



SUCCESS **talks**

Accelerate Your Career Conference **2021**

Sponsored by BMO Capital Markets

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
ABOUT SUCCESS TALKS	5
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE – DAY 1	6
INTRODUCTION – DAY 1	7
MERITOCRACY MYTH	8
HOW TO SELF PROMOTE WITHOUT BRAGGING	9
WHEN TO SAY NO HOW TO SAY YES	10
MANAGING PEOPLE IN A HYBRD ENVIRONMENT	11
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE – DAY 2	13
INTRODUCTION – DAY 2	14
HOW TO STRATEGIC CAREER RISKS	15
ALIGNING WITH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES	17
DEALING WITH SETBACKS	19
THE ART OF BEING INDISPENSABLE	20
CREATING YOUR OWN PATH	21
FURTHER READING	22

FOREWORD

Welcome to the Accelerate Your Career 2021 Conference, hosted by Success Talks and sponsored by BMO Capital Markets. Given how much the world has changed since the start of the year, we have had to adapt as well.

Thanks to technology, we are delighted that we can bring this two day cross-industry event into your homes virtually across the world. Not only does this ensure that no-one misses out, but more importantly everyone can stay safe as we slowly return to normality.

The release of the McKinsey Diversity Matters report (2014), the Parker Review (2016), the McGregor Review (2017), and the Investment Association Black Voices report (2020), all highlight the importance of diversity in our workplace. It would be fair to say that over the last few years there have been signs of positive progress, but we would agree this has been frustratingly slow.

The Accelerate Your Career 2021 Conference provides a unique opportunity for delegates to learn about a variety of topics and seek answers. It will highlight practical examples from successful role models which can be passed onto up-and-coming leaders, helping them to build knowledge and confidence in their respective workplaces.

Our panel is comprised 16 speakers who will discuss a number of topics, these range from office politics, going for promotion at difficult times, and crucially during this pandemic, how to increase visibility while working from home.

FOREWORD

With an emphasis on the specific needs of black and ethnic minorities, delegates will have an opportunity to learn and ask questions from people they might not usually have access to. This open, albeit online, environment will importantly promote solutions for challenges that we all face.

The knowledge learnt from the next two days will help you navigate your careers. Many of the people you will be hearing from have not only built successful careers, but are also the change-makers and role models who are passionate about increasing representation in their respective industries. They can be the inspiration for each of you to take the next step and overcome those challenges you may face in your workplaces.

The need for diverse talent across our industries is clear, and whilst there are still obstacles to overcome, we are moving in the right direction. We welcome you to connect, learn and be inspired by the world class speakers we have provided. The conference will provide future leaders across the world with a wider, deeper understanding of the skills needed to remain dynamic in business and how to anticipate future needs.

I hope you enjoy the next two days. Take care and stay safe.



Dennis Owusu-Sem
Founder | Success Talks

ABOUT SUCCESS TALKS

Success Talks promotes the development and advancement of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) professionals by supporting them in achieving their full potential through a series of specially designed speaker and networking events. These events help participants to develop and enhance their leadership potential and profile within their firm through exposure to senior role models and access to a strong peer support network.

Success Talks is a multiplatform showcase for some of the UK's key BAME influencers, and has featured Sir Damon Buffini, Baroness Scotland, Sir Ken Olisa, Dr Sandie Okoro and Karen Blackett OBE to name but a few. With a social media reach of over 130,000 people, Success Talks connects a global network of people on the platforms that they use daily, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

The Success Talks Accelerate Your Career conference brings together ambitious young BAME professionals with aspirations to be leaders within their organisations. Delegates will broaden their professional horizons, develop new skills, and learn how they can better position themselves for professional success.

With an emphasis on the specific needs of BAME professionals, delegates will have the opportunity to learn and ask questions from people they may not usually have access to.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Day-1

1.30 p.m.	Registration
1.45 p.m. - 2.00 p.m.	Introduction
2.00 p.m. - 2.30 p.m.	Meritocracy Myth ROB NEIL OBE
2.30 p.m. - 2.40 p.m.	Break
2.40 p.m. - 3.10 p.m.	How to Self Promote Without Bragging PENDO O'DONOHUE, PAUL MONEKOSSO CLEAL OBE
3.10 p.m. - 3.20 p.m.	Break
3.20 p.m. - 3.50 p.m.	When To Say No & How To Say Yes DION SHANGO
3.50 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.	Break
4.00 p.m. - 4.45 p.m.	Managing People in a Hybrid Environment TINA ESKRIDGE, BRIDGET LEA, KATHY QUASHIE

INTRODUCTION – DAY 1

DENNIS OWUSU-SEM

Founder
Success Talks



Dennis works for BMO Global Asset Management in a relationship management function where he oversees the relationship between BMO and their outsource provider. He is an Economics graduate from the University of Bath, where he was a president of the African Caribbean Society and has previous experience working for Goldman Sachs.

