

A Personal Advisory Board Can Support Career Growth

This month, I'd like to pivot from the usual technical and policy content to focus on leadership development. A particular practice that many tout as essential to their career advancement is developing and nurturing your own personal advisory board, or cabinet. A personal advisory board is a limited set of people to whom you turn for career and personal advice. Ideally, your board contains a mix of people who play distinct roles in your professional growth.

The representation on your board should include a wide range of individuals. Having gender, racial, and ethnic diversity in your cabinet increases the potential to avoid blind spots when facing difficult leadership decisions. In addition, peer advisors can be a source of encouragement, inspiration, and collaboration during both good and challenging times.

I also recommend finding a reverse mentor – one, perhaps younger than you, who can help you understand the perspectives of those who are newer to the workforce and might be more apt to confront status quo thinking. Likewise, seeking out a few subject matter experts will educate you in areas of transit where you hope to grow. Lastly, identify people that journalist Elaine Welteroth calls “digital mentors” – people you can follow, study, and be inspired by through their online presence, but may never even meet.

Professional organizations like UITP play a vital role in helping you meet and build relationships with people who could ultimately serve on your personal advisory board. In an era where collaboration and community are more vital than ever, a personal advisory board is a powerful tool for success that can help everyone gain the insights they need to succeed – and stay – in this increasingly challenging industry.



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