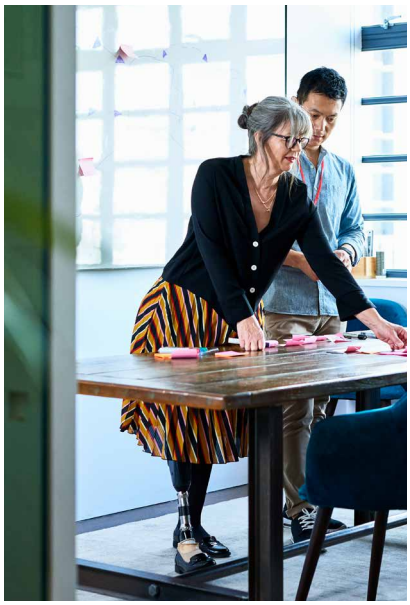
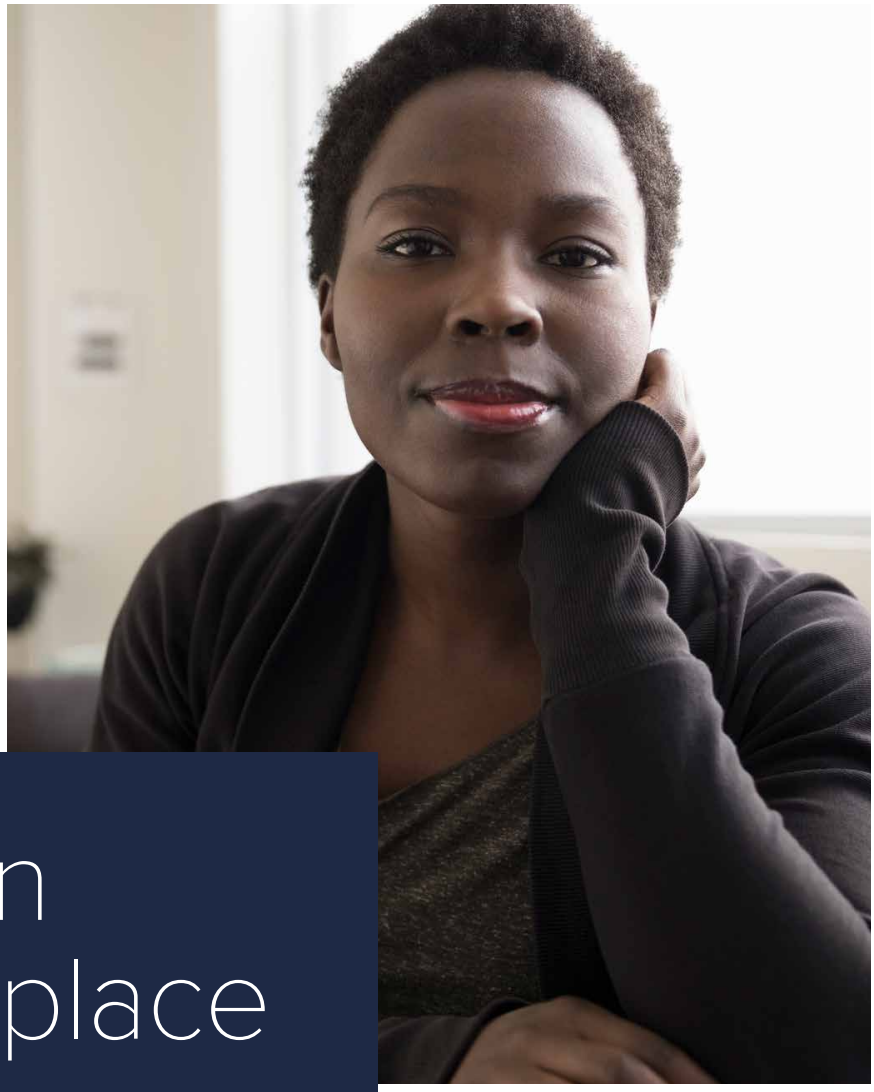
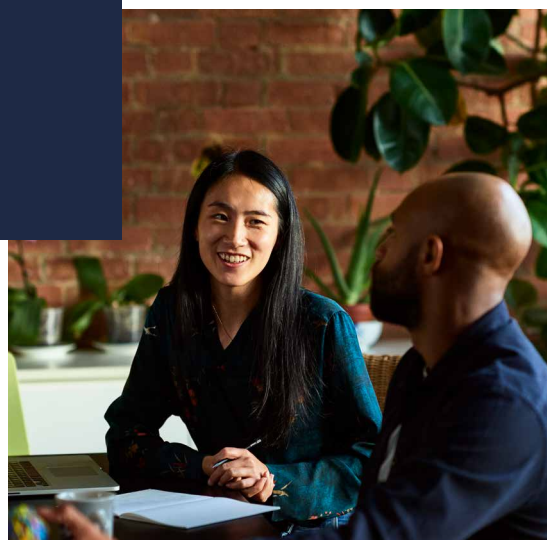
5TH YEAR





