MENTORING AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN THROUGH INCLUSIVE MALE EXECUTIVE SUITE

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By
Tamika Bowser Wright
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We the undersigned, certify that we read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.

John S. Caputo

Thesis or Project Director

Carolyn Eggle

Faculty Mentor

Faculty Reader
Abstract

Women in corporate environments often operate under the glass ceiling, but the term ‘glass ceiling’ is limited in its perspective. It does not account for African-American women in corporate environments who operate under a stronger barrier – the concrete wall. In order to maneuver around the barrier, an action-oriented approach must be taken and mentoring is the structured tool that can help African-American women around this barrier. Through the use of the feminist standpoint theory, and methodical interviews to gain further insight about the position of African-American women in today’s work structure, a formal mentoring will be developed and implemented to help alleviate the burdens African-American women face within corporate environments, as well give them the foundation to overcome and enter the inclusive-male suite.

Website: https://versal.com/c/tp6dmw/developing-employees-through-mentoring

Blogger: http://developingemployeesthroughmentoring.blogspot.com/
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The position of women in corporate America is uneven compared to the position of men. Women tend to occupy positions that are often seen as traditional with few opportunities for career advancement, while men tend operate in higher level positions. Reasons why women are prevented from accessing the executive suite include outdated, faulty assumptions about their knowledge base, skills, as well their potential contributions in the workplace (Townsend, 1997). The dilemma with these unfair practices in the workplace is that it prevents women from accelerating to leadership positions. It creates a barrier for women that limits their perspective to the exclusive male-dominated corporate suite.

The barriers of misconceptions and misplaced assumptions only provide a partial view of what women attempting to access the corporate suite find in their journey. African-American women experience a different set of barriers primarily because of sex and race. Unlike general misconceptions those in power have about women, African-Americans also face stereotypes and prejudice, among other discriminatory practices. In order to maneuver through the corporate jungle and rise above inaccurate depictions about themselves, African-American women need specific assistance from those seasoned professionals who are able to help push through the muddle of (un)intentional corporate unfairness.

Importance of Study

According to Brenda J. Allen (1996) race and gender can determine a person’s place in the labor market, as well as their placement within society. This placement is an important factor when discussing women of color, particularly African-American women, because women of
color tend to occupy the bottom of the employment list (Allen, 1996). In addition to lower placement in the labor market, Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (FGCC) found that African-American women believe they had less control in the workplace compared to their peers who are not of color, received less organizational support and had fewer positive relationships (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). These factors are important when considering why African-American women are not accelerating to the corporate suite.

To combat the negative and career-limiting experiences African-American women face in corporate environments, there needs to be an action-oriented approach. Corporate leadership needs to be more involved in order to help initiate the approach, but, in order for there to be a change, leadership must first recognize the problem. The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission suggest in their report that mentoring be used as tool to promote change (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Mentoring, a form of training employees, has historically been used as a tool in informal circumstances among men after work hours in bars and golf courses (Jenkins, 2005); however, mentoring opportunities rarely exist for African-American women and little research has been done about the benefits mentoring can have on African-American women when implemented properly in formal work structures.

**Statement of the Problem**

The position of African-American women in the corporate workplace is grim, but little research exists to thoroughly explain why. Current research regarding organizational studies often eliminate race as a topic. Other research about African-American women in corporations is either combined with African-American men or other minorities. Limited research exists too on how mentoring can benefit African-American women and overall research regarding African-American women is a bit outdated.
Mentoring, according to Laabs (1994), has the potential to increase employee visibility, as well as create a route for employees to access information that would otherwise be outside of their reach. With the aim of rectifying the barriers that prevent African-American women from accelerating, an action-oriented approach of mentoring would not only ease the discomfort African-American women tend to face within these structures, but it would also create the missing relationships between African-American women and those to have the ability to create change. In order to create this relationship, a formal mentoring program will be developed with the intent of the program is to provide mentees, African-American female professionals, a chance to gather the tools needed to become better leaders, but to also gain access to these resources that are typically withheld.

**Definition of the Terms Used**

**Glass Ceiling:** The term glass ceiling is defined as an impenetrable barrier that exists between women and the executive suite (Townsend, 1997).

**Concrete Wall:** Concrete Wall is defined as the impenetrable barrier that African-American women face in corporate environment. Unlike the glass ceiling where the top is viewable, the concrete wall prevents the top from being seen by those who stand behind it (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).

**Glass Wall:** A metaphor for sex segregation, the term glass wall is used to define jobs in which women are placed in positions that require traditional feminine skills i.e. an assistant, clerical or counseling work (Wood, 2009)

**Sex Role Spillover:** Sex roll spillover is defined as positions that are seen as being either naturally male or naturally female (Allen, 2011).
Multiple Consciousness: Multiple consciousness refers to the dual systematic discrimination of racism and sexism African-American women experience (King, 1998).

Critical Information Gap: Critical Information Gap is used to define the theme that White women and women of color do not understand one another (Carter, 2007).

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

The following thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter two presents a thorough review of previous literature of African-American women in corporate work structures, in addition to philosophical assumptions, theoretical basis, and rationale. The research question ends chapter two and transitions into chapter three explaining the scope and methodology of the project. Chapter four presents a constructed formal mentoring program, a project that would be implemented within organizations. Finally, chapter five represents limitations of this study, as well as additional areas of research.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Philosophical Assumptions

The parable of the Good Samaritan displays how one man, the Samaritan, took it upon himself to care for another man robbed and nearly beaten to death by thieves. The Samaritan willingly takes care of a stranger, his neighbor, not because he has to but because he has it in his heart to help someone in need. Pragmatist Philosopher Cornel West uses biblical stories like The Good Samaritan to create dialogue about oppression in connection with those who feel and operate within the walls of oppression frequently (Griffin, 2012).

According to Cornel West (1989), pragmatism is a “mode of cultural critical action that focuses on ways and means by which human beings have, do, and can overcome obstacles, dispose of predicaments, and settle problematic situations” (p.86). Oppression is often coerced and implemented by those in power against people who are marginalized by society as a result of racism, sexism, and economic injustice thus creating obstacles (Griffin, 2012). West’s use of biblical scriptures like The Good Samaritan shows how people, specifically believers, have a responsibility to help those who are in need, as well as those who are feeling oppressed or marginalized. In today’s corporate work structure, women and minorities are often marginalized, operating blindly under the thumb of men who sit in the exclusive executive male suite.

African-American women, on the other hand, operate under a similar, but still different set of marginalization guises when compared to the obstacles of other women. Unlike the hard, yet crystal clear barrier the glass ceiling presents to most women, African-American women are operating under a more solid, concrete barrier that not only prevents them from seeing the top, but also limits the opportunities that are available to them (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Where other women are at least accelerating to managerial positions, well-educated
African-American women continue to hold down positions where the amount of control given is much less than their other female counterparts. African-American women also do not feel accepted and often feel as though they do not have the support of their full-time work organization among other exclusions (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). In today’s corporate work environment, the identity of African-American women can be tied to the man robbed and beaten in the parable. Although they are not being robbed and beaten in the physical sense, African-American women’s growth potential within corporate environments is very limited and few Samaritans are there to assist them out and above the rubble of oppression.

