The Sponsorship Imperative: Critical Roles and Shared Responsibilities

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Guiding Principles

In Professor’s Model:
Diversity = Excellence = Productivity
Scott Page, Ph.D., U. of Michigan

Talent is Universal; Opportunity is Not
Nicholas Kristof, New York Times

Start fixing the system.
Catherine Fox, Journalist, Author
## UT System Leadership 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Leadership</th>
<th>% Women Represented</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Regents</td>
<td>22% (2/9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT System Executive Officers (excludes Chancellor)</td>
<td>36% (4/11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidents:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Components</td>
<td>25% (2/8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Components</td>
<td>0% (0/6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provosts</td>
<td>52% (29/56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President (academic &amp; administrative)</td>
<td>43% (216/499)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deans:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All components</td>
<td>51% (221/433)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Schools</td>
<td>16% (1/6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All components</td>
<td>26% (76/290)</td>
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Why are there so few women leaders?

• Unconscious bias
• Lack of commitment from the top
• Lack of broader efforts to change organizational culture
• 10+ years to make change

Women Confuse Supporters, Mentors & Role Models with Sponsors

Gender equality: Taking stock of where we are, McKinsey Quarterly, September 2015
“As you move up within an organization, it’s important to have the sponsorship of someone who has enough leverage in the organization to make things happen, otherwise it won’t be effective. In most senior level jobs, you need sponsorship to make it to the very top.”

Elizabeth J. Smith
General Manager
IBM Corporation
Famous women: Who were their sponsors?

Sarah Palin

Elena Kagan

Oprah Winfrey

John McCain

President Obama

Maya Angelou
What is common to these relationships?

Power, Advancement, Public
What Does A Sponsor Do?

Advocate

Go out on a limb

Connect you to senior leaders

Use chips on behalf of protégé

Identify critical assignments

Focus on career opportunities

Expand career vision
When women realized they could be CEO

- 65% when someone told them!!
- 16% it only became clear when they reached a high role
- 12% they had wanted this position for a long time
- 7% they never actually wanted to be CEO
- 16% when women realized they could be CEO
What does a protégé do?

Demonstrate trust

Promote sponsor’s legacy

Show loyalty

Contribute 110%

Sarah Palin

John McCain

The Relationship You Need to Get Right, Harvard Business Review. October 2011
What about mentoring?

Mentoring is necessary…

Increases likelihood for promotion:

Men: 93%  
Women: 56%

But NOT sufficient…

More men promoted to leadership positions.  
Men’s mentors were CEO sponsors.

Sponsorship vs Mentorship

**SPONSOR**

- Stick neck out, public
- Deans, provosts, presidents
- Directs/fuels the relationship
- Open doors for next move
- Expect loyalty and stellar performance

**MENTOR**

- Behind the scene
- Any rank or position
- Driven by mentee
- Help envision next move
- Expect little in return

Advice

Guidance

Make introductions

Give feedback

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Sponsors vs Mentors

Sponsors    ACT    Enable the dream

Mentors    ADVISE    Define the dream

Example:

A sponsor would personally recommend you to the editor

A mentor would advise you to become a member of the editorial board of a journal
Protégé: Proven performer

Mentee: Learner

Women and minorities are over mentored and under sponsored!

Men are 46% more likely to have a sponsor

Why???
Implicit Bias is Alive and Well

“Women don’t want to work that hard” – Senator C. Grassley, 2018

People choose people who look like them

Women walk a behavioral tightrope
“...Sponsors look for self-confidence and ambition to get ahead...

The reluctance of women and minorities to promote themselves and express their ambitions makes them less visible to potential sponsors.”

Ida Abbott, J.D.
Sponsoring Women: What Men Need to Know

http://theconfidencecode.com/confidence-quiz
If you done it, it ain't bragging.

Walt Whitman

But for women…
Form a Posse

Amplify

Elevator speech-ALWAYS

“I’ve got an elevator pitch, an escalator pitch, and, just to be safe, a stairway pitch.”
Network! Network! Network!

It’s often not who you know but who knows you via informal networking.
5 Take-Aways

• Join networks with influential people

• Build trust

• Turn mentors into sponsors

• Sponsors are gatekeepers, not guidance counselors

• It’s a transaction
The Ideal protégé is:

- Confident
- Risk Taker
- Resilient
- Committed
- Loyal

https://theconfidencecode.com/confidence-quiz/
Finally Sponsorship is EARNED!

High performer

Respected Colleague

Effective Communicator

Ability to Execute
Developing high potentials is an essential leadership activity
You Have an Impact on Careers

Women with sponsors are more likely to:

• be satisfied with rate of advancement 30%
• ask for a pay raise 37%
• ask for a stretch assignment 20%

Keeps mothers on track:

• 85% with sponsor vs. 58% no sponsor

Boosts a diverse workforce:

• African Americans with a sponsor >50% more satisfied with rate of advancement vs. 35% those who don’t have one
Sponsorship in Action - Individual

Publicly
acknowledge talents/achievements.
support difficult/unpopular decisions.

Appoint
to internal/external high-level committees/task force

Nominate
for advancement, prestigious positions

Assign
roles that test new skills

Send as replacement
important meetings, speaking appearances and events.

Provide
opportunities to present to executive groups

Invite
women into your networks

Sponsorship in Action - Organization

**Recognize**
unconventional forms of leadership
women’s second-shift responsibilities

**Build**
a sponsorship culture
- educate on importance/power of sponsorship
- include as part of leadership development program
- senior leaders serve as “sponsor evangelists”

**Reward**

senior leaders who are examples

**View**

program as active succession planning

**Be intentional – critical!**

set targets, track outcomes

Fielding-Sing, P. et. al., Why Women Stay Out of the Spotlight at Work. Harvard Business Review, August 28, 2018
Reflections on being a sponsor:

If you have sponsored a woman or a minority, how did it differ from sponsoring a man?

• What were the challenges?
• What was the outcome?
• What did you learn?

How did you benefit? Your protégée?

Is there anything you would have done differently?

What is the single most important piece of advice you would give to other sponsors?
Your Current Protégée

1. What are the target positions and career goals of your protégée (short-term and long-term)?

2. What action steps will you take on her/his behalf?

3. What is your timeline?

4. How are you going to track progress?

5. How will you define success?
Sponsorship Risks and Benefits

Risk

• Use your “chips” wisely

Benefits

• Legacy of developing future leaders
• Personal/professional satisfaction
• Increased visibility
• Eye for talent

(1) Fostering Sponsorship Success Among High Performers and Leaders, Catalyst, 2011; (2) Big Idea 2014: Find a Sponsor Who Believes In Your Potential, LinkedIn, 12/2013
Talent is Universal

Opportunity is Not

Sponsors provide Opportunities!