



Army Strategist Association

Mentoring Handbook

Prepared for the Army Strategist Association by PROMOTE
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Mentoring Matters

People are the Army's most important resource and their development is the responsibility of every leader. However, superior-subordinate relationships are naturally constrained because evaluation requirements inherently limit what subordinates will share and the Army/Joint Force is too big for any individual to know everything. Outside mentors provide important, complementary feedback and development beyond what supervisors can provide.

Uniformed and civilian Army strategists have opportunities to serve an extremely broad range of activities at the operational and strategic levels. No one can be an expert at everything a strategist could do. Every job will develop some skills while neglecting others. Those serving as speechwriters will not develop the skills necessary to produce war plans and visa-versa. Becoming a well-rounded strategist requires identifying your own shortfalls and improving them. **This mentorship program's primary purpose is to help Army strategists develop the skills they need to meet their personal goals, which will ultimately help the Army and DoD succeed.**

Mentorship works best when it is voluntary on both sides. Mentors who want to give back and make the Army stronger. Mentees who want to develop themselves for future success. Good mentorship cannot be forced, which is why this program is entirely voluntary. We operate outside official channels to allow a broader range of mentors and a low-threat environment.

The Army Strategist Association and Army Strategist Proponent (DAMO-SSF) attempt to create opportunities for serendipitous mentoring through social events and other gatherings. These events provide opportunities for mentoring moments without long-term expectations. This program provides an opportunity to connect individuals who would not normally interact for a longer-term relationship. Some connections will fail, but many others will work. Mentees should have mentors outside this program and mentors will have other mentees as well.

Thank you for your service. We look forward to working with you.

Respectfully,



Benjamin J. Fernandes
President, Army Strategist Association

For Mentees:

1. Your personal development is your responsibility.

You must seek out mentors. Mentors are unlikely to seek you out unless you work for them. While mentors can help train and guide you, you are ultimately responsible for the choices you make and the path you take.

2. Keep an open mind.

Mentors should criticize you and discuss hurdles you will face trying to reach your goals because they see things we miss about ourselves.

For Mentors:

1. Leaders develop leaders, they don't clone themselves.

Mentees lead a different life with different priorities. Using your knowledge, wisdom, and experiences to help them create their own paths, which leaves a greater legacy than simply recommending they follow your already successful footsteps.

2. Mentors develop mentors.

The impact of your actions extend beyond your mentee to all those individuals your mentee mentors. Mentoring leaves a legacy.

3. Mentors balance strength and warmth.

Effective mentors should give critical feedback and balance positive reinforcement with constructive criticism. Mentors should occasionally push mentees out of their comfort zone to explore their situation/dilemma/challenge from a new perspective.

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”

– Steven Spielberg

Mentoring Strategists

Strategists (uniformed and civilian) constantly work with individuals from all the services and often other departments and agencies. Therefore we shouldn't rely solely on individuals who have already had similar experiences to help us grow as leaders. The concepts of coach, teach, mentor, and sponsor are particularly relevant for our community as individuals from another career field, service, or the civilian national security realm may be able to increase your skills, help you accomplish tasks, and meet your professional goals. Furthermore, mentors outside your career field may be best positioned to sponsor you or connect you to someone who can help you accomplish your personal and professional goals. Those mentors and sponsors can open your aperture and introduce you to possible options that not only best suit you, but will help you best support the Army and Department of Defense by leveraging your talent and experience. So, although you need multiple mentors within your own branch of service and career field, mentors and sponsors from across the national security enterprise may help you become a more influential and better strategic thinker, leader, and action officer. **This program's goal is helping participants meet professionals they would not otherwise know.**

If you're a junior leader, start on your path to finding mentors and sponsors. If you're a senior leader, assess if you should broaden your pool of mentees and protégés. You're likely already mentoring and sponsoring individuals from your own tribe, but consider growing your tribe by seeking to mentor civilian strategists if you are in uniform or vice versa. Additionally, mentorship and sponsorship should be mutually beneficial: mentors/mentees should learn from one another just as sponsors/protégés should benefit from each other's professional positions. Mentors and sponsors should not dictate courses of action or future assignments to their mentees or protégés. Rather, every career discussion should be collaborative and balance the mentee's long-term personal and professional goals.

*"A coach develops, a mentor guides, a sponsor advocates."
– PROMOTE founders Lyla Kohistany and Nicole Alexander*

Coach, Teach, Mentor, and Sponsor

How many times have you heard the term “coach, teach, mentor”? These are distinct activities that sometimes, but not always come from the same individual. Below we provide the primary focus for each term, who leads the process, and the actions involved for each term.

Counseling

Providing regularly scheduled job performance feedback.

