Mentoring at the chapter level

What to look for in a mentor

Personal perspectives on mentoring from

Laurie Cooke
Diane Gage Lofgren
Charlotte E. Sibley

Laurie Cooke, RPh, CAE, chief executive officer, HBA, and American Society of Association Executives Mentor of the Year (front), and Charlotte E. Sibley, MBA, president, Charlotte E. Sibley Associates, LLC, are revered for their commitment to mentoring women in the healthcare industry.

Mentoring Matters
Mentoring Matters: It’s been said that when you are climbing up the career ladder, you should reach down and bring others up with you. Successful healthcare leaders recognize the importance of the mentors who have helped them along the way. In turn, they give back by serving as mentors for the leaders of the future. This HBAAdvantage issue focuses on how effective mentoring can advance careers and maximize personal potential, while enriching our lives personally and professionally.

“Mentoring can be 360 degrees. Those higher ranking can help you get promoted, while early career mentors keep you forward thinking.”

Carol Meerschaert, MBA, RD, director of marketing & communications, HBA
“Being a mentor is very rewarding. Not only are you helping others, you’re continually sharpening your leadership skills, gaining exposure to a diversity of perspectives and creating your legacy with every person you mentor.”

Laurie Cooke, RPh, CAE, chief executive officer, HBA

“As you change and develop throughout your career and re-evaluate your goals, your mentoring needs also will change.”

Charlotte E. Sibley, MBA, president, Charlotte E. Sibley Associates LLC

“Having a mentor is extremely important to your career. The right mentor will give you knowledge, advice, a ‘big picture’ perspective and keep you focused.”

Yvonne D’Amelio, MBA, chief operating officer, HBA
Everyone needs a mentor—or several. Shellie Caplan of Caplan Associates told me years ago that one way to take accountability for your career is to create your own “board of directors.” You need a variety of mentors and sponsors throughout your career to achieve various objectives.

You will grow personally and professionally if you call on internal and external mentors, advocates and sponsors who can offer you guidance in different ways. One mentor might focus on your career development, another can serve as your go-to person from a functional standpoint and another might be right for you because your styles mesh well. As you change and develop throughout your career and re-evaluate your goals, your mentoring needs also will change. You may even need to “retire” a mentor at some point.
Meaningful connections

It’s important to understand how mentors—and advocates and sponsors—are defined and how they can enhance your career development.

By definition, mentors:
• are frequently internal
• are not in your line of reporting
• are usually at a higher level than you
• help you navigate specific situations and the political environment
• help you understand “how we do things around here”
• advocate for you, since it can be difficult to “blow your own horn”

In addition to cultivating relationships with internal mentors who can help you navigate the corporate landscape, you should look for outside mentors who are experts in your functional areas. As Deirdre Connelly, president of North American Pharmaceuticals for GlaxoSmithKline, says: “Be a student of your company, your function and your industry.”

A peer mentor is someone at your level whom you trust and who can provide candid feedback while also offering support. For example, a peer mentor can let you know after a staff meeting how you performed: “Was I crisp?” “Did I come across well?” Based on the peer mentor’s feedback, you can calibrate your performance immediately.

You should also seek out advocates/sponsors who:
• are mentors who actively advocate for you
• can be at any level, up or down
• can even be in your line of reporting

Finding the right mentors

One of the best ways to find a great mentor is to choose someone you respect and want to emulate. The person should also be willing to give the time, and he or she should truly care about your success. The best way to recruit a mentor is to simply ask the person if he or she is interested. Most people are flattered to be asked.

To get the most out of your mentoring relationship:
• agree on objectives
• keep your appointments
• establish trust
• maintain confidentiality
• be open to feedback and willing to change

Based on the feedback you receive from your mentors, you should always be looking around and recalibrating. Nobody is responsible for your career but you. If you don’t take charge of your career, no one will.

Pass it on

It’s been said that when you are climbing up the career ladder, you should reach down and bring others up with you. If there’s anything that is perhaps even more rewarding than being a mentee, it’s serving as a mentor to the next generation of leaders.

Mentoring can advance careers and maximize personal potential, while enriching our lives personally and professionally.

Pass it on… be a mentor!

