A lot of decisions are made when you’re not in the room, so you need somebody who can advocate for you. I can’t think of a person who rose without a sponsor or significant sponsors.

—Woman Sponsor

“ My own sponsors [have] sponsored me into a position or an opportunity and by doing that, they’ve allowed me to develop skills that I didn’t have that have benefited me on future assignments or future management roles.

—Man Sponsor

Sponsoring Women to Success

Sponsorship matters. In fact, high-level sponsors can help make or break a woman’s career and can tip the scales for high-potential executives. At the same time, sponsorship benefits the organization, so it cannot be left to chance. It’s not enough to say “it’s a good thing”; organizations must create an environment where sponsorship thrives.

In Sponsoring Women to Success, Catalyst takes the wraps off sponsorship and looks closely at on-the-ground experiences of executive sponsors and protégés, and the benefits these individuals have reaped.

We found that sponsorship:

• Is key to advancing high performers and gives them greater opportunities to excel through skill development and increased visibility.

• Acts as a differentiator at the top and a means to overcoming barriers for women.

• Provides valuable benefits to sponsors, including feedback, enhanced skills, increased knowledge of company needs and opportunities, and personal and professional satisfaction.

• Provides direct and indirect benefits to organizations, including better leaders and teams and increased organizational commitment.

Catalyst also has created an associated tool, Fostering Sponsorship Success Among High Performers and Leaders, with the following sections:

• Advice for High Performers: How to Set Yourself Up for Sponsorship

• Advice for Leaders: How – and Why – to Be an Effective Sponsor