

THE AMPLIFY HORSE RACING GUIDE TO MENTORSHIP



Official Mentoring Partner of The HRWS





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GET STARTED!

This guide is a great way to begin learning about pursuing mentorship in the horse racing industry!

1. WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?
2. WAYS TO PURSUE MENTORSHIP
3. MENTEES - VALUE
4. MENTORS - ADVICE
5. CAREER COACHING

ABOUT AMPLIFY HORSE RACING

Amplify Horse Racing is a youth-focused 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to amplifying education, mentorship, and career opportunities for young people in the Thoroughbred horse industry, and is the Official Mentoring Partner of the Horse Racing Women's Summit (HRWS).

This guide was developed by Amplify as a resource to support HRWS members and followers on their own mentorship journeys as mentors, mentees, and the pursuit of personal and professional development.

“Sometimes you need people who see your potential when you can't see it yourself. Having mentors who saw my potential was what kept me going when I was having a hard time getting my first win as a trainer.”

- Jade Cunningham, Racehorse Trainer

WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

Amplify describes mentorship as *“a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people (“mentees”) together with experienced industry professionals (“mentors”) who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing their journey into the Thoroughbred industry.”* Mentors counsel mentees on their career goals, direction and steps toward achievement.

Generally speaking, mentorship is for people of all ages and stages of life or their career. A dictionary definition of Mentorship is *the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor, who is “a trusted counselor or guide.”*



HOW DO MENTORSHIP MATCHES FORM?

Mentorship can take many shapes, from creating a strong partnership with a manager or co-worker to forming a connection with a more experienced peer. Mentoring can occur through a formal program with structured discussions, or a more organic connection that develops over time through mutual trust and shared goals.

Mentorship can, at times, be confused with an internship or working experience. The difference is that mentoring is focused on learning and growth through discussion and relationship-building, as opposed to a practical experience where you learn by doing a job.

The key to any successful mentoring relationship is to be intentional, approaching the relationship with purpose and respect.

WAYS TO PURSUE MENTORSHIP

1. Apply for a program to become a mentor or mentee. Initiatives like the [Amplify Horse Racing Mentorship Program](#) can assess interests and compatibility to match you with someone.
2. Identify an individual you admire professionally. Invite them to have coffee or lunch with you to get to know each other. State your interest in them becoming your mentor, or ask if they'd be willing to meet with you for professional development discussions on a regular basis.
3. Be intentional about asking for guidance in the workplace, or encourage your employer to investigate corporate mentorship or leadership solutions such as [Ten Thousand Coffees](#) or [Proteus International](#).
4. Want to be involved in your community? Search [MENTOR's "How to become a mentor"](#) tool to discover programs in your region.

"It doesn't take much to give back to our sport, and mentoring is one of the most impactful ways to encourage young people to not only be part of racing but to truly invest in it. And I can guarantee that mentoring will be just as impactful for you as a mentor as your mentee, sometimes seeing our world through fresh and excited eyes is just what we all need."

-Jodie Vella-Gregory, Company Vice President



LOOKING FOR A THOROUGHBRED INDUSTRY MENTOR, OR WANT TO BECOME ONE?

The Amplify Horse Racing Mentorship Program launched in 2021, formalizing the process of pairing youth and young adults interested in pursuing a Thoroughbred industry career (mentees) with experienced industry professionals who can offer guidance (mentors). It's the only mentorship program of its kind in the Thoroughbred industry, and is unique among other horse programs for youth.

If you are between the ages of 15-25 and are looking for your first step into the Thoroughbred industry, this program is for you!

Are you a Thoroughbred industry employee with a passion for fostering the next generation of leaders? If so, consider becoming a mentor for Amplify Horse Racing! As a mentor with Amplify, you have the opportunity to make a significant impact by guiding and supporting talented young individuals looking to enter the Thoroughbred industry. By sharing your knowledge, expertise, and network, you can help shape the careers of passionate individuals and contribute to the growth and success of the sport.

MENTEES

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF HAVING A MENTOR?