He is the founder of Success Talks (www.success-talks.co.uk), a platform dedicated to showcasing the stories of some of the top influencers in black and ethnic minority culture around the world, with the aim of enhancing the mindset of people to aspire to become more.

Previous ventures include being co-founder of Young & Connected, an organisation which aims to broaden the horizons of people aged 18-25 by creating powerful networks and providing opportunities for attendees. He was also a co-founder of an educational app which had 1 million downloads in its first year.

Dennis sits on the NatWest Advisory board for diversity where he helps develop the strategy for NatWest to achieve their targets in attracting, retaining, and promoting individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds. He is the recipient of Investment Week's Rising Star Award, Future Business Leader Award Winner - Ethnicity Awards, EMpower Ethnic Minority Future Leader 2020 & 2021, and was named as one of the Top 25 Black British Business Leaders to Follow in Forbes.

INTRODUCTION – DAY 1

Themes addressed this session

- Why Hard Work is Not enough
- How to navigate career challenges
- What are the subtleties of an organisation one should focus on?

ROB NEIL OBE

Director
Krystal Alliance



Rob was born in Paddington, London and grew up in the London Borough of Brent. He joined the Ministry of Justice [MoJ], then Lord Chancellors Department in October, 1983 – starting at Willesden County Court in North London. Rob progressed to Deputy Court Manager before joining the MoJ's South Eastern I.T. Team. In 1998, he landed his dream job with MoJ's Corporate HR as a Development Trainer. Rob studied at the Civil Service College for two years, gaining a Certificate in Training Practice [CTP] and is now a member of CIPD.

Rob progressed his civil service career at the MoJ in HR, and as a founding member of the MoJ's Employee Engagement Team he led the design, recruitment and launch of the pioneering Engagement Champions Network in 2008. Rob was responsible for the development of Employee Engagement Champions [EECs] across the MoJ which he grew to over x1000 people across the entire MoJ's; Courts, Tribunals and Legal Aid Agency, before working with other Govn't departments to introduce their EEC's, notably; HMRC, DWP and MoD.

Rob was elected Chair of the Civil Service Race Forum an umbrella network of BAME Staff Networks across the civil service, comprising 30+ Government departments and connecting 6,000+ BAME civil servants across all levels. Rob ended his tenure as Chair of CSRF in 2018 and continues to support the CSRF as an advisor. Rob chaired the MoJ's Diverse Leaders Taskforce in support of the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy until March 2019; and after 35 years with the MoJ, he departed in April 2019 to support the Department for Education [DfE] with Embedding Culture Change.

Rob has been a Trustee with RELATE for eleven years and also volunteers as the Social Media Director with the Reach Society @ReachSociety10. Rob was awarded an OBE in the 2018 New Year's Honours list for 'Services to Race Equality in the workplace and the community' and received his gong from the Queen at Buckingham Palace in May 2018. Rob was also the inaugural winner of Investing in Ethnicity's Workplace Hero Award in November 2018.

After two years at the DfE and a total of 37yrs with the civil service, Rob departed the public sector to launch his own consultancy named Krystal Alliance [KA] which supports organisations across all sectors to be more inclusive.

HOW TO SELF PROMOTE WITHOUT BRAGGING

Themes addressed this session

- Understanding why it is important to self-promote
- What are the best mechanisms for this?
- Dealing with envy of peers

Pendo O'Donohoe

Director
Google



Pendo is the Director of Sales for the Middle East & Africa for Google and is based in Dublin; she leads an account management team who work with Google Ads advertisers across the region. She began her career over 20 years ago in Zimbabwe working for a children's non-profit organisation supporting their donations drive. She started her career at Google working with sales teams in the UK market, and 7 years ago she landed in the Emerging Markets part of the business as she followed her passion for helping advertisers in more nascent markets grow their digital footprint. Over the years, she has been a huge champion of Diversity and Inclusion and a keen advocate for the Black Googler community in Dublin and EMEA; she also founded the Black Googler Network Chapter (an Employee resource group) in Dublin in 2014.

