Relationship capital in the form of sponsorship and mentorship plays a critical role in the development and success of both today’s leaders and tomorrow’s. As an emerging or established professionals how important is it to actually have relationship capital?

This session looks candidly at the paths to leadership of two established landscape architects and how relationship capital has been key to their personal growth and goal achievement. A moderated discussion continues the topic with emphasis on their roles as current mentors and sponsors.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Examine the importance of professional relationships, mentors, and sponsors
- Gain knowledge on how to cultivate and expand professional relationships
- Promote mentoring and sponsorship within the profession
- Explore successful mentor and sponsor models

**PRESENTATION OUTLINE**

I. Introduction: Context, challenges, assumptions, and objectives  
   a. Relationship capital, mentorship, and sponsorship defined  
   b. Assumptions and challenges of the climb  
      i. Leadership Statistics  
   c. Panelist background and introduction  

II. The Leadership Climb – Mark Dawson  
   a. Critical career milestones  
   b. Setbacks  
   c. Benefits of relationship capital  
   d. Becoming the mentor/sponsor  

III. The Leadership Climb – Mark A. Focht  
   a. Critical career milestones  
   b. Setbacks  
   c. Benefits of relationship capital  
   d. Becoming the mentor/sponsor  

IV. Moderated Discussion/ Q&A

**MODERATOR**

**DIANA FERNANDEZ, ASLA**  
Diana is a landscape architect at Sasaki Associates, and the chair of the ASLA Emerging Professionals Committee. Diana’s work ranges from public parks and plazas to private university work. She brings a passion for creative placemaking, community engagement, and sustainable urban design. Diana holds a bachelor’s degree from Temple University, and has served as a guest critic and lecturer for Pennsylvania State University and Temple University. Diana was the recipient of four ASLA awards and has been recognized numerous times for exceptional leadership.
PRESENTERS

MARK A. FOCHT, PLA, FASLA
As First Deputy Commissioner for Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR), Mr. Focht is responsible for operations, maintenance, planning, capital, urban forestry, ecosystem management and security for a 10,300 acre system comprised of 131 parks, 151 recreation centers and playgrounds, and 71 outdoor swimming pools. Mr. Focht holds Bachelor and Master’s degrees in landscape architecture from Penn State and the University of Massachusetts and is a PA licensed landscape architect. Mr. Focht was inducted as a Fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects in October 2008, served as the Society’s Vice-President for Communications in 2010/11, President in 2014 and is currently Immediate Past-President.

MARK DAWSON, PLA, FASLA
As head of the landscape architecture and site practice at Sasaki Associates, Mark is a member of the firm’s Executive Committee. He also helps drive the strategic direction of the urban public market practice within the Urban Studio. Mark views the cities in which he works as vital and living ecosystems. By considering and synthesizing the complexities of social, economic, environmental, and cultural influences, he creates coherent, enduring, sustainable designs. As a part of his work, Mark educates communities about the importance of public spaces and how their ownership and involvement ensures environmental and social sustainability and economic revitalization.

RESOURCES

- Book - Author: David Nour - “Relationship Economics” - Gain knowledge on how to cultivate and expand professional relationships