S.P.O.N.S.O.R.

THE SEVEN PILLARS OF STRATEGIC SPONSORSHIP FOR HR & DEI LEADERS. BUILD A SCALEABLE, MEASURABLE SPONSORSHIP CULTURE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP WEBINAR WITH CRISTINA MUNTEAN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2025


WELCOME

WHO AM I?





THE PLAN FOR TODAY

1. **THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS OF IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**
    1. In-house coaching vs. mentoring vs. sponsorship
2. **WHY SPONSORSHIP IS THE MISSING PIECE FOR WOMEN LEADERS?**
3. **THE S.P.O.N.S.O.R. FRAMEWORK FOR TALENT MANAGEMENT PROS**
    1. **S**hift the mindset from mentoring to active sponsorship
    2. **P**air with purpose
    3. **O**rient the sponsors – and sponsorees
    4. **N**ormalize sponsorship behavior
    5. **S**upport the relationship
    6. **O**perationalize and track
    7. **R**einvest in the cycle – sponsor forward.
4. **Q&A AND WRAP UP**





LET'S DIVE IN ☺

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS OF IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

QUO VADIS, COACHING?

1. **In-house coaching programs emerged as the solution to democratize coaching for the many people inside organizations.**
2. **Focus: performance, behavior shift, situational clarity and orientation, burnout prevention etc.**
3. **Currently, in-house coaching programs are impacted by two factors:**
    1. **Resource starvation:** HR and L&D people + managers (aka certified in-house coaches) are exhausted by the endless transformation. Steering the in-house coach population may not be a top priority these days.
    2. **Tech and AI-based coaching platforms** that promise coaching for free.



Essentially, we're assisting to a reinvention of in-house coaching programs to fit the current landscape of shrinking resources, increasing client needs and expectations, and fast technology advances.

QUO VADIS, MENTORING?

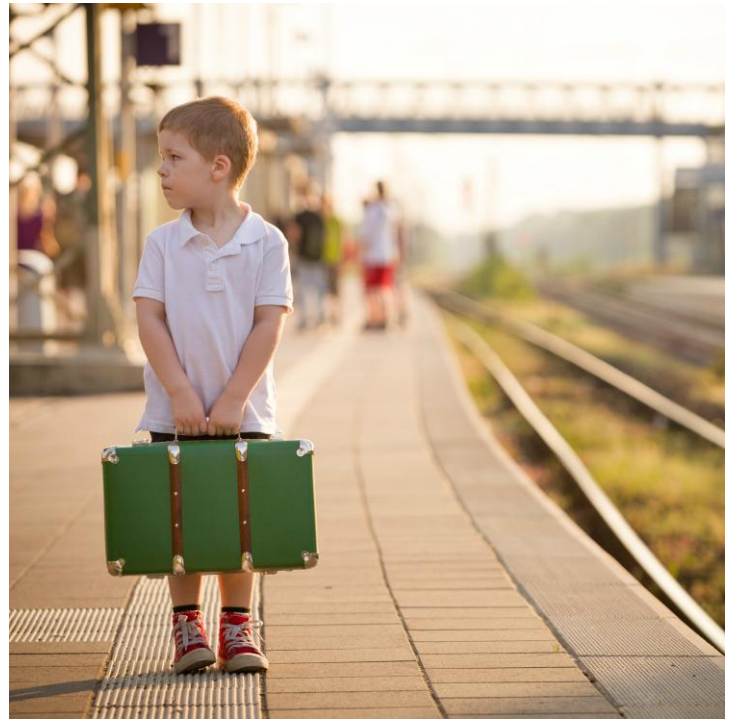
1. Persistent confusion between coaching and mentoring. Both clients and buyers (HR pros) find it hard to identify what they really need from the very beginning.
2. Deceitful easy access. Still too many organizations and companies rush to call people mentors simply because of their professional experience + appetite for quick purpose and social prestige.
3. Massive lack of professional mentor training on strategic mentoring competencies:
    1. Transformative listening.
    2. Asking great questions.
    3. Storytelling for impactful knowledge transfer purposes.
    4. Role modeling etc.
4. In-house mentoring programs are the solution to the crisis of loneliness, burnout, disengagement, and disconnection at work: traditional mentoring, reverse mentoring etc.
5. Currently, in-house mentoring programs need to address:
    1. The gap between pretense and reality – through professional mentor and mentee training.
    2. The emergence and usefulness of tech and AI-based mentoring matching platforms.