Women in the Workplace

2019



LEAN IN

McKinsey & Company

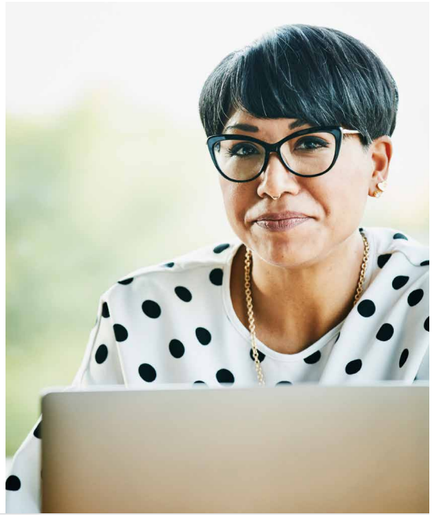
About the study

Women in the Workplace is the largest comprehensive study of the state of women in corporate America. In 2015, McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org launched the study to help companies advance diversity in the workplace. Since then, close to 600 companies have participated in the study, more than a quarter of a million people were surveyed on their workplace experiences. Every year, the number of companies participating in this study has increased.

This year, 329 companies employing more than 13 million people shared their pipeline data or completed a survey of their HR practices. In addition, more than 68,500 employees were surveyed on their workplace experiences, and we interviewed women and men of different races and ethnicities, LGBTQ women and men, and women with disabilities at all levels in their organizations for additional insights.

Our 2019 findings build on our data from the last four years, as well as similar research conducted by McKinsey & Company in 2012.

Sign up for the 2020 study at womenintheworkplace.com.



THE REPORT AT A GLANCE

Women in the Workplace 2019

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Five years in, we see bright spots at senior levels. But companies need to focus their efforts earlier in the pipeline to make real progress.

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INTRODUCTION

Five years in, we see bright spots at senior levels. But companies need to focus their efforts earlier in the pipeline to make real progress.

In the last five years, we've seen more women rise to the top levels of companies. An increasing number of companies are seeing the value of having more women in leadership, and they're proving that they can make progress on gender diversity. This is an important step in the right direction.

Still, women continue to be underrepresented at every level. To change the numbers, companies need to focus where the real problem is. We often talk about the "glass ceiling" that prevents women from reaching senior leadership positions. In reality, the biggest obstacle that women face is much earlier in the pipeline, at the first step up to manager. Fixing this "broken rung" is the key to achieving parity.

The culture of work is equally important. All employees should feel respected and that they have an equal opportunity to grow and advance. Employees care deeply about opportunity and fairness, not only for themselves but for everyone. They want the system to be fair.

Done right, efforts to hire and promote more diverse candidates and create a strong culture reinforce each other. A more diverse workforce will naturally lead to a more inclusive culture. And when a company's culture feels fair and inclusive, women and underrepresented groups are happier and more likely to thrive.

By fostering diversity, building a culture of opportunity and fairness, and focusing their attention on the broken rung, companies can close their gender gaps—and make progress on the road to equality.

