



Good morning. My name is Tracy Olckers and I am with the Women Development program, part of a new structure that falls within the new HR organisation. It is my pleasure to be able to speak to you today on a topic that I am very passionate about and is close to much of the work I am involved in. My current role at Saudi Aramco involves the development Saudi females – together with my team we do that in a number of ways, our most well-known signature program being the Women in Business program which you may have either attended or heard of.

It is also a pleasure to be talking to a mixed audience today – to those of you who constantly ask us, “where is the men in Business” – I have good news for you too. Our Women Development program team is also responsible for coordinating activities in relation to gender diversity.

Outline

- Findings
- Perception
- The Gender Factor
- Relationships
 - Mentor
 - Mentee
- The T.O.A.S.T Approach



From the outset I would like to make it clear – that today you will not be listening to definitions, scientific models of mentorship or the analysis of the Greek Goddess Athena.

I will talk about my findings on what our company offers in terms of mentorship, perceptions, the gender factor and relationships as well as my personal experiences. Final I will leave you with an approach that will hopefully help you in your journey to find your mentor.

Some of you may have attended my colleague Reem Al-Ghanim’s presentation titled “a perspective on mentoring” – this was delivered in March 2013. In her presentation, Reem mentioned one of the benefits of mentorship to the organisation is diversity enhancement. I want to pick up on the “diversity enhancement” part and add a bit more.

I will then wrap up with what I believe in my humble experience are some tips so help you begin more clearly see – where your mentor is.

Findings

- Catalyst (www.catalyst.org)
- Dishwashers
- Heroes



What they have in common :

- ✓ Established programs
- ✓ Appear to be isolated (lack integration)
- ✓ Helpful....a starting point

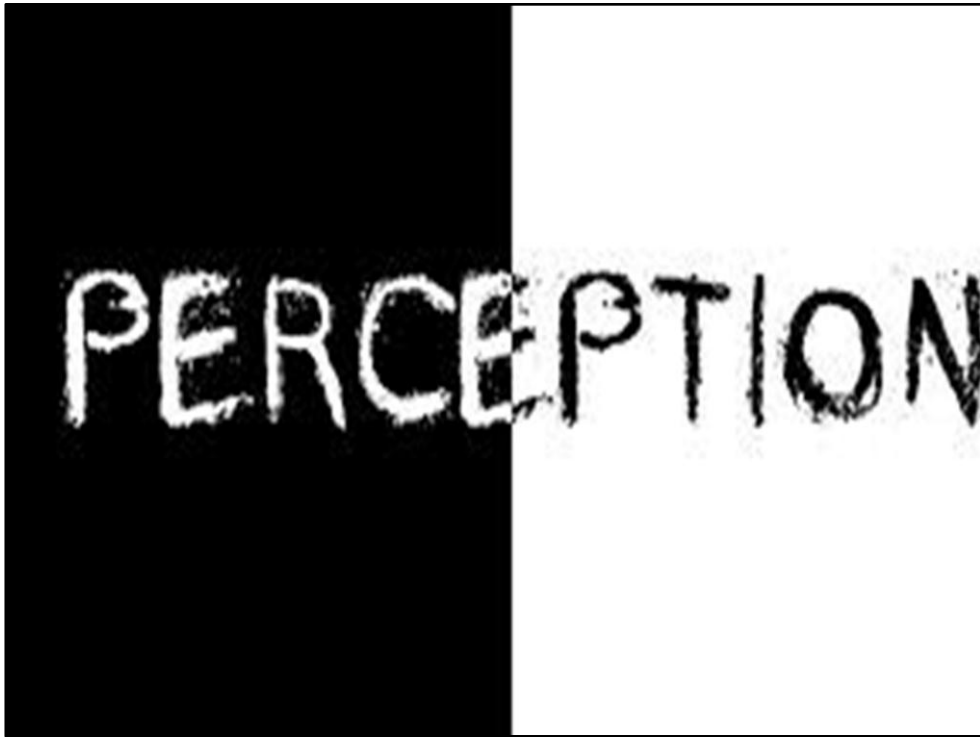


We know that according to a 2009 Catalyst report (the non-profit organisation that focuses on female development) – the one of the key barriers to females advancing in their careers is a lack of mentorship and role models. I will be referring to Catalyst again at the end of my presentation as Saudi Aramco recently joined as a member and your all have access to their research, tools and reports. I continue to be surprise on a monthly basis, in our WiB program class, that only half the class raise their hands when asked if they have a mentor. Having said that, the number has increased over the past 4 years since the program’s inception but still – it is not where it needs to be.