Primary Focus	Review of past performance, but can include suggestions for future growth
Driver's Seat	Supervisor/Rater
Actions	Supervisor sits down with individual and provides written documentation/feedback
Example	Initial counseling when you report to a new command, a six-month review, and yearly performance reports
Duration	Scheduled intervals or in response to an acute situation (i.e. failure of a physical fitness assessment)

Teaching

The National Defense University defines teaching as “the imparting of information and knowledge...” so personnel have the “...requisite knowledge for the day-to-day operations of the command or unit.” Teaching ensures personnel are technically and tactically proficient and is based on the teacher having more knowledge and experience than the student, regardless of rank.

Primary Focus	Ensure service member knows how to execute individual tasks required for the job
Driver's Seat	Teacher
Actions	Teacher trains the student how to execute a task or perform a skill
Examples	Class teaches new Joint Staff officer how to execute the Joint Staff Action Process (JSAP)
Duration	Knowledge-based, so once student displays proficiency teaching is complete.

Coaching

Equipping people with the tools and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective. Coaching often responds to perceived skills deficits and usually includes repetitive practice.

Primary Focus	Coachee's current performance
Driver's Seat	Both parties. Coachee can reach out to Coach and vice-versa.
Actions	Coach provides developmental feedback, often working in tandem with the coachee to increase self-awareness and overcome a deficiency.
Example	An individual needs to better manage diverse teams, increase his briefing skills, or improve his executive-level communications.
Duration	Skills-based, so once the coachee feels comfortable with the refined skill level.

Mentorship

A long-term process through which a senior person supports the personal and professional development of a junior colleague, regardless of rank. Mentoring results in a mutually beneficial professional relationship based on affinity, trust, and respect over time.

Primary Focus	Mentee's future goals
Driver's Seat	Mentee. Although the mentor (senior) sets the tone, the mentee (junior) sets the pace.
Actions	Mentee discusses goals with mentor. Mentor is responsive when mentee requests support/guidance.
Example	Mentee wants to complete a PhD, get a fellowship, work on a commander's action group, and become a general officer. Mentee seeks advice to determine what goals are reasonable and how to achieve as many as possible.
Duration	Relationship-based, so as long as both parties are committed. Best-case = lifelong relationship.

Now that we're slightly more comfortable with those terms, let's add one more – sponsor. The military often uses “sponsor” as “the person who receives me at my next duty station,” which is why “mentor” in the military often describes “sponsor” as well. There is an important functional distinction - a mentor advises you, a sponsor acts on your behalf. Sponsor's advocate for you to get a specific position or promotion, mentors make you a better strategist to succeed in whatever position you have.

Sponsorship

A relationship in which a senior person invests in the development of a junior person to further both the sponsor and protégé's goals. A sponsor sees furthering the protégé's goals as a way to advance the interests of the sponsor or the sponsor's organization.

Primary Focus	Protégé's goals align with sponsor's goals
Driver's Seat	Sponsor advocates, but protégé deserves investment
Actions	Sponsor advocates, in the open and behind closed doors, to champion protégé's goals (i.e. a high-profile deployment, new job, or promotion). A sponsor links his/her reputation to protégé.
Example	The protégé needs to complete a joint duty assignment to be competitive for promotion. There is a requirement for his skill set and experience at an overseas Headquarters and the Commander has the authority to by-name request key members of his staff. The sponsor advocates to the Commander for his protégé to get the position because the protégé has the necessary knowledge and experience to excel in that position and it will help the protégé reach his professional goals.
Duration	Relationship-based, so as long as both parties are committed. It may be transactional or long-term.

Not every mentor is a sponsor and not every sponsor is a mentor. However, a mentor may be in a position to be a sponsor or connect you to sponsor.

*Bottom line:
Every aspiring leader needs teachers, coaches, mentors, and sponsors.*

About the Army Strategist Association

Mission

The Army Strategist Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the study and practice of strategy and the role of the military element of power in achieving national strategic objectives. The goals of the Association are to:

- Support the U.S. Army proponent office for Functional Area 59 (FA59: Army Strategist) and Career Program 60 (CP60: Foreign Affairs/Strategic Planning Civilian) by advocating programs and activities in support of each.
- Preserve and foster a spirit of mentorship and fellowship among military and civilian persons whose past or current duties affiliate them with the strategic arts.
- Strengthen the community of strategists, enhance the study and practice of strategic art, and provide a forum to recognize excellence and the contributions of those in the community.



Please visit www.armystrategist.org to learn more. If you have any questions about this document or feedback on the Army Strategist Association (ASA), please contact us at admin@armystrategist.org.

About PROMOTE

Mission

Strengthen the Special Operations community by:

- Providing service members with dynamic training and tools that help the military leverage its diversity to deliver innovative solutions for our most complex national security challenges.
- Providing a mentorship program for women in Special Operations that optimizes and retains their talent.



PROMOTE Pillars

Educating Leaders

Provide executive leadership development training through partnerships with academic institutions, professors, and researchers

Connecting Leaders

Cultivate professional mentoring relationships between junior women and senior leaders, both *men and women*, who are committed to developing and retaining talent

Please visit www.promoteleadership.org to learn more. If you have any questions or feedback on PROMOTE, please contact us at founders@promoteleadership.org.

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