SECTION 1

The State of the Pipeline

Based on five years of data from 590 companies employing more than 22 million people, two things are clear:

1. Despite progress at senior levels, women remain significantly underrepresented.
2. A “broken rung” at the step up to manager is the biggest obstacle that women face on the path to leadership.

Despite progress at senior levels, gender parity remains out of reach

Over the past five years, we have seen signs of progress in the representation of women in corporate America. Since 2015, the number of women in senior leadership has grown. This is particularly true in the C-suite, where the representation of women has increased from 17 percent to 21 percent.

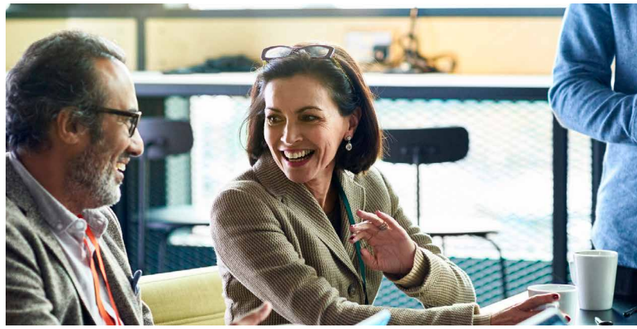
Although this is a step in the right direction, parity remains out of reach. Women—and particularly women of color—are underrepresented at every level.[1] And without fundamental changes early in the pipeline, gains in women's representation will ultimately stall.

Women are staying in the workforce and doing their part. Again this year, women are not leaving their companies at higher rates than men. Moreover, the vast majority of women and men who plan to leave their company intend to stay in the workforce—and less than 2 percent of employees are planning to leave to focus on family. Women are also asking for promotions and negotiating salaries at the same rates as men, and this has been true since 2015.

1 In this study, women of color include Black, Latina, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or mixed-race women. However, due to small sample sizes, reported findings on individual racial/ethnic groups are restricted to Black women, Latinas, and Asian women.

Companies are adding more women to the C-suite. Today, 44 percent of companies have three or more women in their C-suite, up from 29 percent of companies in 2015. Adding even one woman can make a material difference, given the critical role top executives play in shaping the business and culture of their company.

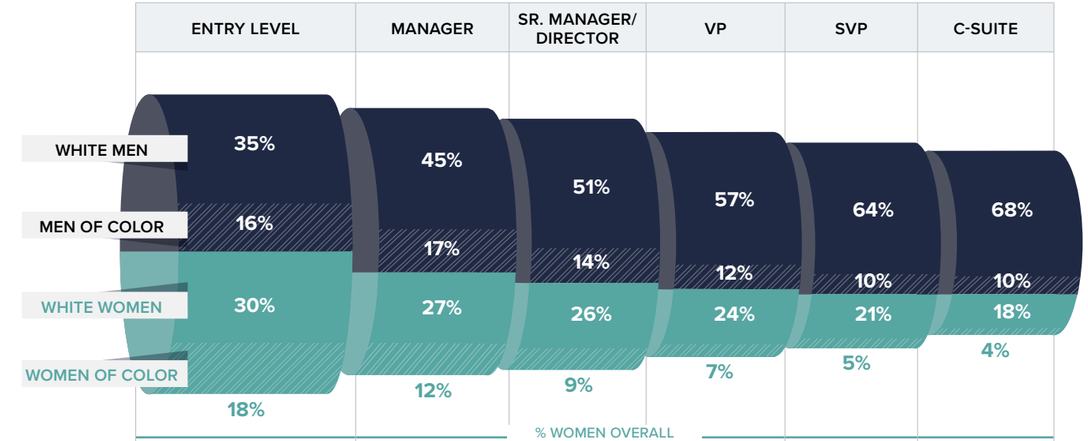
Still, the overall representation of women in the C-suite is far from parity. About 1 in 5 C-suite executives is a woman—and only 1 in 25 C-suite executives is a woman of color.



