

ASCEND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

October 2026

AGENDA TEMPLATE

Session Theme: Strategic Influence & Executive Presence

Welcome & Check-In

Workshop debrief: Peer Problem-Solving Session (September)

- What challenge was brought to the group — and what solutions came out of it?
- Did anything from that conversation spark new ideas for your own leadership?
- Is there something you heard from peers that you want to try or apply?

- **Both:** Brief personal catch-up and progress check.
- Review any action items from your September meeting.
- **Mentee:** Check in on the networking goal from last month — what happened?

Strategic Influence

- **Mentor:** Share your experience building influence — what worked, what did not, and what you wish you had known earlier.
- Discuss the difference between positional authority and earned influence.
- **Mentee:** Reflect on where you currently have influence — and where you want to grow it.
- **Both:** Explore strategies for influencing up, across, and within teams.

Executive Presence

- Discuss what executive presence looks like in a front-line leadership role.
- **Mentor:** Share one piece of advice on presence you wish you had received earlier in your career.
- **Mentee:** Identify one specific area of presence to focus on before the program closes.
- **Both:** Practice — role-play a high-stakes conversation or moment where presence matters.

Program Reflection: Looking Back & Forward

- **Both:** Review the mentee's ASCEND goal — how much progress has been made?
- Celebrate wins, however small.
- Identify any remaining steps to take before the program closes in November.

Next Steps & Scheduling

- **Both:** Agree on the date and time for your November meeting (before the Closing Session).
- **Both:** Mark your calendars — Closing Session & Graduation, Nov 19, 10–11am EST.
- **Mentee:** Come to the Closing Session prepared to share one leadership insight from the program.

Scenario Practice

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You have a strong idea for a process improvement that would benefit your team, but the decision-maker is skeptical and has pushed back twice already. You have no formal authority over the outcome.

Walk through this together:

- How do you build the case without it feeling like a power struggle?
- Who else could you bring in to support or validate the idea?
- What would you do differently in your next conversation to move this forward?

