

MENTORING VS. SPONSORSHIP: A WICYS GUIDE

MENTORING: YOUR TRUSTED ADVISOR

A mentor is an experienced professional who provides advice, guidance and support. Think of them as a coach who helps you develop skills and navigate your career path. A mentor can be someone inside your company, or they can be from an external organization.

SPONSORSHIP: YOUR CAREER CHAMPION

A sponsor is a leader within one's current place of employment who can help advance your career by using their influence and reputation to advocate for your career advancement. They have a seat at the table in key meetings and actively promote you for promotions and new opportunities.

Examples of who a sponsor could be include: a senior manager, a department head, a director, or a vice president.

QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR

In a Good Mentor:

- A good listener: Someone who offers a safe space for you to discuss challenges.
- An experienced guide: They have a strong understanding of your industry and can share valuable lessons from their own career journey.
- Offers constructive feedback: They provide honest, actionable advice focused on your growth.
- Connects you to their network: They introduce you to people who can help you learn and grow.

In a Good Sponsor:

- Has influence and visibility: They are respected leaders with a seat at the table where career-advancing decisions are made.
- Knows your work: They have seen your performance firsthand and are confident in your abilities.
- Is willing to take a risk: They are prepared to use their professional reputation to advocate for you.
- A natural connector: They actively look for opportunities to link you with others who can help you succeed.

HOW TO FIND A SPONSOR

Sponsorship is earned, not given. The best way to find a sponsor is to consistently demonstrate your value and performance.

1. Do great work: Consistently exceed expectations on your projects.
2. Seek visibility: Take on high-profile assignments and ensure your work is seen by senior leaders.
3. Build relationships: Network with leaders in your organization and get to know their priorities. Look for opportunities to collaborate with them or their teams.
4. Communicate your ambitions: Share your career goals and interests with your manager and other leaders. When they know what you want, they can look for opportunities for you.

SUMMARY TABLE

Feature	Mentoring	Sponsorship
Primary Goal	Personal Development	Career Advancement
Action	Advises you	Advocates for you
Location	Internal or External	Typically Internal
Who Benefits	Primarily you	You and the organization
Communication	To you	About you

TOGETHER, WE THRIVE!

This document was created in collaboration with WiCyS member Archana Ramamoorthy, Senior Director of Cybersecurity and Data Protection at Google.

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