

A Very Impressive Mentoring Program

By [Michael D. Short](#) on March 14, 2019

Last week I experienced a mentoring program that will have a major impact on the legal profession in Mexico and should be replicated elsewhere (which is why I'm writing about it). I had the privilege and honor of addressing two new groups of assigned mentors/mentees in Mexico at the invitation of [Abogadas MX](#). My job was to tell the parties how important and life-changing these relationships can be for both the mentee and the mentor, based on my own experiences and travels, and to give them a few thoughts on their new relationships as they start out.

Per their website, *"We are a network of lawyers focused on the professional development and leadership of women lawyers in Mexico to boost their growth. We firmly believe that by implementing professional development programs for lawyers, we will also help the growth of the institutions where they work and the development of the country."* They have their sights set appropriately high and they take their work very seriously. Unlike most mentor/mentee programs that create matches within a law firm or a company, Abogadas MX matches young lawyers from law firms with General Counsel/senior lawyers from corporations, universities, or other relevant organizations. As such, the immediate networking opportunities afforded the mentees in this program – via meeting and knowing each other as peers, having well-placed mentors outside of their own organizations, and meeting other mentors – is truly noteworthy.

Their process for matching mentors with mentees is also noteworthy. This is not a "pick two names out of two hats" program. The board members and staff spend a great deal of time on each assignment and have a rationale and back story to justify each pairing.

Interestingly, while the mission statement, above, states a commitment to women lawyers, the program has naturally drawn interest from men – as both mentors and mentees. Abogadas MX welcomes them into both roles but two men are never paired together.

While I sincerely hope I helped the program in some small way, there was a nice moment of self-reflection in this for me. My comments became a trip down my memory lane because I shared some stories about my mentors and coaches (another distinction we talked about). I also shared with the group the fact that, but for certain people taking a personal interest in me, guiding me, and opening doors for me, my career would have gone in a different direction and Abogadas MX would have had a different speaker last week.

I invite you to check out this program and replicate it wherever you are if you don't have something similar in place. The advancement of women in the legal profession requires focused attention, like this program, everywhere.