Guidance – Being able to ask someone for advice without fear of bias or a hidden agenda.

- **Mentee Tip:** If possible, prepare for meetings in advance with specific questions or discussion topics. These will help you remain focused on what you need to cover, and indicates to your mentor that you respect their time.

Feedback – A mentor should be comfortable with providing honest feedback to the mentee. Rather than telling someone what they want to hear, the mentor shares what the mentee needs to hear.

- **Mentee Tip:** Accept feedback – even if it’s difficult to hear – knowing that it’s not personal.

Mutual dialogue – Even in a structured program with a designated “mentor” and “mentee,” mentoring is not a one-way street. Matches should be willing to learn from each other through respectful dialogue.

- **Mentee tip:** Resist sharing firm opinions about a subject before asking questions to better understand your mentor’s perspective, and to clarify your own understanding.

Judgment free – A mentorship provides space between two people to be vulnerable and open when sharing personal thoughts and experiences.

- **Mentee Tip:** Establish early on that discussions with your mentor are private and confidential, unless otherwise stated and agreed.

Connections & references – If your mentor can speak to your goals, character, and work ethic, they will likely be willing to make key introductions or serve as a reference.

- **Mentee Tip:** Avoid making the relationship transactional. A mentorship should balance seeking guidance for personal/professional development with leveraging your mentor’s network for connections.

Learning from experience – Your mentor was once in your shoes, looking to progress in their life or career. Their experiences – both positive and negative – can help you to make informed decisions about your own journey.

- **Mentee Tip:** When faced with a challenge, ask your mentor these questions:
“Have you ever faced a similar scenario?”
“How did you approach it, or what helped you overcome it?”
“Is there anything you would have done differently?”



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MENTORS

ADVICE FOR A SUCCESSFUL MENTORSHIP

Preparation – Formal mentorship programs offer the benefit of mentor training to prepare them for working with their mentee.

- **Mentor Tip:** TED Talks are free and loaded with information. Check out this one by [Kenneth Ortiz](#) about “How to be a Great Mentor” that Amplify shares during its mentor onboarding process.

Accountability – Scheduling meetings with your mentee on a regular basis ensures that you meet consistently, and demonstrates your commitment to the mentoring process.

- **Mentor Tip:** Never leave a meeting with your mentee without scheduling your next call or meeting. The longer the time-lapse, the easier it is to forget to schedule the next call.

Communication – Consistent communication is nearly as important as scheduling meetings. Check in with your mentee regularly to ask for updates on how they are doing.

- **Mentor Tip:** Confirm the form of communication you want to use with your mentee (text messaging, phone calls, emails) to make connecting as easy as possible.

“The support I received during and after my formal mentorship [through Amplify] has been entirely transformational to my personal and professional development... Mentorship has exposed me to various empowering industry professionals and events that have altered the trajectory of my career through the formation of intentional relationships and connections.”

-Paola Castro, University Student

Support – In order to provide adequate guidance and support to your mentee, it’s important to fully understand their goals for the mentorship.

- **Mentor Tip:** Help your mentee develop “SMART Goals,” which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

Boundaries – Even though you want to help your mentee, it’s important to maintain healthy boundaries.

- **Mentor Tip:** Let your mentee know what days or hours you are most likely to be available, and when you will be off the grid.

Openness – Getting someone else to open up and be vulnerable requires you to open up as well.

- **Mentor Tip:** The early stages of a new mentorship can be awkward. Sharing personal stories or challenges can help mentees feel more relaxed and open to sharing about themselves.



CAREER COACHING

Reagan Cannon is an international leadership speaker and coach, with proven tactics and insights from over 20 years of experience at Fortune 15 companies, including Amazon and AT&T. She has delivered keynotes – including headlining the 2023 Horse Racing Women’s Summit – participated in women’s leadership panels, produced a TEDx talk, and conducted development workshops for thousands of people in more than 20 countries.

We’ve asked Reagan to share her expertise in career coaching by answering frequently asked questions women might have about this area of professional and personal development.