My journey to discovering mentorship in our company lead me to some interesting findings. During my first week of my new role I eagerly nominated myself to attend a mentor certification program. While I was thrilled to find myself in a class, I soon realized that I was part of the **UN-TARGET** audience. **I had signed myself up for a purely technical course.**

Although disillusioned, I did not give up and went on to meet and discover people whom I call the “heroes” of mentorship. Steven Smith, from Project Management. PM adopted the **Perrone-Ambrose Associates program** for their mentoring program. I also met Jeff Mellick, a career counselor from the Career Planning and onboarding selection group (MPDD) who is doing great work on delivering workshops on easy to use practices for mentors.

So although there are programs out there, my personal opinion is that there is a lack of integration – and resolving this is work we still need to do. What I want to focus on, is the work that can be done right here by many of you in this this room. **The mentee.**

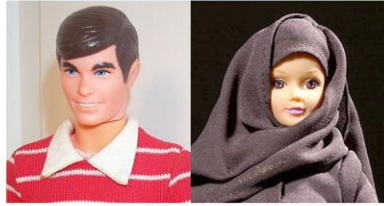


Perceptions play a role in finding a mentor. As you get older your understanding of how important finding a mentor is becomes much more real. I worry that youth do not see how important it is to have mentors as a young age, when starting out your careers.

Another perception I want to talk about is gender.....and explore perceptions when it comes to gender in a mentor relationship.

Mentorship and Gender

- A blended approach
- Inter-gender communication:
 - Connection versus status
 - Asking questions
- Studies are inconsistent:
 - Which gender provides more instrumental and career support?
 - Which gender is characterized by emotional support?
 - Which gender tends to have longer mentor relationships?
- Unsuccessful mentoring partnerships
- Professionalism



I often get asked, does gender impact a mentor relationship. Of course it does! We tend to develop a mentor relationship with people we feel most comfortable with - but does that mean you need to only have one gender type as in a mentor relationship? Of course not. Today there are simply not enough senior females to mentor the growing number of younger females entering the workforce. I suggest a blended approach to mentoring with a combination of both male and female mentors. In WiB we study the work of Deborah Tannen, Professor of Linguistics at the Georgetown University who specialized in inter-gender communication. **We cannot ignore her findings when it comes to mentorship as communications plays such an important role in a mentoring relationship.** Women tend to play on connection and men play on status. A classic example of this is the “devil’s” advocate position males typically take – where as we as women tend to get defensive. Asking questions is another area we find a lot of misunderstanding. If you are a male in this audience who likes to ask for directions, please raise your hand..... (I hope that has proved my point 😊).

Understanding more about how the other gender communicates can help us not to miss out on valuable mentoring opportunities. The studies are inconsistent but there are some generalizations. Which role do you think provides more instrumental and career support? Who provides more emotional support? What about the length of the mentor relationship? I am often saddened to hear when mentor/mentee pairings (whether male-female, female-female or male-male) do not work. I think more time spent on matching could help alleviate this.

One last point on gender – regardless of whether your mentor is a male or female – you need to keep the relationship professional.



So how do you go about finding a mentor?

I want to begin addressing this with a story from Sheryl Sandberg. Sheryl Sandberg is the CFO of Facebook and has grabbed a lot of media attention with her TED Talk in 2010 titled: "What we have too few female leaders". If you have not yet seen it I suggest you take the time to. She went on to write a book called "Lean In" and has devoted an entire chapter to the subject of Mentorship.

In the chapter on Mentorship Sheryl says that her says that finding a mentor these days has become the professional equivalent of finding Prince Charming. Many of us grew up on the Disney fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty, which tells young women that if they just wait for their prince to arrive, they will be whisked away on a white horse to live in a castle happily ever after.

