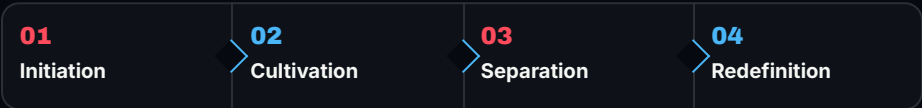
are senior and have influence

introduce you to other executives

put your name forward for openings

fight for your promotion

THE FOUR PHASES OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP (KRAM)



OUR READING

A sponsor lends you a reputation. It is earned with what they have seen you do, not with a title you once held.

Sources: Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter & Christine Silva, Harvard Business Review, 2010 (via Full text in a reprint of the article hosted by BIO (bio.org)); Kathy E. Kram & Lynn A. Isabella, Academy of Management Journal 28(1), 1985

The two lists shorten the table in Ibarra et al. (2010). The phases follow Kram (1983) as Kram and Isabella summarise them: in cultivation the help is at its widest; after separation, much of it stops.

[More in the essay](#)

Starting from zero after you have led people and a business

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

What mentoring is worth

Tammy Allen and colleagues pooled the studies on what mentoring brings the person mentored. The benefits held up, but effects on pay and promotion were small.

CORRELATION WITH EACH OUTCOME, WEIGHTED MEAN R

■ Career mentoring

■ Psychosocial

Promotions

■ 0.10

■ 0.06

Pay

■ 0.08

■ 0.04

Career satisfaction

■ 0.29

■ 0.25

Satisfaction with the mentor

■ 0.37

■ 0.62

In 2008 Lillian Eby and colleagues pooled 116 samples from youth, school and workplace mentoring: many outcomes were better, but the effects were generally small.

OUR READING

Support makes people like their mentor. Pay and promotion move, a little, with the career help.

Sources: Tammy D. Allen, Lillian T. Eby, Mark L. Poteet, Elizabeth Lentz & Lizzette Lima, *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89(1), 2004; Lillian T. Eby, Tammy D. Allen, Sarah C. Evans, Thomas Ng & David L. DuBois, *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 72(2), 2008

r runs from 0 (no link) to 1; Eby et al. count 0.10 to 0.23 as small. Mostly surveys at one point in time: they show links, not causes.

HOW IT IS MEASURED

Assigned or chosen

Belle Rose Ragins and John Cotton asked US engineers, social workers and journalists about their mentors and counted promotions over ten years. Of 1,162 respondents, 44% had an informal mentor, 9% a formal one and 47% none.

PROMOTIONS IN TEN YEARS, ON AVERAGE (1999)



Only those with informal mentors were promoted significantly more, and earned more, than people without one; those with assigned mentors did not differ from them. In formal programmes, Allen, Eby and Lentz (2006) found two features linked with better mentoring: a say in the process, and training judged good.

OUR READING

A programme can arrange the meeting. It cannot arrange the sponsor's interest in you; that has to be earned.

Sources: Belle Rose Ragins & John L. Cotton, *Journal of Applied Psychology* 84(4), 1999; Tammy D. Allen, Lillian T. Eby & Elizabeth Lentz, *Journal of Applied Psychology* 91(3), 2006 (via Abstract at USF Digital Commons)

A promotion counted with at least two of: a significant raise, wider responsibility, a higher level, eligibility for bonuses. The authors warn of selection: people who find mentors themselves may be stronger to begin with.

TOOL OF THE ISSUE

The mentor and sponsor card

One card per relationship. Write down which help you are asking for, advice or a word in the right room, and when you will check that it came. When a name is put forward, the CV has to be ready.

01 The goal one: a skill, a role, a move within a year

02 What the mentor gives advice, feedback, an example: which, and on what

03 What the sponsor risks whose name, in front of whom, and what they have seen you do

04 The next opportunity a role, a project or a meeting, and who decides it

05 How often when you meet, and who asks for the meeting

06 Review date what has opened, and whether to go on, change or end

Sources: Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter & Christine Silva, Harvard Business Review, 2010 (via Full text in a reprint of the article hosted by BIO (bio.org)); Kathy E. Kram & Lynn A. Isabella, Academy of Management Journal 28(1), 1985; Tammy D. Allen, Lillian T. Eby & Elizabeth Lentz, Journal of Applied Psychology 91(3), 2006 (via Abstract at USF Digital Commons)

A practice proposed by the editors, after the mentor and sponsor roles in Ibarra et al. (2010), Kram's phases and the say in the process that Allen, Eby and Lentz (2006) found mattered.

Open the tool: [CV Builder](#)

stivencatalyst.com/tools/cv-builder/

SOURCES AND METHOD

Every figure has a source.

The figures in this issue come from the sources below. The year shows how recent each one is.

Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life

Kathy E. Kram, Scott, Foresman, 1985 · via Kram & Isabella, 1985; Allen et al., 2004; Ibarra, Carter & Silva, 2010

Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development

Kathy E. Kram & Lynn A. Isabella, Academy of Management Journal 28(1), 1985
<https://doi.org/10.5465/256064>

Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women

Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter & Christine Silva, Harvard Business Review, 2010 · via Full text in a reprint of the article hosted by BIO (bio.org)

<https://hbr.org/2010/09/why-men-still-get-more-promotions-than-women>

Career Benefits Associated With Mentoring for Protégés: A Meta-Analysis

Tammy D. Allen, Lillian T. Eby, Mark L. Poteet, Elizabeth Lentz & Lizzette Lima, Journal of Applied Psychology 89(1), 2004

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.1.127>

Does Mentoring Matter? A Multidisciplinary Meta-Analysis Comparing Mentored and Non-Mentored Individuals

Lillian T. Eby, Tammy D. Allen, Sarah C. Evans, Thomas Ng & David L. DuBois, Journal of Vocational Behavior 72(2), 2008

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2007.04.005>

Mentor Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships

Belle Rose Ragins & John L. Cotton, Journal of Applied Psychology 84(4), 1999

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.84.4.529>

Mentorship Behaviors and Mentorship Quality Associated With Formal Mentoring Programs: Closing the Gap Between Research and Practice

Tammy D. Allen, Lillian T. Eby & Elizabeth

EDITORIAL METHOD

Each figure was checked for its year, its publisher and what exactly it measures. Where the publisher's page could not be opened, the figure was checked against independent summaries and is marked “via”. The editors' interpretation is marked “Our reading”. Figures that could not be confirmed are not in the issue.



MANAGEMENT REVIEW

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Every issue, one management question, checked against the best research.

ALL ISSUES

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