Paul Monekosso Cleal OBE

Non Executive Director
Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust



Paul is a Non-Executive Board Member at Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, Metropolitan Police and National Citizen Service Trust and Equality Advisor to the Board of the FA Premier League. He is also a founder investor partner of Impact X Capital Partners which invests in underrepresented entrepreneurs. For 16 years leading up to 2017, Paul was a partner at PwC, the global professional services firm, where he served on the Management Boards of the firm in both the UK and in Africa. He provided corporate finance and consulting advice to clients across various industries including the public sector and financial services.

Paul has worked in both local and central government, been a board member of the Government's Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, and continues to work with a number of London schools, all of these efforts being reflective of his interest in public services and issues of inequality. For many years he has been involved in diversity and inclusion in business and was recognised for his work in that area in the most recent New Year's Honours List

WHEN TO SAY NO & HOW TO SAY YES

Themes addressed this session

- Should you say yes to every opportunity?
- How do you say no to requests without burning bridges?
- How do you deal with multiple senior stake holders who each have important work to be completed by you?

DION SHANGO

CEO, Africa
PwC



Dion was appointed as Africa CEO of PwC on 1 July 2019. Prior to this, he served a four-year term as the firm's Southern Africa CEO, the first black African to be appointed to the role.

Since being admitted to partnership in 2008, Dion has led engagements on complex and multinational businesses and has serviced a number of large listed clients, mostly within the mining industry. He has extensive experience reporting under IFRS and of financial reporting in the mining industry. Furthermore, he is the former leader of PwC's Energy, Utilities and Mining (EU&M) Group.

In addition to Dion's experience in the mining industry, he also enjoyed exposure to other sectors and industries throughout his career, by virtue of being involved in the audits of companies and organisations such as the South African Reserve Bank, Vodacom and MonteCasino. In recent years, his client base has included Exxaro Resources Limited, Harmony Gold Mining Company Limited, Royal Bafokeng Platinum and Sasol Oil, among many others.

MANAGING PEOPLE IN A HYBRID ENVIRONMENT

Themes addressed this session

- How do you cultivate a hybrid culture strong?
- How can create new relationships which are beneficial to your career?
- How do you maintain visibility of staff?
- How do you avoid communication breakdowns?

TINA ESKRIDGE

Head of Marketing Excellence – Microsoft Advertising
Microsoft



Tina Eskridge is a Sr. Director of Marketing who leads the Marketing Excellence function within Microsoft Advertising. She maintains responsibility for digital marketing strategy, marketing tech, and inclusion with a deep focus on delivering best in class experiences. Prior to joining Microsoft in 2012, Tina spent more than 17 years in strategic roles across the retail, financial services, software, consumer goods, and education industries. She is an active angel investor, board member, and continual champion for diversity.

BRIDGET LEA

Managing Director
BT



Bridget Lea is Managing Director of Commercial for BT plc working across BT, EE and Plusnet consumer brands. Bridget has 25 years of retail and telecoms experience across a number of high-profile organisations including Sainsbury's and O2. She has a passion for creating high performing teams, nurturing talent and delivering transformational change, with a relentless focus on the customer.

Bridget actively promotes diversity in all its forms, is a NED for Marston's PLC and also sits on the Board of Governors at Manchester University.

MANAGING PEOPLE IN A HYBRID ENVIRONMENT

Themes addressed this session

- How do you cultivate a hybrid culture strong?
- How can create new relationships which are beneficial to your career?
- How do you maintain visibility of staff?
- How do you avoid communication breakdowns?

KATHY- ANN QUASHIE

Director
Vodafone



Kathy is a respected executive leader with substantial expertise in P&L growth, sales leadership and digital transformation. She has worked across Tech, Telecoms, Software, Retail, and Banking, delivering traction of operation in some of the largest and most dynamic markets.

Kathy currently works for Vodafone where she leads Enterprise Indirect Partnerships. In her role she establishes c-level engagements with businesses to promote the sale of Vodafone's intelligent connectivity and adjacent services. Since joining, Kathy has driven significant growth transformation within the channel and was recognised by Capacity magazine for being in the Top 20 Women for doing amazing work across the industry. She previously worked for British Telecom plc as Director for Major Business, where she delivered significant performance growth and customer success. Kathy was also CEO and Chair of BT Expedite, BT's digital omni-channel retail business, where she led on the turnaround and then profitable divestment of the unit to an Equity acquirer, APAX, based in America.