Essentially, we're (hopefully) assisting to a maturing of in-house mentoring programs through more focus on professional education, proper matching and tracking, and adaptation to the shifting needs of both people and organizations.

QUO VADIS, SPONSORSHIP?

1. Sponsorship remains the **poor cousin** of coaching and mentoring, even as more talent management pros start to admit that women are over-mentored and under-sponsored.
2. Most organizations lack:
    1. Official in-house sponsorship programs, and
    2. Concrete sponsorship frameworks to guide people's behavior.



Essentially, in most organizations, sponsorship still occurs automatically, intuitively, and preferentially, without proper support, risk management, or a solid vision for the future.

WHY SPONSORSHIP IS THE MISSING PIECE FOR WOMEN LEADERS?

THE MISSING PIECE

1. May we like it or not, the positions of top influence in organizations are **still held mostly by men**.
2. Very often, these men are **not properly trained** in bias and unconscious belief management. Without clear training and a framework in place, they will reach for intuitive methods of supporting people who look and act like them.
3. Most women admit they are where they are **thanks to male allies**, mentors, and sponsors.
4. We need a **clear definition** for sponsorship behaviors to **eliminate the risks** of innuendo and undesired consequences for both genders.



THE ALLY-TO-SPONSOR PROGRESS LADDER




Q&A

THE S.P.O.N.S.O.R. FRAMEWORK FOR TALENT MANAGEMENT PROS

S: SHIFT THE MINDSET

1. Start by admitting that we need a formal framework for sponsorship in organizations.
2. Shift the mindset from passive advisory and reflection (coaching, mentoring) to proactive advocacy (sponsorship).
3. Define the difference in roles and scope:
    1. In-house coach
    2. In-house mentor
    3. In-house sponsor: speaks your name in jet rooms, stakes their reputation for your rise.
4. Embed the distinctions in your leadership culture.



P: PAIR WITH PURPOSE

1. Sponsorship isn't random – it's intentional, strategic, and aligned with real business needs.
2. Identify high-potential individuals from underrepresented groups and connect them with decision-makers ready to sponsor.
3. Create an intentional matching process, not an informal *"you'll figure it out"* recommendation.
4. Observe and manage the emergence of the sponsorship relationship.
5. **REMEMBER:** In sponsorship, you're running the long game.



COACHING



MENTORING



SPONSORSHIP



O: ORIENT THE SPONSORS

1. People don't know how to sponsor automatically. Many senior leaders avoid sponsorship because they are afraid of backlash, reputational risks, favoritism accusations, or overstepping.
2. That's precisely why you need to provide a clear:
    1. Sponsorship framework that is shared with the whole organization. This framework should be comprehensive: What to do, what to avoid, when to ask for support etc.
    2. Robust sponsor and sponsoree training.
    3. Transparent sharing of the sponsor-sponsoree pairs, to take away the risk of projections, gossip, and reputational impact.
3. Sponsor and sponsoree training should include:
    1. Clear definition of role and expectations from both sides.
    2. Clear definition of objectives and milestones: How will success look like?
    3. Clear definition of metrics: Visibility opportunities, proactive career support etc.



N: NORMALIZE SPONSORSHIP BEHAVIORS

1. Sponsorship should **never feel like favoritism** - and you should never let your sponsors face unnecessary leadership or reputational risks on their own.
2. Be very clear and transparent about the existence of your sponsorship framework across your entire organization. Make sure everyone understands that sponsorship is firmly grounded in **measurable potential + performance.**
3. Craft a *Sponsorship Behavior Scorecard*. This can include observable and measurable actions: advocating, nominating, connecting etc.
4. Embed sponsorship in leadership behaviors:
    1. *Part of being a great leader here is opening doors for others.*
5. Cut gossip and innuendo in the bud:
    1. Be merciless with gossip and inappropriate humor.
6. **Recognize and reward** great sponsorship publicly.