The best mentoring advice I’ve ever given—or received

• Do your own job very well
• Let others do their jobs
• Volunteer for tough projects or assignments
• Ask for feedback—and take to heart the comments that are right for you
• Try to be the most effective person in the room…not the smartest
• Adopt a continuous improvement/learning mind set
• Learn from failure as well as from success. Take ownership of failure; share ownership of success
• Don’t be afraid of opportunities that are outside of your comfort zone
• Return calls from executive search firms—recommend someone if you’re not interested
• Develop your emotional intelligence
• Network, network, network. Networking is work, and it does work
• Don’t eat lunch alone. Scheduling lunches with others is an excellent way to develop relationships with people
• Don’t be blinded to opportunities that come along. Many times, the most gratifying parts of your career come from opportunities you weren’t looking for. Be alert to these gifts
• Think in terms of a career “lattice” rather than a ladder. Some moves may be horizontal or even a “step back.” As Lonnel Coats, president and chief executive officer of Eisai Inc., says: “Seek lateral learning to accelerate vertical progression”
• Take accountability for your own career
• Be yourself. As Oscar Wilde said, “Everybody else is already taken”
• Have fun. Life is short
Mentoring moments
How an open heart and open mind lead to knowledge-sharing at its best

I have been privileged to experience many rewarding instances in which a more experienced colleague served as a thought partner, modeled successful behavior and shared insights she had gained during her career. Equally rewarding are the opportunities I’ve had to mentor and sponsor other women. My career development would have been much more arduous without mentoring. It’s a fulfilling and effective way to accelerate learning—while enjoying the ride.

There is often confusion about the difference between mentoring and sponsorship. Barbara Frankel, executive editor and senior vice president of DiversityInc, shares a simple distinction she learned from Sodexo, a company with a strong mentoring program. A mentor relationship, whether formal or informal, involves someone “talking with you,” while a sponsor is someone “talking about you.” Each type of relationship has value, and it’s ideal to engage in both if possible.

Informal mentoring
Informal mentoring, in which we consciously observe others, can help us mature in our careers. It’s a great way to perfect our skills, learn new ones and strengthen emotional intelligence.

I think of the informal mentors in my life as having traits that I admire and have chosen to learn from and, in some cases, model. Sometimes people wonder how to initiate an informal mentoring relationship. In my experience, I have let another leader or colleague know that I admire his or her achievements, style or acumen—and then I ask for a few insights. I’ve also quietly observed how others interact or get things done and then worked to model their best attributes.

Early in my career, I worked with an executive assistant who displayed great ease and a wonderful sense of humor. Her good spirits relieved tension and built esprit de corps, which helped me learn to lighten up! A few years later, a boss with incredible joie de vivre made life brighter for those of us on his team. His laughter was a part of each and every meeting. As a result, I pay that forward with my team—we laugh early and often.

Recently, a leader I admire taught me how to express a differing opinion with a “yes, and” response versus a “no, but.” I’ve seen how this kind of respectful approach shows that we’re open to ideas, discussion and finding the best solution for all involved. This inviting response also encourages others to be more open to what we have to say.

Formal mentoring
Formal mentoring provides a form and structure that help hold us accountable for what we give—and get—from the experience. The mentee is responsible for driving the relationship because she wants to learn from the mentor. In turn, the mentor can help the mentee map out her career, discover where she needs to gain additional skills and rehearse or role-play difficult or unfamiliar situations, such as asking for clarification on a misunderstanding or talking about a promotion.

Sponsorship
Sponsorship can be a secret weapon to help propel you forward along your career path. Sponsors are defined as mentors who advise and advocate,
using their influence to help mentees secure high-level positions, assignments or opportunities. A recent global study by Catalyst, a leading not-for-profit membership organization focused on expanding opportunities for women and business, suggests that having a sponsor may be even more advantageous than having a mentor. Because sponsors help their protégés identify and take advantage of career opportunities, women with sponsors are more likely to win promotions than those with mentors.

**An open approach to learning**

Sometimes the way to advance is not to move up the ladder, but to go across—a kind of “corporate lattice,” to quote a metaphor used by best-selling author Cathleen Benko and co-author Molly Anderson in their book of the same name.

