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# Top 5 Summer Tips: Finding and Learning from Mentors

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This practice note outlines five practical tips you can use as a summer associate to help you benefit from mentors. This summer will be a learning experience for you, just as surely as your classes in law school have been. Part of that learning will revolve around your substantive work, and part will concern law firm culture and your potential role in it. No one is better suited to help you with all aspects of your learning curve than a mentor (both in your summer clerkship and when you become a permanent associate). The following tips will help you find and learn from mentors during your legal career, beginning this summer.

## **1. In addition to any formal mentors assigned to you, seek out informal mentoring relationships.**

At Orrick, both at the summer associate level and at the associate level, we spend a good deal of time identifying mentors that we think will “click” with a particular summer associate or junior associate. When you are new to your

firm, the most obvious sources of advice will likely be any formal mentors that have been assigned to you. However, you will quickly develop relationships with other partners and associates at the firm, and some of these will undoubtedly develop into your strongest relationships over the course of the summer. Whether formally assigned or developed organically, you will be more comfortable asking questions of, or sharing successes, challenges, and concerns with, those mentors with whom you have formed solid bonds. Do not feel like you are confined to your firm’s formal mentoring program.



## 2. Ask for advice in identifying mentors.

Like most things you will face as a summer associate, you will benefit from the advice of those who have come before you when you are seeking to identify mentors. Some of the most natural relationships (mentoring and otherwise) that you will form during the summer program will be with junior associates. In addition to providing their own tips and advice for navigating your summer, junior associates can identify more senior associates or partners who have been particularly impactful on their own development. Do not hesitate to ask for recommendations—and for introductions.

## 3. Different mentors will have different strengths and the ability to offer different types of guidance.

As mentioned above, you will benefit from establishing a number of mentoring relationships, both formal and informal. Based on seniority, practice group, or otherwise, each mentor will bring a different perspective, and some may be better equipped to offer advice on certain aspects of your fledgling career at the firm than others. One mentor may be great at providing hands-on guidance on the technical aspects of practicing law, while another may be particularly motivated and “in the loop.” Whether you need help on how to handle the substantive legal components of an assignment, how to work with a particular lawyer at the firm, or how to approach a client meeting or a firm social gathering, consider your options and know that there is no harm in asking multiple mentors. You may not find a one-stop-shop for advice, and that is fine.

## 4. Be brave and ask mentors for feedback on your work.

Mentors are critically important to learning the ropes at a firm. You build a good reputation based on the quality of your work, and mentors can be consequential in this regard. They can pave the way to understanding a work assignment—both the particulars and the priority. After establishing a rapport with your mentor, be deliberate about soliciting specific feedback on assignments before you turn them in and be open to constructive feedback and ways to improve your work product.



## 5. Cultivate and evaluate your mentoring relationships.

Mentoring relationships are just that—relationships—and like all relationships, they require work from both parties to maximize the relationship’s potential. Be open to critical assessment of (i) what benefits you are receiving from the relationship and (ii) what you are doing, or could be doing, to drive or cultivate it. Sometimes formal, assigned mentors and mentees are matched up but, in the end, prove to be ineffective or just not the right fit. When the relationship is not working, after well-intentioned effort over time, it might be fair to move on and seek out another mentor, whether formal or informal.



**Robert Moyle**  
**Partner, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP**

Robert Moyle is a partner in Orrick's New York office and a member of the firm's Structured Finance Group. Rob's practice focuses on securitization, public offerings and private placements, as well as other types of asset financings and sales.

Rob has experience with a wide variety of asset classes, including credit and charge card receivables, auto loans and leases, dealer floorplan receivables, consumer and small business loans, student loans, tender option bonds and residential mortgages. He represents a variety of market participants, including issuers, sponsors, underwriters, placement and remarketing agents, lenders, borrowers and liquidity providers. Rob also advises clients on the application of securities laws and other financial industry regulations, including Regulation AB II and the rules and regulations promulgated under the Dodd-Frank Act.

Rob joined Orrick in 2005. He serves as Hiring Partner in the New York Office and is a member of the firm's Professional Development Committee.



**Joi Bourgeois**  
**Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP**

Joi Bourgeois leads Orrick's efforts to promote diverse and women lawyers to leadership in our firm and our profession. She works directly with the firm's clients who share our commitment to diversity.

She provides coaching to our lawyers to help them advance. She consults with the firm's practice and office leadership in pursuing their teams' diversity goals, including recruitment and sponsorship at all levels. In addition, she helps to introduce innovative programs that foster a stronger sense of community among diverse and women lawyers at Orrick and among our clients.

Joi brings to the role 17 years of experience as a professional coach, coupled with the perspective of a former practicing lawyer. As a partner in the talent development firm Greiner Consulting Group, she has coached 1,500+ attorneys at all levels. She has deep knowledge of the unique opportunities and challenges women, ethnically diverse and LGBTQ attorneys encounter in developing relationships with clients and sponsors. She practiced corporate law at predecessor firms to Clifford Chance and Richards, Kibbe & Orbe. She is sought after as a speaker by law schools and professional organizations, including as a driver of diversity initiatives and programming at the New York City Bar Association.

A graduate of New York University Law School and Northwestern University, Joi speaks French fluently and lives in Westchester and Fairfield Counties with her partner, her two athletic sons and a Pekingese and Pitt Bull.