Q: What are some similarities and differences between career coaching and mentorship?

A: A coach generally utilizes powerful questions to discover the underlying belief that is causing the undesirable outcome in your career. They know how to dive deep into the behaviors and get to the root causes. Sometimes, they will employ tools like assessments and 360 feedback mechanisms to help aid you in identifying the true cause of a behavior and how it is being perceived in the workplace.

Mentors generally utilize their own experiences and knowledge to teach you a new skill. They are a rich well of best practices and key learnings, often helping you apply these with the confines of a specific company, industry or profession. You should approach a mentor with a set of questions that you want answered on a key challenge or growth opportunity. These relationships can work in tandem. A coach can help you uncover the root cause issue, and a mentor will share their specific guidance in your field.



Q: At what stage of a woman’s career do you recommend she consider career coaching?

A: Career coaching can be used at any stage of your career, but it is most effective when you are trying to solve a specific problem with your performance or are looking for a change.

A coach can help you unpack whether the performance is caused by an underlying belief or a skill gap. Maybe you just received constructive feedback on your year-end performance, or you just went through a promo cycle and found out there is an area of improvement impeding your progress.

It might be easy to jump into fixing the problem, but you might have something under the surface that is actually driving this gap. For example: I have had women tell me they need to “speak up more in meetings and want tips on how to do that.” This could stem from a crippling fear that you might “look stupid” if you speak up. You must overcome this fear before you can successfully implement communication techniques.

A change in your career could include a promotion, job expansion, rotation into a new department, or an org change that is opening up new opportunities. Do you have a plan on how to maximize these opportunities? Knowing how to prepare and capitalize on career advancement opportunities is a great place to engage a career coach so that you are intentional and have a plan.

Q: What questions should a woman ask herself to determine whether she's ready to pursue career coaching?

A: "What do I want to achieve with this engagement?"
"Am I ready to make changes now?"
"Can I commit to the time and the "homework" given in between sessions?"
"What kind of skills and experience am I looking for in a coach?"

Q: What areas of life and leadership for women are most common in career coaching engagements?

A: Far and away, the most common topic for women is confidence. Even the most senior and successful women have an inner voice that tells them to question their abilities. I call this belief the Competence Complex. This is the belief we have to know everything about everything, or we can't be confident about anything. This stops us from speaking up, raising our hands for new assignments, and makes us feel like we never measure up. All of this limits our career advancement and causes anxiety in our jobs.

Another key topic is communication. Important themes in this area include overly politicizing our ideas vs. presenting them with passion + data, not challenging others for fear of social cohesion, not addressing performance issues in an overwhelming desire to be "liked," and general anxiety and "shake voice" when presenting in a meeting.

Q: How can a woman go about locating a career coach?

A: I would always recommend finding a coach who is certified and/or trained in coaching techniques. The best way to find a coach is to get a referral from someone who has had a successful engagement. Ask around to leaders you trust and respect. Many of them have probably had a coach in their career. You can also search databases like the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and even sites like LinkedIn. Every reputable coach will agree to a short chemistry call to make sure that the partnership (it takes both buying in) is a good one and will meet your needs. Come prepared with why you want a coach and why now.

Q: Any other advice?

A: Finding the *right* career coach matters. What works for someone may not work for someone else. Coaches are taught to use their personal intuition and experience in service of their clients. That means that while there are coaching practices and ethical standards to follow, each engagement is highly customized. Work to find a coach who has a style that can unlock your underlying beliefs and help you put them into a plan.

"So many of us get involved in the Thoroughbred industry because of the horse, but our human relationships in this industry are critical. Each of my mentors have become advocates for me in many ways. Anytime I have a question or hit a roadblock, I feel like I have a person who can help me through it, either based on their experience or their ability to connect me with someone else who can help guide me."

-Hallie Hardy, Not-for-Profit Executive Director



FIND AMPLIFY AT
amplifyhorseracing.org



FIND THE HRWS AT
womeninracingsummit.com

