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How Training and Development can increase African American women into leadership

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HOW TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT CAN INCREASE AFRICAN AMERICAN
WOMEN INTO EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

By

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Abstract

At Fortune 500 companies, women account for just 15% of C-suite executives, and 5% of CEOs. African American women hold around 1.5% of these positions. Even though the number of women in these positions is growing slowly, the percentage of African American women is becoming more and more nonexistent. Are African American women not qualified? Are they afforded these opportunities as white males and females? This paper focused on different reasons for the lack of diversity in these large organizations and what solutions may help change the lack of diversity.

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Introduction

If you sit and close your eyes and think back to every supervisor, manager, or mentor you ever had, most individuals would use the same descriptive words: Educated, type A personality, aggressive, and just an all-around natural born leader. But what about their physical appearance? Were they tall, short, woman, man, white, African American, Asian, Christian or a Muslim? For myself, after working 15 years I can say 97% of my managers have been middle-aged white men. I have worked for one African American woman, one white woman and one African American man. This troubles me, and I know I am not alone. Leadership is defined in many ways but the main focus on the definition is "a person or persons who guide a group" (Merriam-Webster online dictionary, n.d.). Popular textbooks on leadership may devote a few pages to research examining women in leadership roles but ignore the influence of race and ethnicity (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010).

A current problem is how to expand the number of women and African American women in leadership positions. Women comprise 51% of the labor force and provide a significant pool of potential leaders (Catalyst, 2005). "Women are predominately in lower level managerial ranks and are only marginally represented at the executive levels", (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010). Women accounted for only 14% of Fortune 500 board seats in 2005; of these positions, 79% were held by white women and 21% were held by African American women (Catalyst, 2006). Women occupy only 24 of the CEO positions in the Fortune 500 (Catalyst, 2006). There are different terms to define the slow pace of women in leadership. Glass ceiling, concrete wall or sticky floor are a few terms use to describe this barrier. Women can grow into leadership positions but not without issues of child care needs, racism, sexism and discrimination. According to Eagly and Carli (2007), women are required to demonstrate both agentic and

communal skills, as well as create social capital. Women have to be strong but have a maternal side while climbing the corporate ladder. Even though women have the opportunity to participate in mentoring to add to their social capital, African American women face stronger challenges. They are typically more isolated without mentors or a network of support and they are less able to garner the help they may need ethnicity (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010).

 Research

The situation facing African American women is more complicated than what is faced by white women. White women, who share the same skin tone as most male leaders, focus more on gender bias and may not see race and ethnicity as a problem in leadership. African American women face something called "gendered racism", (Blake, 1999, p. 13). Women must decide if the prejudice is due to race, ethnicity, gender or some other issues (Blake, 1999). In these situations it has to be difficult for an African American woman to decide what part of herself is responsible for the prejudices. African American women who have faced oppression carry these unwanted burdens that white women do not face. If she feels she is being discriminated against, she has to keep tight documentation to identify the specific cause of the discrimination (Bell & Nkoma, 2001; Blake, 1999; Sanchez-Huscles & Sanchez, 2007). I have witnessed different forms of oppression of African American women in the workplace. For example, every day there were a group of white women who went to lunch together and a group of African American women who did the same. After a few days, some of the African American women were confronted about being late back from lunch and were told they should watch who they hang out with. The white women would constantly go over their lunch time, but were never confronted. After a few weeks, the African American women stopped going to lunch with each other and were afraid to leave their desk during lunch time in fear of being watched. African American

women also face pay discrimination while always having to maintain a positive self-image (Holvino & Blake-Beard, 2004).

Some of the reasons for the slow advancement of African American women in leadership include the lack of line(management) experience, inadequate career opportunities, racial differences in speech and socialization, ethno sexual stereotypes and tokenism (Oakley, 2000). Stereotypes are a big reason for the lack of opportunities for African American women to advance. The media perpetuate African American women as difficult to work with, angry and not ineffective. African American women have been viewed as "Mammy" or "Jezebel" (West, 1995). In many different television shows you can see how negative stereotypes are set. For example, in TV shows like *Scandal*, the President of the United States is a white male, his wife is a white female and his mistress is an African American woman. The only difference is the white woman is the wife but the African American woman is the "Jezebel". Women leaders cite stereotyping as a significant barrier to advancement; these stereotypes are especially problematic for racially and ethnically diverse women (Catalyst, 2005). An Individual's subconscious feelings of prejudice can alter how individuals relate to women and minorities and who they recommend for leadership roles in the business world.