Now young women are told that if they can just find the right mentor, they will be pushed up the ladder and moved out of the cubicle and into a corner office to live happily ever after. I would like to announce, that I have been at Aramco for 14 years and am still in a cubicle.... Seriously - we need to unwind the messages we are sending when we give advice on how to find a mentor " to be assertive, just ask someone to be your mentor". It does not work like that. Many of you in this room will agree with me that the while this is flattering, it is also extremely awkward. So what can you do about it?

The Relationship

- Establish a 2-way relationship
 - Between you and the company
 - Between you and your mentor
- Make it mutually beneficial
- Use every opportunity
- Don't get caught up on the label



***stop thinking “get a mentor and you will excel”,
instead excel....and you will get a mentor”***



You need to focus on the relationship. You cannot depend on others – its up to you. Its up to you not only to establish the mentoring relationship between you and the company (whether you are a PDP, part of a program or informally mentored) but also to establishing the relationship with your mentor.

Make the relationship mutually beneficial and “make you mentor look good”.

Good mentors should be super busy and have lots of pressure and very little time. So what can you do about it? The relationship needs to be mutual – what is in it for me? When a mentee succeeds it make the mentor look good.

Use every opportunity you get to as a building platform to establish a relationship that could mature and evolve into a mentor relationship.

And my last point on relationship is regarding labels. That your mentor does not have to be someone who you are in direct contact with – they could be someone you admire, respect and learn from them by observation.

You may not even realize that someone is being your mentor until after the relationship has ended.

Tips – using the T.O.A.S.T approach

1. Start sooner, don't wait for the perfect moment
2. Find the gender blend that is right for you
3. It's so much more than checking the box
4. They are out there waiting for you
5. Get your pitch sorted out – today!
6. Be clear on what you hope to learn and why it matters to you
7. Learn how to communicate effectively
8. What can you do today and why not get started right here right now?



To wrap up I would like to share the very scientific approach that has taken me years to craft. As with all Aramco acronyms, I realized when preparing for this talk, I need to at least use one. TOAST – is the Tracy Olckers Advice Substantiated over Time.

1. Start sooner, don't wait for the perfect moment
2. Find the blend that is right for you
3. It's so much more than checking the box
4. They are out there waiting for you
5. Get your pitch sorted – today!

If you don't already know, your elevator pitch is your personal introduction in 30-60 seconds. It should tell a person what you do and have an impact. I will never forget a young girl in WiB, let's call her Fatima. When I asked her to introduce herself to me she said... "hi, this is Fatima and I am just a secretary". In that same class I met another woman who said "Good morning, my name is Fatima and I am responsible for the timekeeping, training co-ordination and administration of the 47 employees within our division. I am the central liaison person across our department and I maintain the schedule for our Division Head. Guess what? She too what also "just a secretary"... Which one would you rather mentor? Which one would you rather hire?

6. Be clear on what you hope to learn and why it matters to you.
7. Learn how to communicate effectively
8. What can you do today and why not get started right here right now?

“A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside of yourself....”

So where is my mentor....really?

And finally, regardless of your personal opinion of her, Oprah Winfrey is a mentor to many across the globe, and has probably had the greatest impact on women all over the world.

So I found my first mentor when I was 6. I looked up to her as she was confident, had a sense of adventure, **loved to help others** and was a little mischievous.

Interestingly enough, my mentors are a combination of a cartoon, celebrities, men, women, who I have worked with. My mentor journey is not over – only last year did I find an incredible female mentor in Kenya who has taught me so much in the short time I have known her and helped me to find meaning and purpose in my life.

I would like to end by asking you to take a few moment tonight to job down your list of current mentors and explore ways of finding new mentors. You are also surrounding by potential mentors in this room today – the question is will you will grab the golden opportunity to meet and network with them.

Take every opportunity to look for your mentor, they are all around you. Believe me, there is no one person who knows everything. In every person that you meet in life, there is something that you can learn from them – and if you happen to find them, **my final piece of advice to you is.....TAKE A SELFIE!**



Thank You

Thank you for spending your time with me today and I will now take questions.