The few Samaritans that do exist within corporate work cultures can operate under the banner of mentor. Through prophetic pragmatism, Cornel West seeks out action-oriented approaches to eliminate oppression and empower those who are often disadvantaged and excluded from decision-making processes. To combat oppression, West (1989) stresses the importance of wisdom and how wisdom can be used to not only evaluate human experiences, but how it can contribute to the choices that need to be made to create change. Through wisdom and human experiences, an action-oriented approach to confront how African-American women are seen and utilized within corporate structures can be accomplished through mentoring.

Within the process of mentoring, African-American professionals are privy to information that would otherwise be withheld. Mentoring also provides a safe harbor for conversations between mentor and mentee with no judgment (Jenkins, 2005). However, before the development of a mentoring program begins, dialogue must first occur to discuss what barriers African-American women face in today’s organizational structure. Once information is collected, the forthcoming mentorship program can then be developed with objectives that create and enhance the existing and future positions African-American women can obtain in the
workplace. Also, through positive and productive mentoring, burdens can potentially be alleviated and the workplace ground can begin to become an even field for all.

**Theoretical Basis**

**Feminist Standpoint Theory**

According to Julia T. Wood (2005), a standpoint is achieved through critical reflection on power relations and through engaging in a struggle required to construct an oppositional stance. Standpoint is historically based on shared group experiences by placing less emphasis on individual experiences within socially constructed groups, but rather more emphasis on the social conditions that create such groups (Collins, 1997). Descriptive categories such as race, gender, social class, ethnicity, and age are seen as elements of a social structure that uses these devices to foster inequality within each group (Collins, 1997). Born out of traditional social norms to further marginalize those that are not in power is the feminist standpoint theory.

The feminist standpoint theory does not come to fruition through the single standpoint of one woman, but rather how women as a whole are treated and viewed based on social norms. Wood (2005) states that “for the feminist standpoint theory, a key claim is that women’s lives are systematically and structurally different from men’s lives and that these differences produce different knowledge” (Feminist Standpoint Theory and Muted Group Commonalities and Divergences, para. 3). The feminist standpoint theory attempts to examine and analyze why patriarchy appears to make male and female divisions appear natural and how women should naturally be subordinate to men. The theory also aims to challenge traditional frameworks that marginalize women (Wood, 2005). By reviewing and examining current organizational work cultures and the position of women, the feminist standpoint theory will give insight into how
socially constructed ideas about women have positioned and promoted them compared to men. Additionally, the theory will create and disclose the unique standpoint of African-American women within today’s organizational work structure, and will serve as the theoretical basis of the project design.

The Literature

The Glass Ceiling

Women are not accelerating at the same pace as men nor are they achieving the same positions as men. The reasoning behind these differences is because women are often subjected to stereotypes, myths, and simple generalizations (Townsend, 1997). The men who are in power will then use these stereotypes and generalizations about women to prevent them from advancing to senior management positions, as well as corporate boardrooms. A Newsjournal article in late 1980s defined these specifics limitations, or barriers, against women and their advancement to the top as the glass ceiling (Townsend, 1997).

The term glass ceiling is defined as an “impenetrable barrier between women and the executive suite” (Townsend, 1997, para. 1). The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (FGCC) developed soon after the Newsjournal to not only examine the barriers that prevent women from accelerating, but to also address how women can overcome these barriers in their final report. One specific barrier listed in the government report is gender difference. White male managers, according to the FGCC (1995), believe that women do not belong in business. Women are also not intended to be their (white males) peers. In addition, women lack the experience to take on challenging assignments, have little to no ability to take job risks, and if they are a mother, they lack job commitment (Townsend, 1997). In her textbook Gendered Lives, Julia T. Wood (2009)
describes some of these particular barriers as a glass wall, a metaphor for sex segregation on the job in which women are placed in positions that require traditional feminine skills such as being an assistant, clerical, or counseling (p. 245).

Positions that are deemed as naturally male or female are referred to as sex role spillover and despite the mere advancements women have been made over the years the concept of sex role spillover still exists today (Allen, 2011, p.48). Women continue to occupy lower level management positions. Additionally, they are underrepresented in line jobs that involve profit and loss responsibility, as well as any position that involves any major decision-making responsibilities about the future of the company (Townsend, 1997). The barriers that women face are limiting, discriminating, and often insulting; however, the term glass ceiling does not encompass the barriers faced by all women.

The Concrete Wall

Women of color, particularly African-American women, face a different set of barriers. Where the glass ceiling is deemed as impenetrable, the top is still viewable for women who are not of color. African-American women, on the other hand, view the barriers that they are confronted with as a concrete wall. Unlike the glass ceiling, the concrete wall reiterates the point that not only is the top not reachable, it cannot even be seen through much less broken through to gain access to the executive suite (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, p. 68). In many organizational work cultures, the concrete wall is clearly viewable and intact for female African-American professionals.

The implications of the concrete wall are many. African-American women, according to Allen (1996), tend to occupy the bottom of the income and employment list. African-American
women also believe they receive less support within their organization. They are also in positions with minimal or dramatically less control when compared to their other female counterparts. Boss and employee relationships are also seen as being less than positive (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). According to Patricia Collins (1989), Black women have a standpoint that is self-defined within their own oppression. The obstacles that African-American women are under within corporate work environments are unlimited and as a result, these obstacles tend to lead them to operate within multiple consciousness

**Multiple Consciousness**

Multiple consciousness refers to the dual and systematic discrimination of racism and sexism (King, 1988). In corporate work cultures, “African-American women in professional jobs felt pressured by bicultural stress, the result of the contradictory pull between their own cultural identity and the pressure to conform to a corporate identity that is both masculine and white” (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, p.68). The problem with multiple consciousness is that it becomes a form a survival. Multiple consciousness, or double jeopardy, becomes a double enslavement tool of black women (King, 1988) because even without prior knowledge of the woman herself, African-American women are culturally perceived and stereotyped to be incompetent, aggressive, hostile, educationally deficient which reinforces the concrete wall (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). By some means African-American women must arise above these stereotypes to advance. They must also face cultural differences that prevent them from accelerating to the top.
Cultural Differences

Cultural differences are another significant barrier that prevents African-American women from accelerating in the corporate work environment. FGCC found minority men and women are expected to play by White males’ rules within corporate environments which imply conformity. Even styles of communication are expected to be the same as those in power. Prior to working with women and minorities, men in power rarely had to consider the communication styles of others because their own communication style could be understood among their peers. Today, however, due to the various communication styles between women and minorities, men in power view differences in communication as a potential for misunderstandings and misunderstandings cost money (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).

In addition to the communication complexities when it comes to working with White men, African-American women must also confront the same complexities in a corporate environment while working with White women. According to bell hooks (1981), the social status of Black and White women has never been the same and although both groups have been victims of sexist victimization, the oppression White women have faced is greatly different from the oppression of Black women. hooks goes on to further state how White women believe they offer women a guide or an analysis on how to achieve liberation (hooks, 1984). For the reason that the standpoint theory focuses on power relations between those in positions of power versus those who are not in power, White women cannot truly provide African-American women a guide to achieve liberation and the miscommunication between White women and African-American woman reestablishes the fact there are devices used to foster inequality which in turn contributes to the position and problems African-American women encounter within their career pursuits.
In addition to communication discrepancies within organizational work structures, the level of marginalization and oppression between African-American women and White women varies greatly. Where White women are at least advancing, African-American women continue to occupy the bottom of the labor market inside corporate work structures (Allen, 1996) and in many work environments, cultural differences contributes to this problem. Overall these differences continue to reiterate existing notions and ideas about minorities that often leads to a potential disconnect between both African-American and White women.