Stereotypes can affect African American women in leadership roles because of their influence on perceptions and their elicitation of stereotype threats (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Stereotype threats occur when one understands that their own race or ethnicity is a reason for poor performance. African American women may experience greater negative stereotypes as a result of the combined effect of being female and African American (Hoyt, 2007). African American women experience lower promotion rates, more occupational job segregation, pressures to modify sex and occupational roles, different predictors for advancement than

African American men, early pressures to work and negative career expectancies due to racism and sexism (Combs, 2003). "African American women are more likely to experience unfair treatment in training, advancement and disengagement", (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010, p 4).

African American women who hold leadership positions face extreme hurdles than those faced by white women in leadership. White men report they are more accepted of white women than of African American women. African American women are grouped together in lower level positions versus positions that can get them promoted. This can cause them to not get the experience and training they need to advance in their careers. These barriers restrict access to both formal and informal paths to promotions (Cohen, 2002). African American women are too different from White women to benefit from their shared gendered status and also from African American men to benefit from their shared race. African American women in leadership roles may experience triple jeopardy because of the multiple stereotypes associated with gender, race and ethnicity. They are required to display leadership competence while mimicking European American behaviors. Sometimes African American women feel "socially invisible" to their peers. They have the stressors of trying to conform and make fewer mistakes. As an African American woman in the workplace, I can agree that I feel that I need to be like the "norm" of the workplace just to fit in. I am the second African American woman who has been hired at my company in 5 years. I sit by myself with no neighboring co-workers. All other co-workers have their own offices and own cliques they interact with. Having worked there for about one year, I still have the added stress to perform better and faster than anyone else. When I make a mistake, it becomes a huge deal within my department. When other co-workers, which are white males or females, make a mistake, it is laughed off and corrected without any reprimand. When I have requested more work or a challenge, I am told that I am not qualified to do anything else.

Working while African American is such a challenge, sometimes you don't even know who you are during the work hours. Sometimes you lose your identity and become everything they want you to be. Identity is the aspect of self that stands in relationships to social groups or categories of which an individual is a member (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010, p 5). Your identity is formed, in part, through interaction with others. In the workplace, informal and formal interactions with coworkers and managers over time shape identities and reveal perceptions and expectations of others. "Because leadership is a social process, the formation of self-identity, social identity, group identity, and gender and ethnic differences may be particularly important" (Lord & Brown, 2004, p 5). "The intersectionality movement has developed over 30 years and has been fed by the civil rights, antiracism, disability rights and environmental movements as well as by peace initiatives and quests for indigenous self-determination", (Shields, 2008, p. 5). It was the women of the African American feminist movement in the United States who first charged that their story was not reflected in the experience of White, able-bodied, middle class, heterosexual women (Collins, 1998, p 5). "African American women were overlooked in the initial discussion of feminism, and they asserted that research in this area should explicitly discuss how social positions and group membership change experiences of social identity", (Shields, 2008, p. 5).

Companies cannot blatantly use prejudice to hire or fire you but they have figured out legal ways to destroy an African American woman's reputation in the work place. According to Yoshino, (2006), this method is called "Covering" (Yoshino, 2006 p. 1). Covering is when you hide parts of who you are to make others feel comfortable. You are conforming to the "norm". When Kenji began teaching at Yale Law School in 1998, he was an open homosexual. One of his friends told him to have a better chance of making tenure, he has to be a homosexual

professional versus a professional homosexual. He can be a gay employee but not show anyone he is gay. For example, no pictures of his partner, no affection with his partner at a company party or talking about being gay. These same situations happen with people of different ethnicity, women with children, women who are pregnant and African Americans. As African American women in the work place we have extreme pressures to conform to our workplace from day one. At my first job out of college, myself and few other African American employees hung out together. There was one African American woman who had part of her hair red. It wasn't bright red or distracting but just noticeable. Another African American woman told her to take the red out of her hair because she needed to look close to white as possible. At this time I was younger and I didn't clearly understand what she meant. Basically since no white person in the work place had an unnatural color in their head, she shouldn't either. This employee couldn't help she was born African American and with course hair but she needed to keep her appearance close to the white employees as possible. No color, no extreme hair styles and nothing that will make anyone offended.