It can be useful to work for a year or two in a different department to expand our knowledge. That’s what I did when I took a job at Catholic Health Initiatives as vice president of customer market strategy, where I was put in charge of redesigning the patient experience. This was completely out of my comfort zone of marketing communications, but the risk paid off by opening me up to the world of performance improvement, which helped me land yet another job. The role also caused me to see communications and public relations through the “experience” lens—a perspective I would not have had if I had not made a lateral move. This perspective is now central to the way I view and determine strategy for communications.

The only way to learn the most we can from others is with an open mind and open heart. Regardless of where we are on the mentoring spectrum, we need to be open to giving and receiving knowledge. Think of mentoring not as criticism, but as feedback; not as a sign of weakness that we don’t know it all, but as a signal of our strength that we’re always willing to learn.

When we learn from someone else, we honor that person. The exchange of knowledge and experience—of competence and confidence—is a gift received by both mentor and mentee, and ultimately those around us. It’s sharing knowledge at its best.

**A roadmap for shared success**

At Kaiser Permanente, a few of us started KP Women Embracing Life and Leadership, a multicultural business resource group where women at the company connect with other women to advance their careers and enrich their relationships. Members frequently tell us that our mentoring program has given them a greater regard for their roles and the courage to step out of their comfort zones, and it’s helped them stretch and grow in ways they hadn’t envisioned.

Alice Owens, a corporate executive recruiter at Kaiser Permanente, is a member of the group who has been mentored by Jeanne Hughes, communications director for brand strategy, communications and public relations at Kaiser Permanente.

“Being mentored has given me increased confidence, which allows me to share knowledge with all of National Recruitment Services, not just my team,” Alice says. “I’ve widened my scope of work and my circle of influence. So if and when an opportunity for that next level arrives, there will be no hesitation. Now I have a roadmap.”

Jeanne says the experience has served as validation for her, too. “I wasn’t thinking about myself as a mentor because even though I’ve been doing this same kind of work for more than 10 years, I am still relatively early in my career. Serving as Alice’s mentor made me feel that I had valuable skills that others would like to acquire.”

She adds: “It’s a reminder that we are in charge of our own destiny.”

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Diane Gage Lofgren, APR, Fellow PRSA, is the senior vice president, brand strategy, communications and public relations at Kaiser Permanente. In this role, she leads the critical work of framing Kaiser Permanente in the hearts and minds of its key stakeholders, and leads all work associated with national public relations, issues and brand management, and corporate communications, in addition to overseeing advertising and marketing. Diane is an active volunteer in her professional community, mentoring communications students and professionals in all stages of their careers. She co-founded Kaiser Permanente Women Embracing Life and Leadership, a business resource group that provides women with opportunities for education, networking and development of leadership skills that enhance their work and life experiences. She also serves on the HBA advisory board.
“I recently went through a lot of personal and professional changes, and I am so thankful that I was part of the program during that time. This dynamic group of women gave me the support, encouragement and confidence to make the right decisions to help me grow as a person and in my career.”

—Rebecca LaRose, mentee, HBA Boston

“This program gave me a safe, supportive environment in which to reflect upon my goals and explore my development options—and the confidence to step out of my comfort zone and challenge myself in new and creative ways.”

—Allison Englander, mentee, HBA St. Louis

“I have found no other place where you can safely express your insecurities; get guidance, encouragement and support; and truly see the fruits of your labor. My participation has allowed me to expand my professional perspective, accomplish several professional goals and gain life-long friends in the process.”

—Doreen Rice, mentee, HBA Metro

“It was extremely gratifying to share so that others may avoid some of the same mistakes I’ve made. I also benefited greatly from the leadership assessment tools and coaching feedback. The end product was a network of great women and a solid plan for taking the next steps in my own leadership journey.”

—Dinorah Hakala, mentor, HBA San Antonio
MENTORING AT THE CHAPTER LEVEL

Reflections from HBA chapter mentoring program participants

“The program gave me the opportunity to interact with some very talented and successful businesswomen. It was enlightening to learn how they are addressing some of today’s challenges.”