Jessica Faye Carter (2007) refers to this disconnect as a *critical information gap*, a term used to describe the theme that White women and women of color do not understand one another (p.32). This critical information gap is important in the day-to-day communication between White women and African-American women and Marsha Houston (2004) explores the communication cultural differences African-American women have with White women. According to Houston, White women tend to believe that African-American women’s communication style is aggressive and deviant, whereas their own communication style is perceived to be ‘normal’ and friendly. In addition to viewing their communication style as normal and friendly, White women also view African-American women as talking in a dialect tone, as opposed to their General American Speech (Houston, 2004). The differences in communication between these two groups are important because it is again used as form of marginalization. If as a group African-American women are not being understood by their peers, then the gap widens and the lack of communication and understanding becomes a burden while the standpoint of African-American becomes more firm. By not communicating in the same manner as those in power, it continues to create division, lessening the esteem of African-American women who seek advancement.
These differences in communication styles also come from incorrect depictions of African-American women in the media. In their article “Accepting the Challenge of Centralizing Without Essentializing,” the authors found that from a communication standpoint, White women attributed their communication experiences with African-American through the recollection of an event that appeared on television (Bell, Camara, Drummond, & Orbe, 2000). The television episode typically contained certain catch phrases and terms that were assumed to be acceptable, as well as usable in day-to-day conversations. The problem with utilizing television as a source of information on any minority is that it reemphasizes existing stereotypes that eventually become absorbed into the minds of those who have and maintain power within corporate work structures.

**Mentoring**

In order to challenge stereotypes and alter the future of how African-American women are perceived and promoted in the workplace, more action needs to be taken by the men that lead today’s corporations. According to the FGCC, corporate leadership cannot enforce a genderless, colorless, or cultureless society; however, they can enforce merit-based practice and behavior. Senior management can also have more of an influence on how women and minorities are promoted within their organization. Ultimately, senior management needs to utilize more of their influence rather than silently enjoying that narrow inclusion of the male suite (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). One specific action-oriented plan senior management can take to challenge marginalization and oppression is through mentoring.

Mentoring can be an extremely beneficial tool for African-American professionals when properly implemented (Jenkins, 2005). It allows coworkers to establish business relationships
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and share information about the company and its inner workings (Laabs, 1994). Mentoring can also create strong networks, allow employees to learn unspoken cultural criteria, as well as potentially eliminate feelings of lack of support and instead create better employee foundations and dynamics with the support of management (Jenkins, 2005).

Mentoring also has the power to increase confidence, as well as create an environment for learning (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). The process of mentoring does not have to be one-sided, but without some sort of change in place to thwart the way minorities, specifically African-American women, are treated in the workplace, employers can potentially lose reliable talent (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Townsend (1997) notes how women are leaving corporations, not to become stay at moms, but to lead smaller organizations or become entrepreneurs. Also, women no longer want to operate in the same position as men without recognition (Kottis, 1993). In order to save employees, mentoring can preserve as well as build talent. Companies like MetLife have recognized that women are integral part of their global vision and in order to preserve those high performing women considered key employees, MetLife took into account the position of women and introduced a strategy to help advance these women in stronger roles of leadership companywide (Jay & Barnes, 2013).

In order to create a solid standpoint, the feminist standpoint theory utilizes the women’s lives as foundation for constructing for knowledge about women and how women speak about their views upon reality (Allen, 1995). The negative views about reality in the corporate environment is real and the marginalization of African-American women in corporate work environment is fundamental because as a group, African-American women can collectively share their encounters with discrimination in the workplace. The feminist standpoint theory in turn can give insight into the discrimination and specific barriers that African-American women face.
within this environment. The feminist standpoint theory further shows how socially constructed ideas about African-American women, i.e. incompetent, educationally deficient, aggressive, do impact and impede their advancement toward the top. The theory can then take the voices of these women and use it to shed light about how a lack mentoring has hindered career growth for African-American women, as well as display what the benefits of mentoring can do. If the initiative is comprehensive and implemented correctly, the benefits of mentoring can potentially be endless and the ideas that support the feminist standpoint theory will begin to take hold and provide a greater need to incorporate more studies about the position of all women in the workplace.

**Rationale**

According to Stella M. Nkomo (1992) race has been silenced within work organizations, despite the impact that race has when determining a person’s location in the labor market. Previously, organizational scholars would eliminate race within their studies believing that it is unimportant and irrelevant (1992); however, despite race not being factored more in organizational studies, the topic continues to be one that remains scattered across several disciplines (Goldman, Gutek, Lewis, & Stein, 2006). The issue with leaving race out of organizational studies is that it does not consider the full perspective of all employees and the obstacles they face within that environment. Race is a central tool when determining the perception of others (Allen 2007). In addition to the omission of race, the omission of gender information from organizational studies is also nothing new (Harding, 2004). By omitting socially constructed ideas such as race and gender, change cannot be initiated within corporate organizations, if the ideas that address management and advancement solely come from those who are in power.
In addition to gender and race elimination from organization studies, research as whole on African-American women and the barriers they face within corporate environments is extremely limited. Current data collected can potentially be seen as outdated with sources going back as far as 1995, but no later than the early 2000s. Research collected also continues to either merge the obstacles and struggles of African-American with either White women, African-American men, or studies tend to lump the struggles of African-American with other women of color (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Little research currently exists that focuses just on African-American women and their current standpoint within corporations.

By incorporating the feminist standpoint theory into organizational studies, it allows researchers to deepen and extend traditional perspectives about organizational work cultures (Allen, 1996). The theory begins to take root with minority women, specifically for African-American women, that their shared group experiences are now being considered by those in power and leadership positions. The feminist standpoint theory will also play a role in how mentoring initiatives can best benefit other women. If through mentoring, minorities can gain access to information that would otherwise be withheld, imagine what doors effective mentoring can do for the same marginalized group by incorporating race into organizational studies. Scholars and organizational leaders can then gather this new information and begin to develop action-oriented outcomes like mentoring that focus on the betterment of all employees not simply just African-American women.

Research Questions

Upon reviewing the literature, more research needs to be gathered about the barriers African-American women face within corporate work structures. In present day, are the barriers
listed in the 1995 Federal Glass Ceiling report still applicable several years later? Have African-American women changed or has society moved away from the generalizations and stereotypes that have unintentionally altered the way women work in comparison to men. The questions are endless, but the primary focus is how the feminist standpoint theory can help assist with developing a successful mentoring program for African-American women. The following question emerges from the philosophical and theoretical framework as applied to the previous review of the literature:

RQ1: How can the feminist standpoint theory help develop a highly effective mentoring program for African-American women as they operate within executive male suite?