How much does not "covering" affect an African American woman of progressing into an Executive position? I have done several different researches and none can tell me the exact percentage. I assume a lot but I don't want to make a definite answer. I can logically determine you won't see the C-Suites occupied by anyone wearing corn rows or bright red hair. This reminds me of a quote from a comedian named Paul Mooney (2008) "If your hair is relaxed, white people are relaxed. If your hair is nappy, they're not happy". From my own work experience, I do feel a certain way when it comes to my hair. I do wear my natural hair pattern and sometimes humidity sets in. This causes my hair to get bigger and frizzier. I have had comments like "Wow your hair is big" or "Why do you change your hair so much". I get stares

and glares that I think are because the people I work with are uncomfortable. Now if I wear my

hair back in a nice ponytail, that causes extreme tension on my scalp, I get better interaction with

my co-workers than before. They can't fault me for being African American but I better not

flaunt it. The distinction between being and doing reflects a bias toward assimilation. African

American women are only protected by the traits they cannot change. If there are traits that you

can change, you are not protected. We can put relaxers in our hair to make it straight and

manageable, so if we don't get promoted it's our own fault. This is an example of the bias that

hinders African American women from progressing in their career but shouldn't be a factor in

training one to take an executive position.

After all these hurdles, African American women still have the determination to seek the

top executive jobs. The number of women holding CEO positions in Fortune 500 companies is

very small. Only 23 women are CEO's (McGregor, 2015). However there is only one African

American woman: Xerox's Ursula Burns. Ambition isn't something that is lacking in African

American women but the lack of opportunities and chances. According to the Center for Talent

Innovation (CTI) (McGregor, 2015). A research sample stated that 22% of African American

professional women said they aspire to a powerful position with a prestigious title, compared

with just 8% of white professional women. More African American women in this sample also

reported being more confident they can succeed in powerful positions than white women (43%

versus 30%) and more likely to say high earnings were important to their careers (81% versus

54%). Also the CTI found that women are generally ambitious about wanting to excel in their

careers, make money and work in jobs that let them empower others and serve a broader

mission-but are less likely than men to gun for high-ranking jobs in their organization. I can

relate to this situation. Even though I want to grow in a leadership position, I do feel as a woman

I would be scrutinized more for every decision. Also, I do not want to take away the masculinity of any of the men in my organization. Sylvia Ann Hewlett, founder of the CTI, says that African American women had a great deal of clarity and loved power (McGregor, 2015). Regardless of the ambition of African American women, the statistics show they are more frustrated than white women about their travel to the top. CTI gathered responses from 356 African American women and 788 white women working in professional jobs. Forty-four percent of African American women compared to 30% of white women felt stalled in their careers. Also, they felt that their talents weren't being recognized by their managers (26% versus 17%). Katherine Phillips, a professor at Columbia Business School, says, "The unconscious biases could mean African American women are not always welcomed" (McGregor, 2015, p.2). It seems that African American women lean in so far as they fall flat on their faces. This statement reminds me of being in elementary school and how there were always one or two students who raised their hands to answer questions screaming, "Ooh me, I know I know" but the teacher rarely called on them. They called on the students who were not paying attention or needed some help coming out of their shell. After many failed attempts of not being called on, the overly ambitious students stopped raising their hand and became discouraged. These students are African American women in their cubicles daily: gaining multiple degrees, staying late, coming early and doing whatever it takes to move up the corporate ladder. Outside of the stereotypes of African American women, they are judged more harshly on their job performance. If an African American woman makes mistakes, she is penalized more harshly. For example, I misplaced an invoice at my current employer. My supervisor accused me of not paying attention and said "people" are watching me. I am the only African American in my department and 1 of 2 African American employees in the company. A few weeks later a white woman made a mistake and I

heard my supervisor tell her "we all make mistakes, it is ok." I felt so rejected and wanted to confront my supervisor but I knew that would add a nail in my coffin.