Prior to this, she held a number of senior roles during her tenure at BT and across other Retailers and Telcos. Her commercial, customer and tech leadership during this time delivered strong revenue management and M&A assurance activity. Her success in Telco was recognised externally in 2009 by GT in the Global Telecoms Forty under Forty top executives to watch.

Not only has Kathy had a significant contribution to the diversity and inclusion agenda for the companies she has worked within, she has also been a key member of Tech women programs and mentoring. For her combined industry leadership and performance, she was recognised externally for Woman to Watch 2019, by Cranfield University, spotlight on BAME Board future talent and more recently featured on EMpower Ethnic Minority Executive Role Model 2021. Her belief is that a truly inclusive culture will drive stronger business performance and that great leaders are great examples, so it is important to lead by example. Kathy holds an MBA from Heriot Watt University and is also CIMA part qualified and a black belt in six sigma.

Kathy is also a Non-executive Director with Transport for London Museum and Morgan Sindall Group.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Day-2

2.10 p.m.	Registration
2.25 p.m. – 2.40 p.m.	Introduction
2.40 p.m. – 3.10 p.m.	How to Take Strategic Career Risks DOROTHY BURWELL, CHRISTINA TROTTER, MICHAEL BARRINGTON-HIBBERT
3.10 p.m. – 3.20 p.m.	Break
3.20 p.m. – 3.50 p.m.	Aligning With Growth Opportunities RESHMA RAMACHANDRAN, JARRAD LINZIE, RUDY CERES
3.50 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.	Break
4.00 p.m. – 4.45 p.m.	Dealing With Setbacks DARREL HACKETT, JORDON CLARKE
4.45 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Break
5.00 p.m. – 5.45 p.m.	The Art of Being Indispensable DELAND KAMANGA
5.45 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.	Break
6.00 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.	Creating Your Own Path LO TONEY

INTRODUCTION - DAY 2

DENNIS OWUSU-SEM

Founder
Success Talks



Dennis works for BMO Global Asset Management in a relationship management function where he oversees the relationship between BMO and their outsource provider. He is an Economics graduate from the University of Bath where he was a president of the African Caribbean Society and has previous experience working for Goldman Sachs.

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HOW TO TAKE STRATEGIC CAREER RISKS

DOROTHY BURWELL

Partner
Finsbury Glover Hering



Dorothy is a member of Finsbury Glover Hering's Global Board and a Partner based out of London.

She has worked with clients at various stages of development to help expand their profile and enhance their reputations through focused and data-led campaigns.

Dorothy helps her clients connect with their stakeholders, understand and internalize their perspectives and respond to their concerns - whether that includes shareholders, employees or the general public. Championing diversity, equity and inclusion is part of her everyday role both internally and externally and she helps clients connect with diverse groups and engage audiences with cultural sensitivity. She began her career nearly 20 years ago in investment banking at Goldman Sachs and has worked with numerous clients to successfully communicate complex M&A and IPO transactions as well as investment opportunities.

When she is not working with her clients, she dedicates time to championing consumer rights and inclusion in society and sits on the council of trustees for Which?, the U.K. largest consumer rights organization. She is also a board member of Post Holdings (NYSE: POST). Dorothy graduated from Florida A&M University with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in business administration and is a dual British and American citizen.

HOW TO TAKE STRATEGIC CAREER RISKS

CHRISTINA TROTTER

Black Advocacy Chair of Global Sales, Markets & Research
JP Morgan



Christina is an Executive Director in Institutional Rates Sales at JPMorgan. Throughout her career at JPMorgan, she has covered a combination of clients including large corporations, banks, insurance companies and pensions funds, helping them manage interest rate risk or improve returns. Originally from Las Vegas, she holds a degree in Politics and Economics from Princeton University (Class of 2006). She interned on a trading desk at JPMorgan her junior year and has since worked in rates sales for fifteen years. She recently took on the role of Black Advocacy Chair in markets, advocating for existing and prospective employees with the goal of improving retention and increasing Black representation in the markets business.

