



Beyond Mentoring: The 3 C's—Coaches, Champions, and Cardinals

Allowing others to inspire and champion your talent will exponentially enhance your potential for success

People who achieve career success often talk about having had a mentor who guided their career. Whether the mentoring relationship evolves naturally or is a planned relationship, it provides a sustained link between the two individuals.

Everyone needs help learning new skills and imagining things they could have never conceived of on their own. Yet there are three other types of people who can have a profound impact on your ability to achieve success besides someone who is actively mentoring you. The key difference is that the level of their involvement in your life or career often differs significantly from that of a mentor. Knowing that you can benefit from a wider range of advisors will allow virtually everyone you meet to inspire and guide you.

Coaches

Coaches go by many names in today's business world. They can also be consultants, advisors, or trainers. When you think of any successful sports figure,

from Rahul Dravid to Ravi Shastri , one common denominator they all have that enables them to play at an elite level is a coach. The key thing that makes a coach different from a mentor is they are paid to make you think, give you advice, refine your expertise, and teach you advanced skills. A coach's experienced eye can see the changes and adjustments that will make all the difference in your ability to attain success. They teach you how to go beyond the fundamentals to leverage your skills for even greater rewards. Business coaches do the same. They help transform leaders through their ability to teach profound business and life lessons.

A great coach will help you clarify your vision for your future and hone your ability to manage the inherent challenges of the business world. They often view dreaming big dreams as critical, but they know that putting forward the day-to-day effort is essential to making any big dream a viable reality. A coach can help you develop the self-confidence you need so you can hone your skills and deliver them with style, grace, and technical perfection. Coaches are also a support system to help you get back up quickly when you stumble, as we all inevitably do. The lessons and discipline you learn from a great coach will remain with you throughout your career.

Champions

There are some people in your professional life who will reach out to assist you in a very different way than a coach or a mentor. Champions are the people who can open doors for you without any real relationship with you other than they recognize your talent and potential. Champions don't involve themselves in your life in any significant or ongoing way, but they reach back with their hand and give you a boost to lift you to the possibility of a new level of success. These types of distinguished business executives are so widely regarded that their recommendation is virtually an endorsement that moves you to the front of the line. They know they are opening a door for you, but they don't expect anything back except that you follow through on the opportunity at an exceptional level of performance.

You will gain the attention of a champion via recommendations of their staff or from projects you work on that bring your professional skill set to their attention. These types of leaders are always on the lookout for talent. A high level of

satisfaction with your efforts can bring amazing opportunities. It can include business referrals, invitations to next-level boards, and other opportunities to showcase your skills. Referrals from a champion can make an enormous difference in your career and in raising the sophistication level of your future opportunities. The most unusual thing about your relationship with a champion is that there is likely to be no personal relationship. They don't have heart-to-heart talks or lunch with those they support. Yet a champion can do more for your professional career than any mentor ever could. Champions open doors and give you a chance to prove yourself. They can bring you to a whole new professional level and open up the world for you.

Cardinals

Then there are those people who fly into your life and show you possibilities that will change the course of your future. These cardinals just as quickly fly away, and you never see them again. Nevertheless, the brilliance of what they have added to your view of the world totally changes how you see your future. When cardinals talk to you, their words inspire a new song in your heart. The possibilities of the world they show you move your spirit in a new direction. Cardinals inspire you to soar to a level you never could have imagined before you saw them fly. Cardinals leave behind a memory that stimulates and engages you because they have exposed you to previously unimagined possibilities.

You will connect with a cardinal through chance encounters or as a result of a random opportunity that comes your way. These happenstance events have the potential to change the course of your entire life. The insights these cardinals share with you will resonate with you at a profound level, and you will leave the encounter knowing with absolute certainty that your future possibilities have changed for the better. It is unlikely that you will ever see or talk with that cardinal again. Cardinals don't know you. They have no idea of your potential, ambition, or determination. They just show themselves to you, and you will be inspired by the possibilities.

Final thoughts

Whether you are on your way to the top of the corporate ladder or to entrepreneurial success, it is unlikely that you will get there alone. Bringing in paid coaches and allowing others to inspire and champion your talent will open

you up to a world in which you can learn from virtually everyone you meet. By doing so, you will exponentially enhance your potential for success.

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