CTI's (McGregor, 2012) report cites another way such unconscious bias plays a role in the advancement of African American women's career: Just 11% of African American women have a sponsor, according to prior research from CTI, compared with 13% of white women. In this case, "sponsor" describes an advocate in the top leadership ranks who does more than mentor and provide advice, but also actively promotes the more junior manager's career. Having a mentor is an important aspect to building someone's career. They could be either outside or inside the current company you are working at. The reason a mentor is so important is the same reason why a child needs its parents for the first 18 years of life. How will an employee know the correct steps to take to advance or know who are the correct people to talk to get promoted? As African American women we are judged before our intent is even known. The unconscious bias plays a big role in the lack of diversity in leadership. If we had more leaders of different ethnic background, then the doors would be open enough for African American women to walk through. It has to start somewhere but where, and who is to be accountable? In many CTI's interviews, African American women cited their family experiences and cultural history as factors that influenced their attitudes towards ambition, financial independence and desire to achieve powerful roles to help create opportunities for others. I have two main reasons for my goal to achieve a powerful role and their names are Trinity and Makenzie. I am raising African American women and I don't want them to have to jump through the hurdles of fear like I am doing know. My mother's generation didn't have a voice and just worked to retire. African American women accepted their "place" in the workplace and never questioned it.

Forty-six percent of the college educated African American women surveyed by Sylvia

Ann Hewlett and Tai Green (2015), are not being heard or recognized. The statistics show that African American women are twice as likely as white women to be leaders in their communities-running a school board, leading a youth initiative, heading up a charity or community organization. African American women are 2.8 times as likely as white women to aspire to a powerful position with a prestigious title. African American women who have climbed the ladder to middle management of corporate American usually end up staying there despite them having the education and experience. Forty-four percent feel stalled in their careers (compared to 30% of white women). A lot is at stake, and not just for the African American women whose leadership capabilities go unrecognized. To compete in a global marketplace, that looks ever more female and non-white, companies will need talent that's much more keenly attuned to the needs and unmet wants of women and people of color. Research conducted by the CTI in 2013, revealed that employees at publicly traded companies used what they called 2D Diversity. 2D Diversity is when a mix of demographic characteristics and a wide array of life experiences combine. Companies that have this level of diversity are 45% more likely to report growth in market share and 70% more likely to report that their firm captured a new market (Green & Hewlett 2015).

Unconscious bias can have everlasting effects on how African American women are perceived. For example, with more and more African American women wearing their hair natural or even wearing more Afro centric attire, they have this underlying fear of being scrutinized or offending their white colleagues. One of the most potent psychic antidotes to racism is racism: every racist belief in one situation has its mirror imaged in another situation. For example, African American women try to prove their whiteness to move to the top.

To get to any leadership position you have to equip yourself with the right tools.

Education and experience is a must but someone has to have the door open for you to be able to step through. As I a stated earlier in my paper, African American women feel that the door is only open for them to fall on their face. Mentorship is an important aspect to growing in leadership and expanding diversity in those C-Suite positions. African American women need a mentor to create a plan for them to progress in their careers. "A collaborative mentoring style is the method used more today", (Zachary, 2012.p 3). A collaborative mentoring style is the process in which both mentor and mentee have something to bring to the relationship and something to gain that broadens each of their perspectives. Mentor and mentee work together to achieve specific, mutually defined goals that focus on developing the mentee's skills, abilities, knowledge, and thinking; it is in every way a learning partnership. The learner/mentee-plays an active role in the learning sharing responsibility for the priorities, learning, and resources, and becoming increasingly self-directed in the process. The mentor nurtures and develops the mentee's capacity for self-direction over the course of the relationship. Throughout the learning relationship, both mentoring partners share accountability and responsibility for achieving the mentee's learning goals.

   Barriers to leadership opportunities are a global phenomenon where women, when compared to men, are disproportionately concentrated in lower-level and lower-authoritative leadership positions (Northhouse, 2010).These barriers are generally perceived to be against women, but to a larger extent are against African-American women executives (Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). Of the barriers to opportunities for African American women, racism is the greatest (Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). "For African American women, transformational leadership has been closely aligned to their leadership style", (Byrd, 2009. p. 2). "Transformational learning is about becoming open to possibilities and perspectives by critically reflecting one's lived

experience", (Zachary, 2012. p. 10). Mentoring can be transformational for both mentors and mentees. For example, a manager named Kitty has informally supported various colleagues for years; she had never been a mentor. But because she had great mentors, and welcomed the opportunity to "give back". "Mentors can help mentees become more aware of how their beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors affect their daily lives by letting go of self- limiting and unrealistic assumptions that hold them back", (Zachary, 2012. p. 29). Because the relationship is collaborative and both partners are learning, mentors can have similar transformational insights about their own behavior and make changes they never before considered.