Nine years into her career at JPMorgan, Christina took a step back to finish a novel and attend William Esper Studio's two-year acting program. She has starred in a revival of Dennis McIntyre's *Split Second* as well as several short films and web series, including *The Reading* and *Remembering Wednesday*. She continues to write and act, while working part time at JPMorgan.

ALIGNING WITH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

RESHMA RAMACHANDRAN

Group SVP & Head of Transformation
The Adecco Group



Reshma is currently Senior Vice President & Group head of transformation for The Adecco Group and is based at their headquarters in Zurich. She is an Innovative leader with 20 years' experience working in multi-cultural teams and geographies including the United States, Europe, the Middle East, India, and Southeast Asia. She brings a wealth of experience in digital & business transformation.

She is currently working at the intersection of humans and technology that helps make the future work for everyone. Reshma coaches and mentors several young women in universities that has encouraged them to opt for STEM careers and minority ethnic groups to help them advance in their careers. As an advocate for women in STEM, Reshma actively champions the business benefits of employing an effective inclusion strategy and has been a voice of change both inside and outside of the organization.

JARRAD LINZIE

Managing Director
JP Morgan



Jarrad Linzie is a Managing Director and Head of Index Research Product Development within the Global Index research business. In his 20+ year tenure on the index team, Jarrad has been influential in the creation, development and strategy of flagship fixed income benchmarks, including the Emerging Markets suite of indices.

He has held index positions in both New York and in London. Prior to joining the index research team, Jarrad held positions in EM Credit Research and Analytics teams at J.P. Morgan

ALIGNING WITH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Rudy Ceres

Partner

Dunnington Bartholow & Miller LLP



Rudyard W. Ceres is a member of Dunnington's corporate, international, litigation/ADR practice areas and UK/Commonwealth Desk and Africa Desk practice groups. Mr. Ceres assists clients in such areas as asset portfolio management (including real estate), international corporate transactions, commercial litigation, and, domestic and international arbitrations. Mr. Ceres represents both individuals and companies ranging from startups to large and middle market companies, including non-profits. He also represents foreign governments in attracting foreign direct investments, focusing primarily on Africa and the Caribbean.

Mr. Ceres is well-versed in handling international trade issues, including export controls, import regulations, economic sanctions, anti-bribery, international arbitration, regulatory compliance and has worked as a liaison for his clients in the United Nations. Prior to joining the Dunnington team, Mr. Ceres spent a decade with an AMLAW 50 firm and he served as the international partner for two U.S. law firms.

Mr. Ceres's experience also includes international asset management, working closely with high net worth individuals, as well as private equity, hedge fund and charitable organizations to protect and grow their asset bases. Accordingly, Mr. Ceres is able to compliment his legal skills with his role as a trusted advisor to manage and mitigate his clients' legal and business risks on a global basis.

DEALING WITH SETBACKS

Themes addressed this session

- How To Fully Prepare
- What Strategies You Can Deploy
How To Maximise Your Package with
Limited Information
- Typical Mistakes People Make

Darrel Hackett

President
BMO Wealth US



Darrel has served as President, BMO Wealth Management – U.S. since 2014. In this role he leads BMO Financial Group's private wealth management businesses in the United States, including BMO Private Bank, BMO Family Office and BMO Investment Services.

Darrel has held a variety of leadership roles since joining BMO in 2004. He formerly served as Senior Vice President & Head of North American Integrated Channels, where he was accountable for developing and executing BMO Financial Group's multichannel strategy to optimize distribution channel mix (e.g., digital, branch, ATM), performance and functionality in the United States and Canada. Other key roles include Senior Vice President & Head, US Business Banking; Regional President - Chicago Metro; and Head, Acquisition and Integration Group where he led the integration of 7 bank acquisitions.

Before joining BMO, Darrel was a management consultant at McKinsey & Company. During this time, he led strategic engagements with Fortune 500 companies, with an emphasis on Financial Institutions. Darrel also held a variety of roles at the General Electric Company and Eastman Chemical Company, where he began his career.

Darrel has a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business and a Bachelor of Science (Cum Laude) in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Darrel serves as an independent board director for Glatfelter (NYSE: GLT), a global B2B engineered materials supplier. He also is on the board of directors of BMO Harris Bank N.A., the board that governs BMO Financial Group's principal banking subsidiary in the United States. Darrel's civic involvement includes serving on the Board of Directors for the Art Institute of Chicago, the Children First Fund (the Chicago Public Schools Foundation), and Chicago United. He is a member of the Commercial Club of Chicago (Membership Committee), Economic Club of Chicago, and the Executive Leadership Council.