To better examine how the feminist standpoint theory can assist mentoring African-American women, a formal mentoring program will be developed specifically for corporations and organizations. The purpose of the program will not only highlight the benefits of effective mentoring, but also how better leaders can be developed with the assistance of a seasoned professional that has an interest in helping African-American women accelerate farther in her professional career.
Chapter 3: Scope and Methodology

The Scope of the Project

In work organizations where women and minorities are excluded from accessing senior positions, formal mentoring programs are encouraged to help ease the discrimination felt by those who are not included on the track to access higher level management positions (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Current research shows that mentoring programs can potentially offer a plethora of opportunities for women and minorities that include access to information that would otherwise be withheld, increased visibility, and better exposure (Laabs, 1994); however, few studies truly examine the benefits of mentoring for African-American women trying to gain access to the all-inclusive male suite. As with most organizational work studies, the opinions and views of African-American women in corporate work structures are either eliminated or combined with other female minorities or African-American men.

In order to examine how mentoring programs can benefit African-American women, the scope of this project will be narrow. The goal of this formal mentoring program will be to establish relationships between African-American women with people in senior management positions that have the ability to not only influence change within a potentially stagnant corporate environment, but to also allow African-American women an opportunity to accomplish their career goals as well. The results of this project will also allow both the mentor and mentee to grow, to become leaders, and possibly future mentors to others. As this mentoring program is dedicated to African-American women, there will be limited perspectives from men and women of other races. Primarily, this formal mentoring program seeks to expose the position of African-American women within corporations and then demonstrate how the power of mentoring can
assist with diminishing the walls that prevent African-American women from accelerating to the corporate top.

**Methodology of the Project**

According to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (FGCC) mentor relationships have always existed within the workplace and it is rare for someone to access the executive suite without some sort of support or encouragement along the way (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Despite positive impacts mentoring can have on an employee’s career, it is often a challenge for African-American professionals to secure a mentor (Jenkins, 2005). In order to counteract the lack of mentoring relationships African-American professionals have within corporate work structures, the focus of this project is dedicated to creating a formal, interactive, mentoring program but specifically for African-American women. Unlike most mentoring programs that intend to encompass the goals for all employees, the goal of this project is simple: help African-American women achieve equal footing as other employees within the same unilateral corporate environment.

To accomplish the project goal, new knowledge must be imparted through description and explanation about the current state of African-American women in the workplace (Haridakis, Rubin, Rubin, & Piele 2010). To impart this information, previous research about the positive influence mentoring can have on employees will be utilize in connection with behavior-oriented research. The purpose of behavior-oriented research will be to uncover the recent and personal positions of African-American women in today’s workplace in regards to mentoring and show how it can be beneficial.
According to Georgia T. Chao (2009), employees that are able to engage in some sort of mentoring program are able to advance at a higher rate than those who are not mentored and because the benefits of a formal mentoring are so grand, organizations have now sought out to implement more formal mentoring programs for women and minorities. Many organizations and corporations, however, still have not sought out ways and methods to assist minority women, specifically African-American women, on how to overcome that concrete wall. To better examine the position of African-American and how they view their own mentoring relationships, or the lack thereof, interviews will be utilized. Interviews, according to Haridakis et al. (2010) will be used probe communication behaviors, such as what participants’ views on mentoring are and whether they have a mentor. The interviews for this project will also help guide the structure of the program, so that the needs of the mentee are met throughout the program and even once the formal mentoring program is complete. The following interview questions will be utilized to gather data:

1. How long have you worked in your profession?
2. Describe your work environment in terms of employee communication with upper management.
3. Do you feel like your current employer is supportive of you as an African-American women? Please explain.
4. If you believe your current employer is not supportive of you as an African-American women, what efforts would you suggest to increase support?
5. As an African-American woman, have you experienced any form of discrimination within your professional career?
6. Do you currently have a mentor? If not, do you believe a mentor would be beneficial for your career? If you do have a mentor, how has s/he helped you within your career?

7. Are there any specific areas of mentoring you believe would be beneficial to African-American women? If you're not currently involved in a mentoring program, why would having a mentoring program for African American women be helpful to you?

The number of African-American women that will be interviewed will be approximately five women who all have various career backgrounds. The intent behind interviewing African-American women with varying careers is to show the need for mentoring, regardless of the career path. The purpose of the interview questions is to also gather opinions from African-American women regarding the types of obstacles they have faced within their professional career. The feedback gleaned from these interviews will be utilized as testimonies for the mentoring program to establish how high-performing African-American female professionals are often eliminated from accessing senior positions. The testimonies will also serve to further the position of the feminist standpoint theory and the stereotypes and generalizations can be used against a specific group (Wood, 2005).

In order to implement the mentoring project, it will be introduced in two stages. The first stage will take place through a one-day seminar to introduce purpose of the mentoring program to qualified mentors and mentees. This one-day seminar can also serve as a beneficial tool to communicate the intent of the program to both mentor and mentee, as well as address any questions that may not have been answered during the recruitment process. It is important to note that the mentoring program will not be available to all employees, but only to the high-performing employees that have demonstrated willingness to lead, as well as a willingness to
learn. The one-day seminar will also allow for mentors and mentee to be paired with one another. The purpose of the mentor and mentee pairings is so that mentees can work with mentors who are in positions that either aligns with their own goals or they have the necessary skillset to point them in the right direction.

The second stage of the mentoring program begins after the seminar. A formal mentoring program will roll out as a year-long program that will heavily require the participation of the both mentor and mentee. Once the program begins both mentor and mentee are requested to communicate with each at least twice a month either through phone, email, or one-on-one meetings. It is important to note that strong mentors are needed to implement this program effectively. In their own online mentoring program, Brannagan and Oriol (2014) stress that mentors need to share a commitment and willingness in the program order to make the mentoring work. In addition to communicating with each other, mentor and mentee will have an opportunity to connect online through an interactive classroom environment where both participants can read, as well as discuss how leaders are developed through an established mentoring curriculum. A best-practice of mentoring document will also be developed and distributed online as an additional tool to assist with the mentoring process.

**Ethical Considerations**

Prior to conducting interviews, those participating in the interview will be provided a detailed consent form (See Appendix B) that acknowledges the purpose of the project. The consent form will explain that only first names will be used, the length of the interview, and that at any time they have the right to withdraw from the interview process. Interviewee’s place of employment will also not be disclosed once the project is complete and the consent form must be
signed and returned back to the interviewer, prior to starting the interview. In order to comply with research ethics, those interviewed for this project will be notified that the sole intent of the interview is to gather experience, past and/or present, about the role of mentoring within their careers.
Chapter 4: The Project

Project Description:

The mentoring program for African-American women will be a yearlong program broken down into two stages. During the first stage of the program, qualified mentors and mentees will participate in a one-day seminar. The intent of the seminar is to engage mentors and mentee with one another, as well as address the forthcoming mentorship that will begin once the seminar is complete. The seminar will also be used as a time to address any outstanding questions or concerns and to gather full-time commitment from both participants. Mentors and mentees will also learn about the online interactive curriculum they are expected to engage in together within the next year.