Interviews

I interviewed three African American women in three different areas of their careers. The reason I picked these specific women is because I wanted different points-of-view from several career sectors. My hope for these interviews was for them to give their real life experiences of working and how they felt about promotions, training, relationships and the fairness in the workplace. I asked them eight specific questions:

1. What is your age?

2. What is your marital status?

3. What is your current work status?

4. What is your highest level of education completed?

5. As an African American woman do you feel that there is equal opportunity for promotion? If yes or no, please give detail examples?

6. What does diversity and equality mean to you? DO you see diversity and equality in executive positions at your current employer? What does diversity and/or equality look like?

7. Do you feel there is a "white privilege" when it comes to executive positions? What

barriers do you feel exist for African American women to attain executive positions?

8.   14% of women hold executive position in Fortune 500 companies, and less than 1% is held by African American women. How does this make you feel? What is a strategy that companies should take to have more diversity in these positions?

Findings

Subject A, is 60 year old; divorced woman and she is employed in a higher education setting. She has 3 years of college experience and has been in the workforce for decades. She is considered in the generation of Baby Boomers. Subject A continues her interview with stating that she feels that African American women do not have equal opportunity for promotion as their counterparts. She believes that racism and stereotyping are the main reason for the lack of promotion. She sees diversity as different ethnicities, different religions, different sexes, and different sexual orientations. White privilege is a set of advantages and/ or immunities that white people benefit from on a daily basis beyond those common to all others. White privilege can exist without white people's conscious knowledge of its presence and it helps to maintain the racial hierarchy in this country. Subject A believes that "white privilege" exists in some organizations and that African American are hurt by the privilege. She answered the last questions as follows:

This percentage is not a surprise to me. Companies should make a concerted effort to employ more African American females. Diversity included all of #6 (referring to her response to question 6) but African American females need help with early education (high school) to prepare them to succeed in college.

Subject B is 30 years old and single. She works full-time as a teacher in a local school district. She has completed her Bachelor's degree and is currently a graduate student. In her

career she has stated that "There are very few African American women in higher-level positions within the company that I currently work for. Promotion is available, but higher level positions seem to be reserved for white males". She views diversity as a representation of various nationalities and that equality is when all people are treated the same. When it comes to "white privilege" she says, "There seems to be apparent white privilege within executive positions based on the facts of who hold the most executive positions. There are racial and sex barriers that exist for African American women trying to obtain executive positions". When I read her last answer, I felt that African American women are so misinformed and ignorant to the facts. She said, "Knowing that African American women only hold 1% of the executive positions in Fortune 500 companies is very discouraging, but also seems to show that African American women are not even considered for these positions". I am only a few years older than Subject B and I feel the same way she does. I am discouraged in my career due to the lack of available positions for African American women. In both my degree fields, the jobs are dominated by white men or white women. Being an Accountant has opened my eyes to a lot of discrimination against African American women. I know I have been treated like the "help" in certain situations and passed over for promotions. In one of my first positions out of college, one of our Accountants was let go. I was the only other person there with an Accounting degree and knew they would promote me. They gave the job to a white male with no accounting experience. I resigned a few months later for a different company.

The last subject's point-of-view was very different than the other two. She had a more optimistic outlook on her career. She has made great strides that I haven't even begun to make. She is four years older than I am but I consider her in the middle of her career. Her salary has doubled over 10 years. She is a 36-year old married African American woman. She is a full-time

HR manager and has received her Master's in HR Management. When asked does she feel there

are equal opportunities for African American women, this was her response:

> Yes, with many of the laws that are in place now, I feel that there is more equal
>
> opportunity in the workplace for African American women now, not 100 % but better than
>
> in prior years. In my experience, I have witnessed African American women receive
>
> promotions to executive positions. I, myself, have received advancements in pay and
>
> roles, throughout my career in HR.