Some of Darrel's recognitions include 2020 Women In Capital Markets – Champion of Change, 2018 and 2016 Savoy Magazine's "100 Most Influential Blacks in Corporate America", 2009 Crain's Chicago Business "40 Under 40" and 2007 Chicago United - Business Leader of Color.

DEALING WITH SETBACKS

Themes addressed this session

- How To Fully Prepare
- What Strategies You Can Deploy
- How To Maximise Your Package with Limited Information
- Typical Mistakes People Make

JORDON CLARKE

Executive Director
Morgan Stanley



Jordon Clarke is an Executive Director in Trading Operations for the Institutional Securities Group at Morgan Stanley. He is responsible for the Global Investment Banking Division, Global Capital Markets and Syndicate Global Change Programme. In addition, Jordon is the operational lead for Enterprise Blockchain, DLT & Crypto Exploration.

Prior to his current roles, he was Head of European Exchange Traded Products (ETP) Operations, where he had a leading role in the launch of the firm's successful European ETP business.

Jordon is committed to creating a more equitable workplace in his role as the Co-Chair of Morgan Stanley's African and Caribbean Business Alliance (ACBA) and as a key member of the Operations Diversity & Inclusion council and The Race to Action Council.

Jordon graduated from Loughborough University in 2010 with a degree in Information, Management & Business Studies (BSc). In his spare time, Jordon enjoys playing basketball also launched an education app, which currently has over 1 million downloads.

THE ART OF BEING INDISPENSABLE

Themes addressed this session

- What it means to be indispensable
- How the characteristics can change throughout your career
- What you can do to make yourself more indispensable

DELAND KAMANGA

Managing Director & Head of Global Markets
BMO Capital Markets



Deland Kamanga is Head of Global Markets within BMO Capital Markets. In his role, Mr. Kamanga has oversight of all aspects of BMO Global Markets, which provides markets-based solutions to corporate, institutional and government. Under his leadership, the Global Markets team delivers leading market insights, risk management, best-in-class execution services and access to major markets across asset classes, including debt, foreign exchange, interest rate, credit, equity, securitization, and commodities.

Prior to his current role, Mr. Kamanga was Head, Fixed Income, Currencies & Commodities where he oversaw origination, sales and trading of cash and derivatives products. At BMO he has held numerous senior leadership roles and has over 30 years of Capital Markets experience. Mr. Kamanga is a representative in various leadership committees, including the BMO Capital Markets Operating Committee and Executive Committee and the board of directors for BMO Investorline, BMO Nesbitt Burns Holdings Corporation, BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc. BMO Capital Markets Corp.

Mr. Kamanga serves on the BMO Capital Markets Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee and is an Executive sponsor of Women in Capital Markets Return to Bay Street Program, BMO Black Professionals Network Canada, and the Black and Latino Committee. He is a proud champion of diversity and participates in a variety of BMO's employee groups and initiatives.

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Actively supporting his community, Mr. Kamanga sits on the board of Trustees for SickKids Hospital, the boards of Women in Capital Markets and the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

He holds a BA in Economics from the University of Western Ontario and is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).

CREATING YOUR OWN PATH

Themes addressed this session

- What to consider before going alone
- What Strategies You Can Deploy
Typical Mistakes People Make
- Why it is not for everyone

LO TONEY

Founding Managing Partner
Plexo Capital



Lo is the Founding Managing Partner of Plexo Capital, which he incubated and spun out from GV (Google Ventures), which is based on a strategy to increase access to early-stage deal flow. Plexo Capital invests in emerging seed-stage VCs and invests directly into companies sourced from the portfolios of VCs where Plexo Capital has an investment. Investors in Plexo Capital include Alphabet (holding company of Google), Intel Capital, Cisco Investments, the Royal Bank of Canada, Kapor Capital, the Hampton University Endowment (Cambridge Associates client), the Ford Foundation, family offices, and technology executives.

Prior to founding Plexo Capital, Lo was a Partner on the investing team at GV, where he focused on marketplaces, mobile, and consumer products. Before GV, Lo was a Partner with Comcast Ventures, leading the Catalyst Fund and working with the main fund focusing on mobile messaging marketplaces.

He also worked with Zynga as the GM of Zynga Poker with full P+L responsibility For Zynga's largest franchise at the time. During his leadership, web bookings increased by over 150% with margin expansion. Lo has also held executive roles with Nike + eBay as a start-up funded by top tier investors.