The second stage of the mentoring program is the formal mentoring program, the engagement between mentor and mentee. Over the next year, both mentors and mentees will participate in an online, interactive, classroom environment where they learn how to become a leader and mentees will have an opportunity to truly learn and engage with their mentor. The purpose of the curriculum is to provide a structured tool on the development of leadership skills. The mentors and mentees can also participate in the online discussion questions interactively through a blog, view recommended movies that correspond with the text, and access the Best Practices for a successful Mentor/Mentee relationship.

The Project

According to Julia T. Wood (2005), “a standpoint refers not simply to location or experience, but to a critical understanding of location and experiences, as part of—and shaped by-larger social and political contexts_. (para 8). The devices, generalizations, and stereotypes
used against women still exist today, despite advancements women have made in the corporate arena, but especially for African-American women. Information gleaned from the interviews performed for the project show that African-American women continue to experience varying forms of discrimination in the workplace, despite having the educational background to fulfill specific, often specialized job requirements. The interviews also provided insight that African-American women continue to be stereotyped as angry and aggressive if they are in positions where they have more knowledge than their peers. The varying elements that withhold African-American women from advancing in the corporate work environment provided the foundation for the formal mentoring program. The information also reinforced the groundwork of the feminist standpoint theory – a group collectively sharing career barriers. If in today’s corporate work structure, African-American women can still collectively speak about experiences that have prevented them from accelerating then the standpoint of these women is clear. Mentoring is not only beneficial, but necessary is overcome these hurdles.

According to Georgia T. Chao (2009), organizations that participate in mentoring programs are likely to benefit from their employees participating in those mentoring programs. Chao states organizations are able to see better organizational socialization, employee integration, managerial succession and reduced turnover. As a result of these benefits, organizations are more likely to determine those who can and cannot participate in the mentoring program from both the perspective of the mentor and the mentee. Chao (2009) states that “rather than leaving mentoring to happenstance, formal programs have given organizations control over who is mentored, when they are mentored, and how they are mentored” (para 4.).

In order to establish who can participate in this formal mentoring program, who can be a mentor and who can be a mentee, established qualifications for both roles must be met. It is
recommended that the person serving in the role of the mentor is an employee that is in a manager position at a minimum. The mentor must also have an exceptional record for leadership, a desire to see others improve and succeed, as well as works well with others. The role of the mentee is an African-American woman that has worked at the designated organization for at least twelve months. Within her work period, the mentee candidate must have an exceptional work performance record, as well as expressed a desire to advance. The mentee, as well as the mentor, must also have an error-free record in order to participate. The goal of this mentoring program is help African-American women accelerate beyond past the concrete barriers and into positions that could include access to the male-inclusive suite. This formal mentoring program is intended to be seen as a highly-recognized, professional development tool and in order to implement this particular program, only qualified applicants will be accepted. (See Appendix C)

One-Day Seminar

The one-day seminar (See Appendix F) is the first introduction qualified applicants will have to the formal mentoring program. Designed to be held over an entire work day, the seminar will introduce several important elements of the program to participants. First, the one-day seminar will address what the mentoring program is and why it is important. Small group discussions will then be held across several tables so that seminar participants can share any past experiences with mentoring and why they believe mentoring has benefited them and their careers. During this particular time, seminar facilitators will pair mentors and mentees based on similar career goals and interests written down on the Mentor/Mentee pairings form filled out at the beginning of the seminar (See Appendix D).
After a lunch break, mentors and mentees will formally meet and then learn in extensive detail about the year-long mentoring program they are about to undertake. The remaining part of the seminar will be utilized to cover the mentoring curriculum, as well address as any last minute questions before departing and starting the program. Finally, mentors and mentees will sign their Mentor/Mentee Agreement Form, insuring their professionalism and commitment over the next year. Program participants will also be issued their *The Leadership Challenge 5th ed.* book before exiting the seminar to start this new professional development challenge.

**Online Classroom**

Once the one-day seminar is complete, the mentoring program will be structured through an online classroom. The classroom, hosted through the Versal.com website, is intended to allow mentors and mentees a structured classroom environment without physically being in a classroom. The online classroom portion of the mentoring program will also use a guided, structured curriculum for the mentor and mentee to utilize throughout the process.

Through the use of the Kouzes and Posner’s book *The Leadership Challenge 5th Ed.*, the online classroom will be broken into four modules. Each module will take the mentor and mentee through the text to cover what is necessary to become an efficient and an effective leader. In addition to reviewing and discussing the text of *The Leadership Challenge 5th ed.*, mentors and mentees will engage in discussion questions in an online discussion blog about the content that is recommended to be read and viewed during the specified timeframe.

Since the mentoring program is designed to be a year-long professional development program, each module is designed to last three months. This timeframe is designed to give mentors and mentees adequate time to not only read the text, but give thought to the discussion
questions. The length of each module is also designed for the mentor and mentee to have time to adequately communicate with one another in the midst of everyone’s busy and demanding schedule. Furthermore, since face-to-face or phone meetings are not always possible, the online aspect of the mentoring program is create convenience for the participants so that communication can continue for two working professionals even outside of their personal and professional schedules.

Website: https://versal.com/c/tp6dmw/developing-employees-through-mentoring

Blogger: http://developingemployeesthroughmentoring.blogspot.com/

The Curriculum

The curriculum for the mentoring program is a structured tool designed to assist both mentor and mentee with the skill of leadership. The goal of the entire program is to create better African-American female leaders and while the objectives are small, they are strong steps that encourage those leaders to be created once the program is completed. Mentees should walk away from the program with knowledge and a set of skills that would otherwise not be available to them without being engaged in some sort of formal program. The curriculum for the mentoring program is divided into four modules. Each module is broken down into specific sections that are intended to develop leaders from the ground up. Additionally, the curriculum is primarily based around *The Leadership Challenge 5th ed.* text. The purpose of the text is to create a solid foundation about the role of leadership. It is also the primary tool mentors and mentees will utilize throughout the program, in addition to the actual process of mentoring itself (See Appendix G).
Module One

Learning Objective: Mentors and Mentees will have an established set of values about the tools and skills needed to be a successful leader at the completion of the Module. The values determined in Module One should start the initial groundwork about mentees course toward successful leadership.

The first module of the mentoring program revolves around values. As leaders are developed, participants must consider what their values are and how they utilize those values in connection with their day-to-day leadership skills. Also, as mentors and mentee maneuver throughout the program, mentees should truly be gleaning information about the values that influence their mentor. The mentees should too consider their own values during this timeframe and either develop or redefine their own values, as well as a foundation that will make them an exceptional leader. In addition the course readings from the Leadership Challenge text, mentors and mentees have several, non-required, questions in the module that they can potentially discuss. It is important to note that the discussion questions are not required, but rather conversation starters about the course text. Mentors and mentees also have the option to view a movie that correlates with the module topic. The movie for module one is 12 Angry Men (1957)
Module Two

**Learning Objective:** Mentors and mentees will utilize the values created in module one and implement those values with the intent to inspire their peers.

The second module of the mentoring program touches on inspiring others with the values created in module one. In this particular module, mentors and mentee should discuss how leaders are able to take their values and utilize those same values to inspire others, as well as create a vision that allows other to see what some may refer to as the big picture. Preferably, this module should be a time where mentees truly learn how mentors lead, how they are able to get others to believe in the overall picture or game plan of the company. As with module one, there are several questions/conversation starters that are not required, but can be used as tool to create discussion about leadership. The recommended movie for Module Two is Coach Carter (2005).
Module Three

Learning Objective: Mentees will develop specific goals and aim to accomplish at least one goal within the remainder of the mentoring program timeframe.

