COACHES, MENTORS, AND SPONSORS: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCES

"A coach talks to you, a mentor talks with you, and a sponsor talks about you."

* Roles may sometimes overlap

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<th>COACH</th>
<th>MENTOR</th>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
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<td>A coach provides guidance for your development, often focused on soft skills (e.g., active listening) rather than technical skills (e.g., financial acumen).</td>
<td>A mentor informally or formally helps you navigate your career, providing guidance for career choices and decisions.</td>
<td>A sponsor is a senior leader or other person who uses strong influence to help you obtain high-visibility assignments, promotions, or jobs.</td>
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**Who Drives the Relationship?**

- You and your coach are responsible for driving the relationship—you can reach out to your coach when you need help, but your coach can also reach out to you.
- You drive the relationship. Your mentor is reactive and responsive to your needs.
- The sponsor drives the relationship, advocating for you in many settings, including behind closed doors.

**Actions**

- Provide development feedback outside the formal performance evaluation process.
- Help you determine possible career paths to meet specific career goals.
- Advocate for your advancement and champion your work and potential with other senior leaders.