   After that response I felt encouraged and optimistic but still cautious. I do believe that

they do promote the certain type of African American woman and the door isn't open for all of

us to walk through. What I mean by "certain type", is an African American woman who doesn't

offend or disrupt the cultural norm. She continued:

> Diversity is any and everything that makes us different, age, race, culture, education
>
> background, gender, etc. Equality is having equal and fair rights opportunities/practices
>
> for all without regard to all those things that makes us diverse. At my current employer, I
>
> do see diversity and equality; however at some of previous jobs I did not see that.
>
> Her answer regarding white privilege is as followed.
>
> It depends on the organization, yes I believe that this still exists in some workplaces,
>
> however I believe that it has changed a bit over the years. I will say that I believe there is
>
> more "white male privilege" in workplaces because I see that more than others. Barriers
>
> could be a variety of things, lack of confidence due to their past experiences, leadership
>
> not recognizing or being careless about the lack of diversity and not taking action on the
>
> issue, lack of support from leadership/administration, not being given an opportunity to
>
> prove they can be successful in an executive level role.

Lastly she responded to the question regarding the lack of African American women in executive positions at Fortune 500 companies:

This stat makes me feel like there still tons of work to be done. Strategy: Diversity should be a main focus for leadership/administration; action plans should be designed and implemented. Companies can develop a diversity statement along with their mission statement and live by it and be held to its standards. Diversity and equality training should be a priority, mandatory requirement for all starting with Administration on down to hourly staff. Recruiters can advertise open positions with minority advertising agencies and search engines, attend career fairs in urban areas, and companies can develop a management trainee program to grow and develop and attract internal talent.

Conclusion

Does diversity training really work? I have never worked at a company that pushed for employees to grow, let alone increase diversity in leadership. Some decades ago, the powers that be declared that employee diversity was a good thing, as desirable as double-digit profit margins. Companies try all sorts of things to attract and promote minorities and women. They hire an organizational psychologist, consulting firms, and staff booths at diversity fairs. They do so much to embrace the benefits of a diverse staff. A study by three sociologists (Bregman, 2012) showed that diversity training has little to no effect on the racial and gender mix of a company's top ranks. Their analysis found no real change in the number of women and minority managers after companies began diversity training. The law is one reason why employers favor diversity training. With so many race-discrimination suits against large companies, employers believe that having a program in place can show a judge they are trying to combat prejudices in the workplace. Consultant, R Roosevelt Thomas, says Corporate America needs to redefine the word

"Diversity". Diversity means differences and similarities and he teaches executives to focus on skills and not familiarity. You shouldn't care where a person is from as long as he or she can do the job. Studies have shown that people tend to turn negative when it comes to diversity training (Cullen, 2007). They feel that they are being forced to feel and act a certain way towards a certain group of people. You can't reprogram prejudices. Millions of dollars a year were spent on the training resulting in, well, nothing. The researchers-Frank Dobbin of Harvard, Alexandra Kalev of Berkeley and Erin Kelley (Bregman, 2012) of the University of Minnesota-concluded that "In firms where training is mandatory or emphasizes the threat of lawsuits, training actually has negative effects on management diversity" (p. 2). People aren't prejudiced against real people but prejudice against categories. For example, if "Susan" is a lesbian, they don't have a problem with Susan the employee but with the category of her being a lesbian. These categories are dehumanizing; they simplify the complexity of a human being. So focusing on the categories increases their prejudice. Instead of seeing people as a category, we need to see people as people. Don't train people to be more accepting of diversity but train people to work with a diverse group of individuals. Teach them to have difficult conversations with a range of individuals and how to manage a variety of employees who report to them (Bergman, 2012). Mentoring is one way that can help with this type of training.

Zachary (2012), indicated there are three types of mentoring, peer, supervisory, and group. The first is Peer mentoring. In peer mentoring one peer may mentor another peer, or both peers might mentor each other. They share some level of commonality-job title, academic success, experience, cohort, or something else. Peer mentoring can take place in a one-to-one or group setting, either formally or informally. The Chicago Bar Association Alliance for Women developed a peer mentoring program in which each member is both a mentor and a mentee. This

is called mentoring circles. Not only do junior members learn from those with more experience, but midlevel and senior attorneys gain an opportunity to hone management skills, build relationships and develop referral networks. Each circle is comprised of eight to ten women of varying levels of experience and from a wide range of practice areas. They meet at least four times a year; some meet as often as once a month. This type of mentoring can open up the dialogue for lower level employees to feel comfortable around senior level employees. I get intimidated around senior employees because at most of the companies I've worked with, I wasn't allowed to speak to them directly but to their administrative assistants. Group peer mentoring, like one-to-one peer mentoring, is self-managed by individuals with similar job functions, experiences, interests, or needs. The group takes responsibility for crafting its own learning agenda and managing the learning process to meet member learning needs. Peer mentoring has found a niche in education, from elementary through postsecondary. A student peer mentoring may help another student learn the ropes, stay on course and achieve academic success. Nonprofit boards use peer mentoring to orient new board members. Peer mentoring has been useful in getting new employees up to speed and in facilitating cross-functional learning (Zachary, 2012 p.70-71).

