



How to find a personal mentor

BY KAM RAMAN

When you're starting out in your career or growing your career, a mentor who acts as an experienced and trusted advisor to you is absolutely invaluable. There are, however, a few important steps you should take, to ensure you engage with a successful and passionate mentor who will teach, promote and encourage you — and ultimately be instrumental in your success.

Here are three essential steps you should take, to create a meaningful partnership.

Reflect.

Understand what area of leadership or specific technical skills you want to enhance. It's important that you look inwards first, to define what skills and abilities you want to improve. Personal reflection and self awareness of your own leadership strengths and areas of opportunity, combined with more formal feedback from others in your network, will identify the specific skills and attributes you need to enhance.

To be successful, you must take an honest and objective look at your leadership skills, and ask others for their input too.

Select.

Take the time to select the ideal match for your mentoring partnership. There are many reasons why you might choose a specific mentor. The selection of your mentor is important, because you want to ensure the individual you choose can assist you in the areas you want to develop.

Are you comfortable sharing your strengths and weaknesses with this leader? Are you comfortable sharing your vulnerabilities and fears? Will you be able to respect their feedback and focus on outcomes after each meeting?

Connect.

Making a real connection with your mentor is probably the most critical element in creating a beneficial mentoring partnership. You have taken the time to personally reflect on areas of development and identified someone that can assist with your learning. Now, it's about creating a real connection with your mentor. If a strong

foundation of trust can be established quickly, a mentor's guidance, consultation and coaching can really impact your leadership development.

There are many benefits for both the mentee and mentor in building a formal relationship. The mentee has the privilege of learning from the skills and experiences of a successful leader, and perhaps gaining a new friendship. Mentors are generally people who really enjoy helping others develop by sharing their own experiences, both the good and not-so-good.

Mentoring relationships are not limited to the most senior roles. In fact, emerging leaders have lots to offer to people who are new to leadership. The power of sharing experiences and providing guidance to those that are striving to achieve the next level of success can create a real legacy for more experienced leaders.

Kam Raman is Assistant Vice President of Sales and Member Experience for First West Credit Union. She is also a member of the Women's Leadership Circle advisory council.



Kam Raman

Mentorship vs. sponsorship

Join **The Vancouver Board of Trade's** Women's Leadership Circle on Sept. 24, for the next installment in the popular Morning Leader speaker series.

This event will focus on the theme "Mentorship and Sponsorship: Your Secret to Success" and will centre on how we can all benefit from aligning with strong sponsors and mentors, regardless of our line of work or what stage we are in our careers.

Panellists include **Maninder Dhaliwal**, Vice President of Philanthropy at the **Pacific Autism Family Centre Foundation**; **Debra Hewson**, President and CEO of **Odlum Brown**; **Fiona Macfarlane**, Managing Partner and Chief Inclusiveness Officer at **Ernst & Young**; and **John Montalbano**, CEO at **RBC Global Asset Management**. The discussion will be moderated by executive coach and WLC Advisory Council member **Lisa Martin**.

The event kicks off at 7:15 a.m. at the Vancouver Club with registration, networking and a light breakfast. Learn more at boardoftrade.com/WLC.

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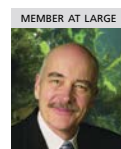
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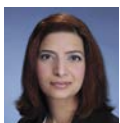
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