—Roxanne Barr, mentee, HBA San Antonio

“The program provided me with a strong foundation of leadership support, encouragement and growth that I could not find at work. It helped me build my value proposition and seek a career path that aligned with my personal and professional goals.”

—Dawn Lang, mentee, HBA Indiana

“I have a mentor at work but always felt confined to discuss the ‘right’ topics. The HBA group gave me the opportunity to be real.”

—Mentee, HBA Southern California

“After I was laid off, the program helped me discover my strengths and apply for a new position I thought was out of reach. I went into the interview with renewed confidence and got the job! It’s my dream job and I am better at it because of the support and insight of my mentoring group.”

—Mentee, HBA Southern California
The HBA is committed to supporting its members’ professional and personal development—a commitment that is exemplified by CEO Laurie Cooke, RPh, CAE, who was recently named Mentor of the Year by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

“Laurie is a stellar example of mentorship in action. Since she joined the HBA in 2006, every president—myself included—has relied heavily on her advice and counsel,” says Deborah Coogan Seltzer, 2011 HBA president. “Given the growth and evolution of the HBA during her tenure, she is essentially the mentor for the entire organization, shepherding us through this transformational phase, and she has been instrumental in our success.”

From the professional to the personal

Laurie’s commitment to supporting others reaches far beyond the HBA. Throughout her career, she has mentored and advocated for hundreds of individuals across multiple companies, industries and communities—many of whom have themselves gone on to highly successful careers. Through a program at her church, she has also recently spent a full year mentoring a ninth-grade student, helping the young woman explore and navigate life’s difficult decisions.

It’s no wonder that her advice is sought regularly by national organizations including the White House, which recently invited Laurie to join a roundtable on the key issues facing women in the United States, and the Vision 2020 Initiative, a campaign to make equality a national priority through shared leadership among men and women.

An example to others

Past and present colleagues alike cite Laurie’s keen business sense and visionary thinking—combined
with a genuine concern for others and down-to-earth communication style—as the key ingredients for her success both as a leader and a mentor.

“Laurie models the way work *should* get done,” says Marianne Fray, HBA director of corporate development, who nominated Laurie for the ASAE award. “Her diplomacy and humility help her build trust across levels, stakeholder groups and even cultures as she trains, mentors and empowers cross-functional teams to drive growth through collaboration and embracing common goals. It is largely because of this that the HBA has experienced triple-digit membership growth, a surge in strategic alliances and an increase in product development during her tenure of less than five years.”

What to look for in a mentor

If you’re searching for a professional mentor, here are some characteristics to look for:

**Experience**

A mentor doesn’t have to be a superior to be effective. But, she should be experienced—and successful—in your key growth areas.

**Honesty**

A good mentor should provide honest feedback—even when you don’t want to hear it. Remember, you’re looking for someone to help you grow—and that means tackling the areas where you need the most work.

**An open ear**

A good mentor does more than offer advice; she also listens to your goals and helps you find the right path.

**Time**

Successful mentoring takes a commitment to meeting regularly. Make sure both you and your mentor have the time—and commitment—to make it work.

These are just a few tips to get you started in your search for a mentor. To learn how successful mentoring relationships work, check out HBA Florida chapter mentoring program leader Hayley Norman’s book *The Career Compass*, available at: http://careercompasssite.com
Congratulations to Carolyn Buck Luce
2012 Healthcare Businesswomen’s Association Woman of the Year

Ms. Buck Luce’s accomplished career includes over 20 years at Ernst & Young, where she is the Global Pharmaceutical Leader for life science clients. The HBA community recognizes Ms. Buck Luce for her decades-long leadership in healthcare and life sciences as well as her tireless efforts for the advancement of women in the industry.

Please join us in celebrating her special achievement at the annual HBA Woman of the Year luncheon.

• Reception: 10:00 AM
• Luncheon: 11:45 AM

HBA will also honor:
Mike Kaufmann, 2012 HBA Honorable Mentor
CEO, Pharmaceutical Segment, Cardinal Health
Nancy Larsen, 2012 HBA STAR
CEO, PROmedica Communications, Inc.

Registration Deadline
April 17, 2012

Grand Ballroom
• Member: $220
• Nonmember: $250
• Table: $2,350 (seats 10)