The second type of mentoring is supervisory mentoring (Zachary, 2012 p.70-71). Subject C mentioned that she got a lot of her motivation in her profession from her supervisor at a previous job. Usually a supervisor mentor's her employees on a daily basis but if a subordinate wants to progress then the supervisory mentoring is a great route. In my current position I am being passed over for progression for a woman who is white. When I have asked for more work, I am pushed away but when the other co-worker ask for more work she goes out of her way to train her and encourage her. This type of job performance-related mentoring is situational; it

becomes a series of additive and spontaneous mentoring moments and mentoring conversations. In a formal mentoring program, supervisory mentoring can potentially by problematic. Most mentees will find it difficult to be candid and open with a mentor who is also responsible for evaluating their performance. They will have difficulty taking risks and being vulnerable. If you find yourself in this position, supervisors need to make sure that they separate mentor role from being a supervisor.

The last type of mentoring is very popular in organizations. This type of mentoring is group mentoring (Zachary, 2012 p.70-71). Group mentoring manages humans, knowledge and time resources. In group mentoring, individuals either mentor each other or rely on one or more individuals to facilitate the learning of a group of mentees. Facilitated group mentoring can involve diverse individuals from different parts of the organization, individuals with similar interests and experiences or even an intact work team. The mentor-facilitator asks questions to keep the dialogue thought provoking and meaningful, shares personal experiences, provides feedback, and serves as a sounding board. Four people are usually involved with three mentees learning from one mentor.

All mentoring depends on establishing and maintaining meaningful points of connections. By connecting first, we are better able to develop fruitful and productive learning relationships. There are seven point connections to mentoring (Zachary, 2012, p 77):

1. Invest time and effort in setting the climate for learning-Determine your mentee's learning needs and how that might play out in your relationships, given that it is not face-to-face.

2. Be sensitive to the day-to-day needs of your mentee-Spend time connecting with your mentee. Ask enough questions to give you sufficient insight into his her work context.

3. Identify and use multiple venues for communications-Explore all available options and use more than one type. Look for opportunities to connect face-to face, even at a long distance.

4. Set a regular contact schedule, but be flexible-Agree on mutually convenient contact schedule, and make sure it works for you and your mentee. If you need to renegotiate a schedule appointment, use that situation as an opportunity for connection and interaction.

5. Check on the effectiveness of your communication-Ask questions.

6. Make sure that connection results in meaningful learning.

7. Share information and resources-Set the stage to share information. Then share the information and follow up.

African American women seek executive careers at a rapid rate but have little to no opportunity to achieve this goal. The supply of leaders is available but African American women are not in demand. African American women may experience greater negative stereotypes as a result of the combined effect of being female and African American. African American women experience lower promotion rates, more job segregation and negative career expectancies due to racism and sexism. How can the number of African American women executives be increased? You can start with diversity training but according to statistics, this method doesn't work. Most employees are not comfortable with this method because they feel they are being forced to feel a certain way about minorities.

Mentoring is one of the ways I feel could help African American women advance in leadership. Knowles (as cited by Zachary, 2012) laid out a foundation of basic

principles of adult learning when it comes to mentoring it includes self-directing learning, motivational learning and evaluation of their own learning. There are three types of mentoring that can benefit African American women looking for promotion. Peer mentoring is when one peer mentors another peer. They share responsibilities and can take place one-on-one or in a group. Supervisory mentoring is situational and it involves spontaneous mentoring moments. This form of mentoring can be problematic because the mentee can't separate mentor from supervisor. The last type of mentoring is called group mentoring. Group mentoring manages humans, knowledge and time resources. In this form of mentoring, individuals either mentor each other or rely on one or more individuals to facilitate the learning of group of mentees. All mentoring and training requires meaningful points of connections. By connecting first, we are better able to develop fruitful and productive learning relationships.

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