

✦ A FABULIZ SOLUTION

Mano a Mano Mentorship Program

Building Diverse Leadership Pipelines Through Structured Mentorship

A three-year case study demonstrating how strategic program architecture, multi-modal learning design, and Train-the-Trainer sustainability models can scale negotiations training from pilot to global deployment while maintaining 92% effectiveness and driving measurable business compliance improvements.

30%

Promotion Rate
(8 of 28 mentees)

94%

Favorable
Experience Rating

100+

Employees Impacted
Across 3 Years

ORGANIZATION

Amazon Stores Learning & Development

MY ROLE

Sr. Program Manager, Worldwide Negotiations Training

PROGRAM DURATION

October 2020 – August 2025

SCOPE

L4-L7 Vendor Managers, Global Consumer Organization

The Challenge

The Problem: Amazon's rapid global expansion required scalable negotiations training for 4,000+ Vendor Managers with varying skill levels (L4-L7) across diverse cultural markets. The organization needed to maintain quality and drive measurable business impact while keeping North America sustainable and scaling to worldwide deployment – all during a global pandemic transition from virtual to in-person delivery.

Specific Challenges:

- No formal structure for matching mentors and mentees based on development needs
- Lack of accountability mechanisms to ensure meaningful engagement
- No measurement framework to track program effectiveness or career outcomes
- Limited resources for program coordination and participation support
- Need to balance individual development with organizational talent pipeline goals
- Desire to scale beyond HOLA to other Employee Resource Groups

Business Context: As VP of the Hispanic Employee Resourced Group (HOLA), I partnered with senior leadership to revitalize this program as Mano a Mano 2.0 – a comprehensive, measurable approach to developing diverse talent with clear promotion outcomes.

My Approach: Design Thinking Meets People-Centered Solutions

The FabuLiz Philosophy: I believe mentorship programs fail when they are either too rigid (killing authentic connection) or too loose (producing no results). The magic happens when you combine *strategic structure* with *human flexibility* – creating a framework that guides without constraining and measures without micromanaging.

Phase 1: Empathise & Define

I started by understanding why the original program was so beloved and what had been missing:

- **Interviewed past participants** to understand what made their experience transformative.
- **Surveyed potential mentees** about their development goals and needs
- **Consulted with Senior Leaders** about organizational talent needs
- **Researched best practices** in informal mentorship program design
- **Partnered with CIMA** (internal measurement team) for evaluation framework

Phase 2: Ideate & Prototype (2015 Launch)

- **Strategic Matching Process:** Created mentor profiles and mentee applications with leader approval, then used selection committee to create matches based on skills, goals, and experiences (not just availability)
- **Structured Timeline:** 6-month commitment with clear milestones and touchpoints
- **Kick-off Event:** Separate orientations for mentors and mentees to set expectations, followed by networking reception for matches to meet in person
- **Monthly Support:** Email communications with resources, articles, and tips specific to mentor/mentee
- **Mid-Program Check:** Each opportunities for connection and program feedback
- **Celebration & Recognition:** Closing breakfast with gift commemorating participation
- **Measurement:** Surveys at launch, midpoint, and conclusion to track satisfaction and outcomes

"I enjoyed having a mentee and watching them grow and opening new doors for them and myself. It helped me take a step back and look as a leader on what I can do to help others."

-Mentor, 2015 Cohort

Program Evolution: Continuous Improvement Through Listening Mechanisms

2015

Pilot Launch (28 Matches)

- **What worked:** Most participants valued the program and would recommend to others.
- **Participant Feedback:** “I enjoyed that I was paired with the exact kind of mentor I was looking for. He was able to provide feedback and help me achieve my goals.”
- **Opportunities Identified:** Mentors wanted more networking opportunities with each other; needed clearer expectation about program not being a ‘shortcut to promotion’

2016

Enhanced Program (30 Matches + 2 Mentoring Groups = 45 Mentees)

- **Enhancement Based on Feedback:** Added Executive Mentor Panel Q&A for mentors only; created “unveiling” moment at reception; developed alumni referral program; added mentee phone list for peer support
- **New Features:** Speed networking event (month 3); Resume writing workshop (month 4); Goal/MAP work workshop (month 2); Info session for prospective participants
- **Results:** 93% completion rate (42 out of 45); **8 mentees (30% promoted within 6 months)**; 94% favorable experience rating.

2017 -
18

Expanded & Scaled (100+ Participants)

- **Major Evolution:** Program expanded beyond HOLA to include PRIDE and PULSE employee resource groups. Expanding program reach and impact
- **Infrastructure:** Coordinated by company DEI team to support multi-ERG approach
- **Sustainability:** Program framework adopted as template for other affinity groups and other regions.
- **Featured Recognition:** Program highlighted in internal publication for excellence in diverse talent development

Measureable Results & Impact

Career Advancement

- **8 promotions** from 28 mentees in just 6 months
- 4 hourly to new hourly positions
- 3 hourly to salaried promotions
- 1 salaried to senior salaried promotion

Participant Satisfaction

- **94% favorable** experience rating overall
- 93% of mentees positive experience (midpoint)
- 73% mentor's positive experience (midpoint)
- 100% would recommend to others
- 93% program completion rate

Scale & Reach

- **100+ employees** across 3-year period
- 15+ lines of business represented
- Expanded from 1 ERG to multiple affinity groups
- Leaders from front line managers to VP level as mentors

Organizational Impact

- Created visible diverse leadership pipeline
- Template adopted for other resource groups
- Featured in internal publication
- Sustainable framework for ongoing use

"The skills and knowledge learned from my mentor and peers I these past six months will be an experience that I will cherish throughout my personal/professional development."

- Mentee, 2016 Cohort

Key Lessons:

What Makes Mentorship Programs Actually Work

✓ Success Factors

- Strategic matching based on goals, not convenience
- Clear structure with flexibility for authentic relationships
- Ongoing support and resources, not just a kick-off
- Peer learning opportunities beyond the match
- Visible leadership support and participation
- Measurement at multiple points with action on feedback
- Celebration and recognition of participation

↑ Continuous Improvements

- Reduce mid-program survey to simple check-in to protect final response rates
- Provide technical skills training (e.g., outlook) so mentees can be proactive
- Create mentor networking events for peer support
- Have visible program champions a resources
- Set clear expectations upfront (not a promotion shortcut)
- Coordinate centrally when scaling beyond single ERG

The FabuLiz Takeaway: Why This Worked

This program succeeded because it honored a fundamental truth: **People don't fail mentorship – poorly designed mentorship fails people.** By combining strategic structure (clear matching criteria, accountability milestones, measurement) with human flexibility (authentic relationships, peer support, responsive iteration), I created a program that was both fabulous (engaging, meaningful, transformational) and foundational (measurable, scalable, sustainable).