Q&A

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Mentorship, sponsorship & 'lifting as you rise'

Who was the first person in the industry to take a genuine bet on you, and how did that sponsorship change the trajectory of your career?

The first person who truly took a chance on me was a female leader who looked beyond my years of experience and recognised my potential. She entrusted me with opportunities that stretched me beyond my comfort zone, exposed me to senior stakeholders, and allowed me to take ownership of transactions that accelerated my growth.

That belief was transformative. It taught me that capability is not always reflected in a CV or defined by years of experience. Sometimes, all it takes is one person willing to create an opportunity and provide support.

That experience has shaped how I lead today. I am intentional about identifying potential, creating opportunities for exposure, and empowering people to take on responsibilities that challenge and develop them. It reinforced my belief that some of the best talent emerges when people are trusted before they feel completely ready.

There is a difference between a mentor (who gives advice) and a sponsor (who advocates for you behind closed doors). Have you had a sponsor, and how did that dynamic work?

I have been fortunate to have both mentors and sponsors throughout my career and have come to appreciate the different roles they play. Mentors helped me develop technically, navigate challenges and broaden my perspective. Sponsors, however, advocated for me when I was not in the room.

They trusted me with complex transactions, created opportunities for visibility, and put my name forward for opportunities that accelerated my growth. Those relationships were built on trust, credibility and consistent delivery. Because sponsors knew they could rely on me, they were willing to invest their own reputation in supporting my progression.

Looking back, some of the most significant opportunities in my career came because leaders were willing to champion my potential and create opportunities for growth. Those experiences reinforced my belief that sponsorship is one of the most powerful tools for accelerating careers. Leadership is not only about developing talent, but also about creating visibility for it.

As a successful leader now, what standard do you set for yourself when it comes to mentoring the next generation of female analysts and associates?

I set a high standard for myself when it comes to being accessible, invested in and intentional about developing talent. Mentorship should extend beyond technical guidance and help individuals build confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging within the industry.

I encourage young women to be ambitious, use their voice, and embrace opportunities even when they feel challenging. At the same time, I provide honest feedback and create an environment where learning is encouraged.

Most importantly, I lead by example. I want young women entering the industry to see that it is possible to build a successful career while remaining authentic to who they are. If I can help someone gain confidence, broaden their perspective and accelerate their growth, then I have fulfilled my responsibility as a leader.

I also believe organisations have a responsibility to create cultures where young women feel supported, challenged and able to build long-term careers. As a leader, I see it as part of my role to contribute to that culture every day.

Peer-to-peer support is vital. How do you build a strong network of allies among other women working in law, audit and banking to support your transaction pipelines?

Some of the strongest professional relationships I have developed have been with women across banking, legal, advisory and audit. What connects us is a shared commitment to excellence, collaboration and delivering successful outcomes.

In a dealmaking environment, no transaction is executed in isolation. Success depends on strong relationships across multiple disciplines, and trusted networks create opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing and effective execution.

Over the years, many of these women have become invaluable sounding boards, trusted advisors and partners in problem-solving. Whether navigating complex transactions, managing stakeholder expectations or working through challenging execution timelines, these relationships provide both professional support and diverse perspectives.

Building and maintaining these networks has strengthened transaction execution and created a community of women who actively support, challenge and champion one another's success across the financial services industry.

How can corporate finance institutions move beyond 'diversity checkboxes' to create environments where young women actually want to stay long-term?

The conversation needs to move beyond representation and focus on inclusion, development and opportunity. Recruiting talented women is only the first step. Institutions must ensure women have access to meaningful work, sponsorship, leadership opportunities and clear pathways for progression. They need to feel their contributions are valued, their voices are heard, and that advancement is based on merit and performance.

Equally important is visibility. Young women need to see leaders who look like them, have faced similar challenges and have successfully navigated their careers. Representation at senior levels sends a powerful message about what is possible.

I have personally benefited from leaders who invested in my development and created opportunities for growth, which is why I believe sponsorship and talent development must be embedded within an organisation's culture rather than treated as standalone initiatives.

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