Module Three of the mentoring program focuses on putting together the leadership foundation developed in modules one and two into action. The leadership action includes seeking out opportunities, experimenting and taking risks, fostering collaboration among peers, and strengthening others. The skill of being a leader is not only transparent, but it is constantly changing. Mentors, especially mentees, should learn and reevaluate how people become involved in projects, how people remain motivated during projects, and why working together is so important. As the mentors move through each module, they should continue to consider their own skills and decide whether or not they are beneficial. Mentees can also utilize this time to learn from their mentors’ actions, if possible. As with previous modules, mentees and mentors have several discussion questions to choose from, program participants also have the option to view the movie Apollo 13 (1995) as a supplement to the module material.
Module Four

Learning Objective: Mentors and Mentees, as well as their peers, will be able to observe the leadership skills developed within the year from the mentoring program. Developed and/or improved skills include better day-to-day engagement with peers, confidence, as well a mature approach towards working with others within the corporate environment.

The final module of the curriculum discusses how leaders can recognize the contributions of others and how leadership can be a skill everyone develops within their own careers. At this point in the program, mentors and mentees should have come full circle in the process of what it takes to become a leader. Mentors should have utilized the previous year as a form of reevaluation and reaffirming one’s leadership’s skills and styles while the mentee engages with the mentor about overall leadership process. The final discussion questions at the end of the
module, as well the subscribed movie, Mona Lisa Smile (2003), are provided as tools to support what good leadership means to both followers and leaders.

**Best Practice**

Throughout the mentoring program, mentors and mentees will have access to a prepared document uncovering what is considered to be the best practices for a good mentor and mentee relationship. The document will hold what other authors and professionals have disclosed about what makes mentors and mentee relationship successful as well. The Best Practices will also address what mentors and mentee should do throughout the course of the mentoring relationship. The Best Practices document will be available on the online course website for review and use at any time. Its sole purpose is to remind program participants how to keep the mentor relationship open and yet fulfilling for all parties involved over the course of the year (See Appendix H).
Evaluation

Traditionally, mentoring programs are known to be informal with meetings and gatherings occurring either at the bar or the golf course (Chao, 2009). Traditional mentoring programs also potentially lack any form of a formal evaluation process. For this formal mentoring program, however, as part of their yearly evaluation, both mentor and mentee will be evaluated against a supplemental evaluation, regarding their process in the mentoring program. The mentoring program’s curriculum is designed so that both mentor and mentee can grow as leaders. In order to confirm that both parties are continuing to grow and develop in their professional skills, the evaluation will serve a tool to determine whether in fact certain leadership skills have indeed developed over the course of a year. The evaluation will also be a gauge to determine if the mentors and mentee’s peers are able to see a change as well. The process of becoming a leader and improving leadership takes time and the evaluation will simply be used a
way to ensure that some change has started occurring since starting the mentoring program (See Appendix I).

**Discussion**

According to Patricia Hill Collins (1997), “freedom occurs when individuals have rights of mobility in and out of groups” (para. 3). The dilemma with freedom is that it is not available to everyone, as long as those in power continue to utilize descriptive categories such as race, gender, and social class as a means to withhold acceptance. Based on the data collected from the African-American female professionals interviewed for this project, true freedom and acceptance is still an obstacle in the today’s present day workplace. Discrimination is still prevalent and the inability to achieve career growth without some sort of assistance from someone in a higher-level job position is prevalent as well.

Constructed out of the interviews conducted, in order to combat negative attitudes and create dialogue, the mentoring program was developed to be more than just a mentoring program. Through the feminist standpoint theory, the mentoring program was designed to eliminate the concrete wall African-American women face and instead build relationships with personnel in upper management. The mentoring program was also designed to create leaders. Leaders that can one day work alongside the men in the executive suite. The interviews conducted established that African-American women share a unique, yet isolated, standpoint in today’s workplace and in order change that standpoint, a formal mentoring program is necessary.
Chapter 5: Summaries and Conclusions

Limitations of the Study

The biggest limitation for this project is lack of time. The formal mentoring program is intended to last an entire calendar year and the purpose of that year is to create a solid, professional mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee. The calendar year is also supposed to allow mentors and mentee time to engage and interact in the online classroom to learn, as well as evaluate current leadership skills and styles. Without the time in place to implement the project fully, it is hard to determine what works and what does not work for this formal mentoring program.

Further Study or Recommendations

Much of the statistical information collected for the project is outdated. The report from the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission is dated back to 1995 and the various scholarly journals used for the purpose of this project about the position of African-American women in today’s workforce have dates listed from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. Current, present-day research was extremely scarce thus leaving older data to fill in the gaps. In order to truly investigate the position of African-American women in today’s workplace, more research needs to be done.

By performing more recent research, enhanced, stronger programs can be created to better meet the position of those in need of mentoring. Additionally, recent data can better inform those in power, senior level management positions, about the importance of mentoring. In order to implement change within organizational work structures, those in senior management position must have the tools they need to implement that change. For the change to occur, better research data as well research processes needs to be improved, if the goal is to create better employees through the process of mentoring.
Conclusions

In today’s corporate work structure, women continue to operate under the glass ceiling, a term that is used to define the barrier that exists between women and the executive male suite (Townsend, 1997). Initially, the term glass ceiling seemed to encompass all the barriers for all women in the workforce; however, that is not the case. For women of color, specifically African-American women, the term concrete wall fits best their perception of the limited access to the corporate suite. It also establishes the foundation for the feminist standpoint theory – a theory that examines the position of women against traditional male platforms within society.

In order to counteract the concrete wall, an action-oriented plan needs to be implemented to eliminate the discrepancies. According to pragmatist philosopher Cornel West (1989), the action oriented plan should eliminate oppression and empower those who are marginalized. In order to eliminate oppression and empower those left behind the concrete wall, a formal mentoring program needs to be developed. Through the context of West’s pragmatic philosophy, wisdom and action are used as part of the formation of the mentoring program. The mentoring program also initiates the practice of creating, as well building the necessary resources to tear down this concrete wall.

Designed to last over the course of a year, the formal mentoring program will only accept qualified mentors and mentees to participate in the program. The purpose of having qualified mentors and mentees in the program is to align career goals and paths as much as possible. Once in the program, mentors and mentees will connect with one another initially through an informative one-day seminar and then through an interactive, online classroom designed for mentors and mentees to consistently engage with one another despite their schedules. After the calendar year is complete mentors, but especially mentees should walk away with new knowledge, a new set of skills, and a better opportunity to start achieving career goals. Also, mentors should have revamped or reevaluated their skills during this time as well. This formal mentoring program is intended to benefit the
mentees, African-American female professionals, but the true benefit will be for these professionals to gain equal footing in an environment dominantly held by men.


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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How long have you worked in your profession?

2. Describe your work environment in terms of employee communication with upper management.

3. Do you feel like your current employer is supportive of you as an African-American woman? Please explain.

4. If you believe your current employer is not supportive of you as an African-American woman, what efforts would you suggest to increase support?

