

Build Your Personal Board of Directors Starting at UCA2020

■ LAUREL STOIMENOFF, PT, CHC

Next month is National Mentoring Month. This initiative was launched in 2002 by MENTOR, the National Mentoring Partnership, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. It has focused primarily on the importance of mentors and our responsibility to develop and create access to good mentors for young mentees hungry for that next step. Yet, we now need to think outside the traditional definition of a mentor—typically one selected individual and oftentimes the mentee’s boss. Organizations are now creating mentorship programs that expand the talent pool by surrounding an employee with a team of experienced individuals—each contributing to the development of the mentee in different and complementary ways.

A UCA Board member and entrepreneur, Mike Dalton, CPA, has spoken on leadership to standing-room-only audiences at UCA and regional conferences. One of his most compelling messages is that each of us needs to create our OWN Board of Directors. Not the formal one that we may have for our organizations, but a personal board of handpicked individuals who we believe will help us find and achieve personal and professional goals. So, the profile of the mentor has changed, along with that of the mentee who was typically a young person who appeared to have the rudiments of a future leader or star.

My takeaway from Mike’s presentation was that it’s never too late to find one’s mentors. And *mentor* and *mentee* are not exclusive roles. We can and should aspire to be both throughout our careers.

I’m Making the Commitment

I have had some great mentors in my life, yet I have always thought of them in the traditional sense. They were typically



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my boss and it was clear that they had my best interest at heart. They invested in my professional growth and despite busy schedules always seemed to have the bandwidth to be a sounding board and provide thoughtful counsel. No matter what our age or stage of life, we should consciously surround ourselves with our *personal* board. As life’s goals change, so may individuals on your board, but our lives will be enriched by identifying individuals who can facilitate growth. As I reflect on individuals who have had tremendous success in their personal or professional lives, I realize that most did exactly as Mike Dalton suggested: they established and leveraged key relationships to achieve, and oftentimes exceed, their goals.

Find a Board Member at UCA2020

Creating your board should be deliberate. The individuals you choose should know why you are asking them and what you hope to glean from them, should they accept the responsibility to serve. I intend to build my board in 2020. This includes finding **no less than two personal board members** when attending UCA’s national convention May 3-6 at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas.

Our industry is replete with talent, and we are making sure much of it will be accessible at the event. Personal and professional development has no limitations—not by today’s age, title, or level of success. So be prepared. I may just ask you to be a part of my future.

We commit to creating opportunities for you to establish your own Board at UCA2020. Seventy-one percent of Fortune 500 companies see the value in formal mentoring programs¹—and your value should not pale to theirs. ■

¹ <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/workplace-loyalties-change-but-the-value-of-mentoring-doesnt/>