



Roundtable Mentor,
Bob Canuel shared his perspective with our team on how to tap into sponsors and mentors to move your career forward.

Mentoring **MATTERS**

Q *I've heard that one of the keys to a successful career is to have a sponsor (in addition to having mentors). What's the difference between a 'sponsor' and a 'mentor' and how can I go about finding a sponsor?*

Over the course of my career I've seen the value in sponsorship and mentorship, both from the perspective of advancing my own career, and in helping others to advance theirs. I've gained personally from each one of those experiences and I encourage you to seek the opportunity for this too.

A **mentor** is someone inside or outside of your organization who will challenge your way of thinking, help you look at things differently, guide you to look inside of yourself and provide you with some new tools to help you improve. They are often a catalyst to help you grow as a person and as a leader.

A **sponsor** is also someone who may be either inside or outside of your organization. The role they play is typically in helping you to action what it is that you want to do and ultimately translate the fruits of your growth into career advancement. They may also inspire you around new opportunities. I have had the experience of both internal and external sponsors who have advocated for me and supported me in new opportunities with my career.

In all cases these were relationships that were fundamentally built on trust, and it was always my view that we both had something to give in the relationship. I needed to give them confidence in my abilities and my loyalty in order for them to give their voice in advocating for me. I also needed to help them look good in delivering on the expectations.

A mentor is a catalyst that helps you grow as a person and as a leader. A sponsor helps you action what it is that you want to do and ultimately translate the fruits of your growth into career advancement.

Leaders looking to get ahead inside their own organizations will find value in finding an internal sponsor who will advocate for them.

While there are some organizations that may have a formal sponsorship program, my experience with sponsorship has been more informal.

An internal sponsor may be your boss, but not necessarily. More importantly, it needs to be a trusting relationship with someone more senior who really understands what you are made of and what you are capable of.

Here are some tips that may help you find that person:

- First and foremost - know yourself and what makes you happy.
- Show up every day with authenticity and openness, and give your best.
- If your boss is not someone who you view as a potential sponsor, expand your network as broadly as you are able in the organization.
- Find new and different ways to interact with people in your organization. Company initiatives, fundraisers and events are options to consider. Or, set up a new network that may provide you with exposure to people at different levels. You never know who you might find yourself chatting with.
- Consider how you can get noticed in positive ways.



Bob Canuel is an executive mentor and facilitator with The Roundtable. With more than 35 years of HR leadership experience across a variety of sectors, Bob was recognized by HRPA as the Recipient of the 2014 Outstanding Certified HR Executive Award. He has extensive experience in Employee-Labour Relations, Organizational Design and Development as well as senior leadership in many change management initiatives. Bob has recently moved to the beautiful country community of Brighton, Ontario where he embraces his love of fly fishing.



Glain Roberts-McCabe is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. She created **The Roundtable** to provide emerging leaders with the navigational skills, tools and savvy needed to manage increases in scope, pressure and leadership complexity.