5. As an African-American woman, have you experienced any form of discrimination within your professional career?

6. Do you currently have a mentor? If not, do you believe a mentor would be beneficial for your career? If you do have a mentor, how has s/he helped you within your career?

7. Are there any specific areas of mentoring you believe would be beneficial to African-American women? If you're not currently involved in a mentoring program, why would having a mentoring program for African American women be helpful to you?
Appendix B: Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Tamika Bowser Wright, a graduate student at Gonzaga University. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about why mentoring is important to African-American women within corporate work structures. I will be one of approximately seven women being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one within the Gonzaga University organization will be notified.

2. I understand that most interviewees in will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

3. Participation involves being interviewed by a graduate-student, Tamika Bowser Wright, from Gonzaga University. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent transcript will be made. If I do not want to be taped, I will notify the interviewer.

4. I understand that the researcher will only utilize my first name in the subsequent reports obtained from the interview. Additional information about the interviewee, such as place of employment and last name will not be used.

5. I understand that the interviewer will transcribe the interview and utilize answers to questions as 'testimonies' to verify the importance of mentoring for African-American women in corporate work structures.

6. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

___________________________________________________________________________  _______________________________________________________________________
Signature                                             Date

___________________________________________________________________________  _______________________________________________________________________
My Printed Name                                      Signature of the Investigator

Tamika Bowser Wright
Twright3@zagmail.gonzaga.edu
504-884-8906
Appendix C: Mentor/Mentee Guidelines

**Mentor**

In order to participate in the mentoring program as a mentor, the candidates must meet the following specifications:

- Worked for the company for a minimum of five (5) years
- Candidate will have successfully operated in a leadership position for the last two (2) years
- Displays excellent leadership and managerial skills
- Confident and able to lead others
- Well organized and able to multitask multiple projects at one time
- Excellent work history with little to no disciplinary action on employee record
- Must be committed to working in the mentoring program for the next twelve months

**Mentee**

In order to participate in the mentoring program as a mentee, the candidates must meet the following specifications:

- African-American woman
- Worked for the company for a minimum of one (1) year
- Has expressed a desire to become a leader within the organization
- Seen in a positive light by peers
- Well organized and able to multitask multiple projects at one time
- Excellent work history with little to no disciplinary action on employee record
- Must be committed to working in the mentoring program for the next twelve months
Appendix D: Mentor/Mentee Interests Form

Name: _____________________________          Mentor or the Mentee? ________________________

Education (please specify your education history)
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

1) What Division/Department are you currently working under?
_________________________________________________________________________________

2) Number of years with the company:
_________________________________________________________________________________

3) Name a few your career-related goals
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

4) What are your interests outside of work?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

5) Why are you interested in being a mentor or mentee?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix E: Mentor/Mentee Agreement

I, _________________________________, understand that I am committing myself to the following mentoring program for the next twelve months. I understand that I am supposed to engage in a fulfilling professional relationship with my mentor and/or mentee, so that professional development is ongoing throughout the formal mentoring process.

I also understand that over the next twelve months, I am supposed engage with my mentor and/or mentee through the online classroom. The purpose of this virtual classroom is to create another form of communication, as well learn about how to become better leaders through *The Leadership Challenge 5th edition* text.

If for any reason the mentor/mentee relationship needs to be terminated (i.e. lack of commitment from either party, extenuating circumstances, etc.), I will inform the program facilitator as soon as possible, so that necessary arrangements can be made for those involved. I will also contact the program facilitator if any other issues arise throughout the mentoring process.

__________________________________
Mentor Name and Date

__________________________________
Mentee Name and Date

__________________________________
Program Facilitator Name and Date
Appendix F: One Day Seminar

- 8:00 – 8:30
  I. **Icebreaker** – Introduction of Mentors and Mentees
  II. **Fill out the Mentor/Mentee Interests Form**

- 8:30 -10:00
  III. **Mentoring Program**
    A. Purpose of the Mentoring Program
    B. Goal of the Mentoring Program: Create more opportunities for African-American
       to equally advance within their professional careers as their peers
    C. The Role of the Mentor
    D. The Role of the Mentee
    E. The Importance of Working Together

- 10:00 – 10:15 Break

IV. 10:15 – 12:00 **Have Mentors Influenced You?**

  A. Group Break-Out Sessions: Small group discussions about past experiences with
     mentoring.
     - Write down expected outcomes by participating in the mentoring program.
  B. Mentor and Mentee Pairings

- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

V. 1:00 – 1:45 **Discuss Expected outcomes and goals of the mentoring program**

VI. 1:45 – 2:30 **Mentor/Mentee Introduction and Pairings**

VII. 2:30 – 3:15 **Introduction of the Online Classroom**

  - *Leadership Challenge 5th Edition*

  **Module One**

  **Learning Objective:** Mentors and Mentees will have an established set of values
  about the tools and skills needed to be a successful leader at the completion of the
  Module. The values determined in Module One should start the initial groundwork
  about mentees course toward successful leadership.

  **Module Two:**
  **Learning Objective:** Mentors and mentees will utilize the values created in module
  one and implement those values with the intent to inspire their peers.

  **Module Three:**
Learning Objective: Mentors and mentees will utilize the values created in module one and implement those values with the intent to inspire their peers.

Module Four:

Learning Objective: Mentors and Mentees, as well as their peers, will be able to observe the leadership skills developed within the year from the mentoring program. Developed and/or improved skills include better day-to-day engagement with peers, confidence, as well a mature approach towards working with others within the corporate environment.

- 3:15 – 3:30 Break

VIII. 3:30 – 4:15 Conclusion of Seminar
   A. Mentor/Mentee Agreement Signed and Submitted
   B. Final Questions
Appendix G: Mentoring Curriculum

Description:
The purpose of this yearlong mentoring program is create a dynamic working relationship between a seasoned professional and an African-American female that needs some assistance with learning the company ropes. Through the text of *The Leadership Challenge 5th ed*, the mentoring program will also guide the mentor and the mentee through various questions and challenges that focuses around how leaders and the skill of leadership is developed within the corporate work structure.

Structured through an entire calendar year, the mentor and mentee are able to meet in person and online through an online classroom, to further engage with each other. The flexibility of meeting online also allows the mentor and mentee to communicate with one another while still maintaining one’s normal schedule.

Objectives:
- Participants can clearly define values that inspire their leadership style
- Participants have a clear understanding of the skills that are necessary to become a good leader.
- Participants will better understand the relationship between those who lead and those who follow
- Participants will be able to initiate their own individual leadership style by the conclusion of the program.

Materials Needed:
The Leadership Challenge by James Kouzes and Barry Posner 5th Edition

Movies: 12 Angry Men (1957)
Coach Carter (2005)
Apollo 13 (1995)

*Note: The above movies are not required; however, they correlate with a different module and the purpose of watching the movie is to create more dialogue about leadership and how/why people follow certain leaders.*

Assignments:
There are no true assignments within this program, however, there are a series of questions throughout each module to help the mentor and mentee engage in discussions about what it
means to be a leader, what it takes to create a productive leadership environment, and how can good leadership be sustained. Mentors and mentees should ideally address the questions together. The answers to questions should be thought-provoking and meaningful. Also, both the mentor and mentee should consider each module as an opportunity to further grow one’s skill. No one is perfect leader, but one can always be working to improve their leadership skills and styles.