Lo received his M.B.A from the Haas School of Business (University of California at Berkeley), where he completed the Management of Technology program, a joint curriculum program with the College of Engineering. Lo received his B.S from Hampton University in Virginia.



FURTHER READING



BUILDING SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

SEKOU KAALUND

Managing Director, Investor Client Management,
Head of Pension Coverage
JP Morgan



Mentoring has been crucial to my career, and I can confidently state that were it not for the career and life wisdom that my mentors imparted, I would have not become a Managing Director in 2007 at 31 years old. Ten years later, I continue to rely on wise counsel and coaching from mentors.

I first learned the origin of the term 'mentor' in college from my favourite professor who encouraged me to study ancient history. We were reading Homer's *Odyssey* and discussing the mentor archetype. For those unfamiliar with the *Odyssey*, early in the story, King Odysseus has not returned from fighting the Trojan War and was presumed by some to have died. As a result, his wife, Penelope, and son, Telemachus, had to contend with many (unwelcome) suitors who wanted to marry Penelope and lay claim to the kingdom. To put yourself in the shoes of Telemachus, imagine 100 guys hanging in your house day after day eating your food, drinking your alcohol, plotting to take you out and marry your mom to control your family's riches. Needless to say, the young prince had some tough decisions to make and needed a wise advisor and counsellor. This important role was filled by the character Mentor, who was Athena, the goddess of wisdom, in disguise. It's not an accident that the first 'mentor' figure was the representation of wisdom and offered Telemachus critical advice in challenging times.

While our career challenges are a bit different from the turmoil Telemachus faced, there is a common element. Like Telemachus, we sometimes find ourselves in uncharted territory and need the aid of wise counsel. While you may not have to contend with 100 suitors seeking your family fortune, I would argue there's an even a greater number of people competing for the career opportunities you seek. Since the goddess of wisdom is probably not disguising herself as Mentor in your life, I offer these five tips – from my experiences of being both the mentee and mentor – for those looking to build relationships that can help guide you.

When seeking a mentor relationship, understand why you want to connect, build an organic connection and recognize that it takes time.

The selection criteria cannot simply be, 'this person is senior and successful, so he or she should be my mentor'. If you meet someone at a work or industry event and immediately send a follow-up email requesting that they mentor you, you probably won't receive the desired response. People aren't generally walking around thinking to themselves, 'I have so much free time, and today would be a good day to add another mentee to the list'. A more successful approach might be to research the person (e.g. a quick Google search) and develop a point of view on potential shared interests and/or commonalities. Understanding someone's interests will help you establish genuine connectivity and build rapport over time. In addition, don't be overly focused on the word 'mentor'; in many cases, it's more effective to simply say you would appreciate having periodic dialogues with a person to benefit from their insight. Over time, the person may begin to act as an advisor and from there you can develop a mentoring relationship. However, prematurely applying a mentor label may make someone feel that you are obligating them to additional time demands. You will have a better chance of getting on someone's calendar and developing a relationship when it doesn't feel like they are taking on 'extra work' in meeting with you.

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

1. Demonstrate that you value their time by having a clear agenda, engaging in 'active listening' and taking action on advice given.

When a mentor takes time to meet, you can safely assume that he or she has various priorities, and other things they could be doing. Be mindful to use their time as effectively as possible. Having a clear agenda or reason for the meeting can help foster productive dialogues that aren't time consuming. When you ask a question or seek advice on a matter, listen intently, take notes if needed and make sure to follow up. If a mentor offered three things to think about and three months later you haven't taken appropriate action, you're sending a clear message that you don't value their time. As a result, that mentor may be less likely to spend time with you. Think of it from an investor perspective – would you keep investing resources in a company that didn't follow the advice of its advisors or board?

3. Be structured and effective in your communications.

It's important to be proactive and organized when it comes to building relationships. After you've met with someone, set calendar reminders to periodically follow up and make a note of salient points in your discussions. That way, if you see a topic that you discussed appear in the news, you can use that as an opportunity to send a follow-up note. It's far more effective than sending a note saying, 'how are you doing, I am just checking in'. Although some situations may require more frequent updates, you should be mindful not to inundate the mentor with messages. Over time, as your relationship grows, you may eventually engage in more personal interaction and questions like 'how was your weekend' or 'how was vacation' could become more appropriate. But if you don't have that relationship, random emails about personal stuff, depending on the person, may not resonate well.