S: SUPPORT THE RELATIONSHIP

1. Remember: **Sponsorship is an ultra-marathon.** Everyone has skin in the game, and everyone should play the long game.
2. Sponsorship is also a dynamic, evolving relationship.
3. After proper orientation and formal training, provide journey mapping milestones:
    1. Resources
    2. Check-ins
    3. Coaching and mentoring for both sides so they can continue deepening the human relationship.
4. Relationship risks: Fear of backlash, disappointment, loss of trust, impostor syndrome and feeling not good enough for the expectations etc.
5. Regular check-ins will help you sniff potential relationship degradation from afar and counter-act it with proper interventions.



O: OPERATIONALIZE AND TRACK

1. By now, sponsorship might feel like a lot of work.
2. That's why you need proper, robust process mapping and backend tools to master your own agenda, time, and priorities.
3. Craft rules of engagement between the sponsorship pair and you as well.
4. Track the process:
    1. Potential / talent identification.
    2. Sponsor / sponsoree training. This can be a milestone before the actual match.
    3. Sponsorship matching.
    4. Orientation and onboarding.
    5. Relationship management + milestone tracking (promotion rate, retention rate, internal visibility, project stretch assignments etc.)
    6. Formal closure and next steps.
5. Use AI, peer support, and external advisory to validate and refine your processes and approach.
6. REMEMBER: You are the sponsor of the sponsorship program. Behave accordingly.



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R: REPURPOSE AND REINVEST IN THE CYCLE

1. Don't let your sponsorship program or matchings be a one-off affair.
2. **Build your pipeline** of sponsors and sponsorees before you need to match them.
3. Encourage sponsored people to:
    1. Share their story +
    2. Sponsor forward when they rise: **From recipient to role model and sponsor.**





"Coaching develops people. Mentoring advises people. But sponsorship *moves* people — into rooms, into stretch roles, into influence. If we want to accelerate equity, we need to **normalize and operationalize *movement*.**"