**Evaluation:**

This is a formal leadership program and in order to maintain the professionalism and accountability required throughout this process, both mentor and mentee will be evaluated for their work and contribution toward the program.

**Course Breakdown:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Mentor/Mentee Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module One: Model the Way</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Chapter Two: Clarify Values p. 43</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter Three: Set the Example p. 71</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Discuss:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Name five (5) values that best reflect you as a working professional.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>❖ Are these values known to others?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>❖ Why are these values important to you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>❖ What can leaders glean through living out their values?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ Why is living out values important to those who are in leadership positions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watch: 12 Angry Men (1957)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module Two: Inspire the Shared Vision</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Chapter Four: Envision the Future p. 101</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter Five: Enlist Others p. 127</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Discuss:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>❖ What are your goals? What do you want to accomplish?</td>
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</table>
Learning Objective: Mentors and mentees will utilize the values created in module one and implement those values with the intent to inspire their peers.

- Why are the goals selected things you want to accomplish?
- Are there any projects currently being implemented at the organization? If so, is everyone on board? If not, think of ideas of how to get everyone on board. If there are no current projects, think about the vision of the organization and if people are on board. If people aren’t onboard with the vision, collectively think about how you can get people onboard.
- How important is it to truly listen to others while in a leadership position?
- How can listening encourage people to enlist in the team and/or organization project?
- Think and share professional stories about what is means to accomplish goals.

Watch: Coach Carter (2005)

Read:
- Chapter Six: Search for Opportunities p. 157
- Chapter Seven: Experiment and Take Risks pp.185
- Chapter Eight: Foster Collaboration p. 215
- Chapter Nine: Strengthen Others p.241

Discuss:
- How often are you engaged in what’s new and what’s occurring within your organization?
- How often do you seek out new opportunities?
- Think about the goals created in Module two. How often do you step outside of your comfort zone to accomplish those goals?
- Do you encourage others to step outside of their comfort zone?

Module Three: Challenge the Practice and Enlist Others

Objective: Mentees should create specific goals within this module and aim to accomplish at least one goal by the end of the program.

Learning Objective: Mentors and mentees will utilize the values created in module one and implement those values with the intent to inspire their peers.
MENTORING AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you work to constantly improve yourself?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think about past mistakes. What have you learned from them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenge Yourself: Attempt to learn something new every day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In order for you to accomplish your job, are the resources you need readily available to you? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you take time to learn new things, but teach your coworkers what you’ve learned as well?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you promote the big picture of the team or organization?</td>
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<td>Do you demonstrate confidence at work? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you coach others? If not, are you interested in learning how to coach others?</td>
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Watch: Apollo 13 (1995)

**Module Four: Encourage the Heart**

Objective: Start implementing the leadership skills learned throughout the course of the year. Peers should be able to clearly observe newly acquired skills learned through the course text.

Learning Objective: Mentors and Mentees, as well as their peers, will be able to observe the leadership skills developed within the year from the mentoring program. Developed and/or improved skills include better day-to-day engagement with peers, confidence, as well as a mature approach towards working with others within the corporate environment.

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<tr>
<th>Read:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Ten: Recognize Contributions p. 273</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Eleven: Celebrate the Values and Victories p. 301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Twelve: Leadership is Everyone’s Business p. 329</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Discuss:</th>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you let people know you believe in them? Not just through words, but actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you contribute to the work environment? Is it comfortable? Are able to talk to you to give and receive feedback?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Challenge: Take time to truly connect with your team members. Don’t assume you know them, but really connect with them.

Challenge: Ask your teammates what they are doing to make their team successful.

Challenge: Consider planning a team event. Make sure that everyone participates, but also make sure to celebrate everyone’s successes.

Why do you want to be a leader? Why is leadership important to you?


Additional Materials for Review:

- Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead – Sheryl Sandberg
- Credibility - James Kouzes and Barry Posner
- Tuesdays with Morrie – Mitch Albom
Appendix H: Best Practices

Best Practice (For Mentors and Mentees)

I. Are You My Mentor?
   • Mentors can provide advice on career strategies, information and guidance on how to navigate the corporate work structure, provide useful information on how to navigate through corporate potholes, among other things.
   • Sponsors tend to be highly influential within the corporate organization and while sponsors can serve as mentors, typically sponsors can fight for the employee when promotions and career advancements arise within the company.
   • First, evaluate the roles and responsibilities of a mentor and sponsor and decide which role benefits your professional needs best.
   • The strongest mentoring relationships are born out of real connections.

II. The Role of the Mentor (at a glance)
   • Mentoring occurs through example. Mentors should provide encouragement, as well as wisdom to help navigate the often unseen corporate potholes.
   • Mentors can also assist with cleaning up mistakes made by those they are mentoring.
   • The goal of mentoring is to create new relationships, as well as build bridges.

III. The Role of the Mentee (at a glance)
   • Be considerate of your mentor’s time
   • Be Prepared – Take Advantage of minutes either before or after a meeting.
   • Be Proactive
   • Do not be afraid to follow up with your mentor after a meeting or briefing.
   • Avoid complaining
IV. The Benefits of Mentoring

- When mentoring is truly effective both the mentor and mentee can walk away with a sense of accomplishment.

Best Practice (For Mentors and Mentees)

I. Part Two

- To become a credible leader, one must first learn how to understand the deeply held beliefs that drives ones leadership.

- Consider your values, beliefs, and the ethics – Important elements that contribute to the role of leadership.

- Mentors put their share values in practice.

- Leaders take action and create conditions that strengthens everyone’s self-esteem and internal sense of effectiveness

- Mentors also take the time to educate their team and associates on various material. This education in turn allows employees to then exercise their judgment and will offer choices that can assist the mentor.

- Credible leaders take action and create conditions that strengthen everyone’s self-esteem and internal sense of effectiveness

- Leaders encourage their constituents that they will be successful. This encourages assists people in the long run to face perseverance in the face of difficult challenges.

- Mentors create opportunities for people to perform successfully.

- Mentors create safe environments

- Mentors allow for mistake to be made.

- Leaders create an environment in which risk and experimentation and learning are prized and rewarded.

- Leaders allow transparency

- Leaders are capable of receiving feedback – Good and Bad

- Leaders are Responsible
- Credibility is a trait that leaders must earn from their constituents.

### Appendix I: Mentor/Mentee Evaluation

#### Mentoring Program Evaluation

**Mentor/Mentee Performance Review**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Department</td>
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<td>Review Period</td>
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<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>1 = Poor</th>
<th>2 = Fair</th>
<th>3 = Satisfactory</th>
<th>4 = Good</th>
<th>5 = Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Displays and Practices Leadership Values</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>Aims to Inspire His/Her Peers</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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**Overall Rating** (average the rating numbers above)

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<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</td>
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**GOALS**

*(as agreed upon by employee and manager)*
**Verification of Review**

*By signing this form, you confirm that you have discussed this review in detail with your supervisor. Signing this form does not necessarily indicate that you agree with this evaluation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
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