4. Create a diverse group of advisors and mentors.

You should look to strike a balance when leveraging mentors. In some situations, it may be more effective to leverage a peer mentor – for example, when you are discussing granular details of a work project. You should think of a mentor as an ATM machine for wisdom. You wouldn't go to the ATM to take out \$3 to make a fast food purchase, instead, you would just use your debit card to directly make the purchase. The same is true for mentoring. The peer mentor may have more detailed information that could assist you with a specific task or project. Mentors aren't there to help you with day to day decisions, so it's important to develop a cadre of advisors that are appropriate for different personal and professional situations. This doesn't mean that you won't develop great mentors where you can discuss a variety of career and life topics; however, you should be focused (see tip #1) on understanding why you are connecting with people. Additionally, by having a combination of advisors that are internal, external, within your industry, in different industries, etc., you are less likely to over-rely on one person's time.

5. Look for opportunities to reciprocate.

It may be hard to initially find ways to give back to your mentor, but one easy way to figure out what you can do is simply by asking 'is there anything I can do for you?' You should also be proactive. If you're aware that a mentor is working on an internal corporate initiative and you can lend a hand, just offer. Don't always wait for someone to tell you how you can help. In my case, because I have mentored so many people, I now have a mini army of talented professionals that I can call on when I need assistance. Whether it's helping prep a friend's college son or daughter for an interview or attending or supporting a non-profit event I am involved in, I know that there are people I can call on who are happy to be of assistance. Additionally, I frequently inquire to make sure my mentees are paying it forward and helping others. To be clear, this is not about a quid pro quo. Instead, it's about looking for opportunities to add value. Relationships that are one-sided rarely are sustainable over the long-term – as it is often said, relationships are a two-way street. Recognize that you have talents or expertise that you can lend to your mentor. I believe mentoring relationships grow even stronger when mutual or reciprocal action exists.

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I've noticed over the years that by generally being helpful to people in the business world (and sometimes going out of my way to do so), I tend to get a lot of help back. It doesn't always come from the same person who I helped, nor does it always come back straightaway, but overall, I think it is true that you reap what you sow.

After a while, everyone develops a reputation, good or bad, and that starts to influence the way in which other people respond to your requests for help. While this has probably always been the case, I imagine that when I started my career it was much easier to go about business life in a selfish way and still be successful. I think we have greater transparency now and media, such as LinkedIn, make it a lot easier to check up on people and find others with first-hand experience. Long gone are the days when someone's recruitment might hang on a single, carefully worded reference. 'You will indeed be fortunate if this person decides to work for you' being my all-time favourite reference with a double meaning!

Employees are probably more confident now about speaking up or voting with their feet, so bad bosses are more likely to be found out more quickly. Customers and clients are also more likely to complain. Globalisation, technology, social attitudes, and consumer power are combining to raise standards and some people find that old approaches no longer work. As the old saying goes 'you can't fool all of the people all of the time' - and it's getting harder and harder to do that every day.

Having said all that I'm not naïve enough to believe that there aren't still people out there behaving in a selfish, conniving manner and some still prosper. We have not yet all moved on from the Gordon Gecko 'greed is good' belief; the banking crisis and the subsequent difficulty that some banks have had in changing their culture has shown that. Closer to home I've worked with some individual examples of self-centredness, though fortunately not too many!

I've always believed in taking a long-term, holistic view of what I do so that I avoid making decisions in favour of my own short-term, narrowly defined self-interest. It never ceases to astonish me how often I meet someone important to my future while attending an event to do someone else a favour. I've always invested time in listening to people in my team and spending time on training and mentoring. As a result, I've typically found it easy to get people to work for me and often my mentees make useful connections for me in return. To be successful in professional services, going the extra mile for a client and/or investing in the relationship before fees start coming in is often a critical differentiator. It's amazing though how often people don't do this.

Sometimes you have to 'kiss a few frogs' before you find a prince. Not everything has an immediate return, but putting yourself out there will begin to build a network of people who will help when you need it in the future and it also builds a stronger society. Whatever you call it synchronicity, karma or even luck, it is not really as random as it sometimes appears. You can't tell where your next big break is coming from, or when, but you can improve your odds of getting it by investing time in building a network and being positive and helpful. We are all connected.