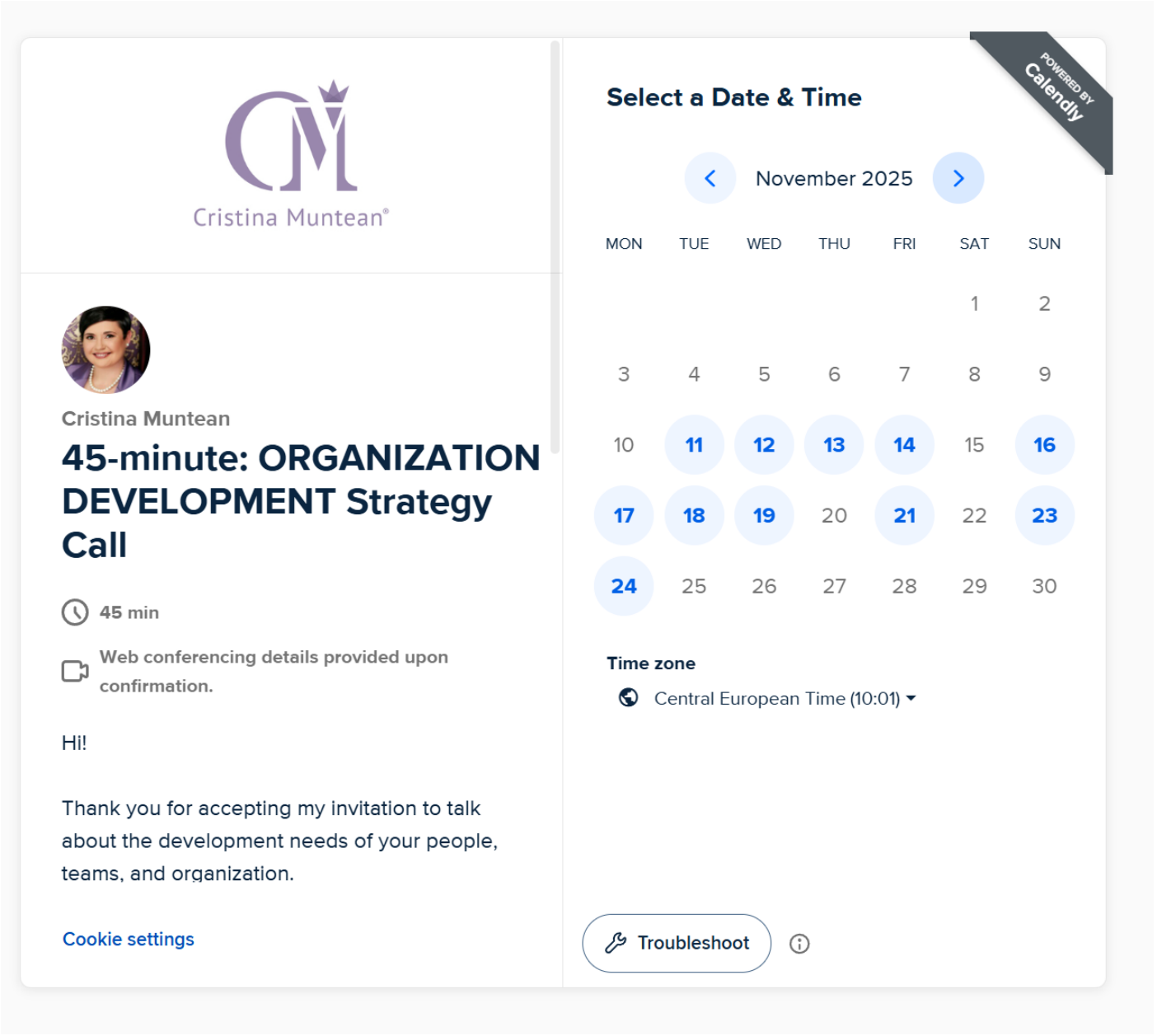

Q&A

MY CORPORATE PROPOSAL:

1. Let's review your in-house people development programs together and let's explore if sponsorship is the right next step in people development for you.
2. **EXCEPTIONAL BONUS:**
    1. One FREE 60-minute strategy session in January. NO STRINGS ATTACHED.
3. **BEYOND JANUARY 2026:**
    1. Proven, experience-backed **advisory**:
        1. 5,000+ hours of individual coaching and mentoring
        2. ICF and EMCC-certified practitioner.
        3. Former member of the EMCC Global Center of Excellence in Mentoring.
    2. In-house coach / mentor / sponsor **training**.
    3. **Ongoing support** for the HR / L&D team with program set-up, operationalization, monitoring, and measurement.
4. **BOOK AN EXPLORATORY CALL BEFORE THE END OF 2025:**
    1. https://calendly.com/cristinamuntean/45-minute-organization-development-strategy-call



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Q&A

YOUR KEY TAKE AWAY:

A. 60 seconds: please share with us:
   A. Your main take-away from today's webinar.
   B. One concrete step that you commit to take right away to make your in-house programs more effective / bring sponsorship higher on your talent acceleration agenda ☺.



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP WEBINAR
WITH CRISTINA MUNTEAN



C.L.E.A.R.

THE MENTAL CLARITY FRAMEWORK FOR SMARTER DECISIONS, STRONGER LEADERSHIP, AND CAREER GROWTH IN 2026 AND BEYOND

WHEN & WHERE: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 (17.00 – 18.00 CET) on Zoom. Save your seat now to secure your dose of inspiration, insights, and strategic leadership and career management executive support.

REGISTRATION: www.cristinamuntean.com/events

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QUO VADIS, L&D?

WHAT'S BROKEN, WHAT'S EMERGING, AND WHAT'S NEXT IN EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN 2026 AND BEYOND

WHEN AND WHERE: Thursday, November 20, 2025 (12.00 – 13.00 CET) on Zoom. Save your seat now to secure your dose of HR inspiration, L&D insights, and strategic leadership and career management executive support.

REGISTRATION: www.vornica.com/events/

THANK YOU!



cm@cristinamuntean.com
Cristina.muntean@vornica.com
+420 776 574 925
www.cristinamuntean.com
www.vornica.com