REPRESENTATION IN THE CORPORATE PIPELINE BY GENDER AND RACE

% OF EMPLOYEES BY LEVEL IN 2019[2]

MEN WOMEN



	ENTRY LEVEL	MANAGER	SR. MANAGER/ DIRECTOR	VP	SVP	C-SUITE
2019	48%	38%	34%	30%	26%	21%
2018	48%	38%	34%	29%	23%	22%
2017	47%	37%	33%	29%	21%	20%
2016	46%	37%	33%	29%	24%	19%
2015	45%	37%	32%	27%	23%	17%
% CHANGE FROM 2015–2019	+6%	+3%	+8%	+9%	+9%	+24%
% POINT CHANGE FROM 2015–2019	+2.6pp	+1.2pp	+2.6pp	+2.4pp	+2.0pp	+4.2pp

2 Due to rounding, representation by race and gender may sum to 101 percent or 99 percent within some levels.

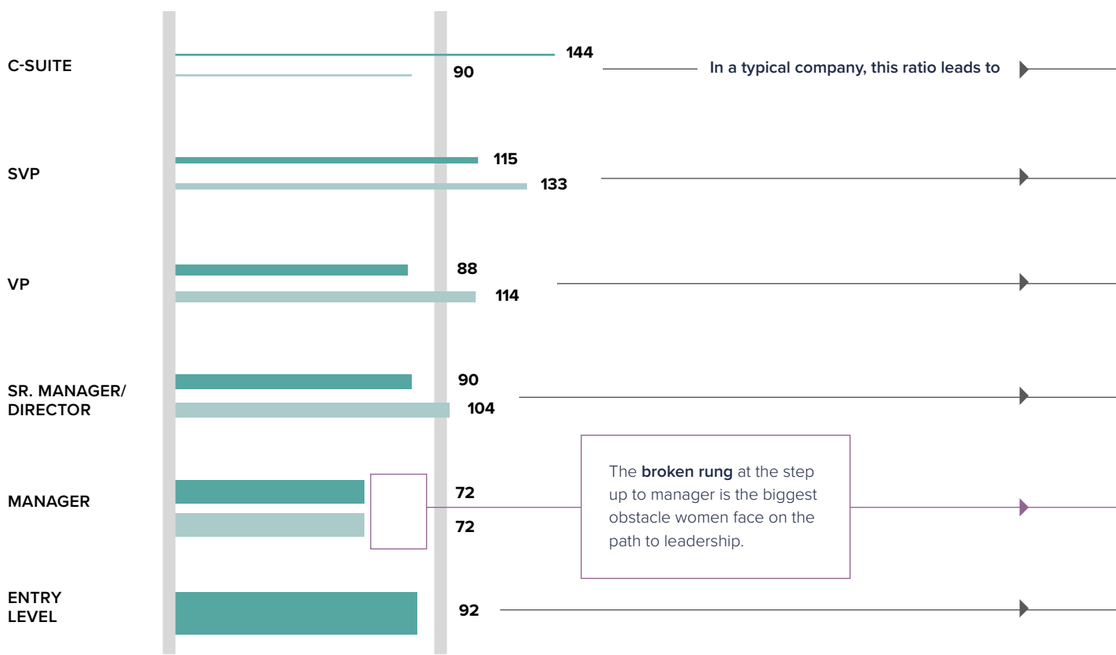
There are signs the glass ceiling is cracking . . .

More women are becoming senior leaders. This is driven by two trends. First, more women are being hired at the director level and above than in past years. Second, senior-level women are being promoted on average at a higher rate than men. Additionally, men at the SVP and C-suite levels are slightly more likely to leave their companies, creating more open positions for women to fill.

THE GLASS CEILING AND THE BROKEN RUNG

The "**glass ceiling**"—a term introduced more than 40 years ago—refers to an invisible, systemic barrier that prevents women from rising to senior leadership. But contrary to popular belief, the glass ceiling is not the biggest obstacle to women's progression. It is actually at the first step up to manager—or the "**broken rung**."

THE CORPORATE LADDER: THE FIRST STEP UP TO MANAGER STANDS OUT AS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE FOR WOMEN



. . . But a broken rung prevents women from reaching the top

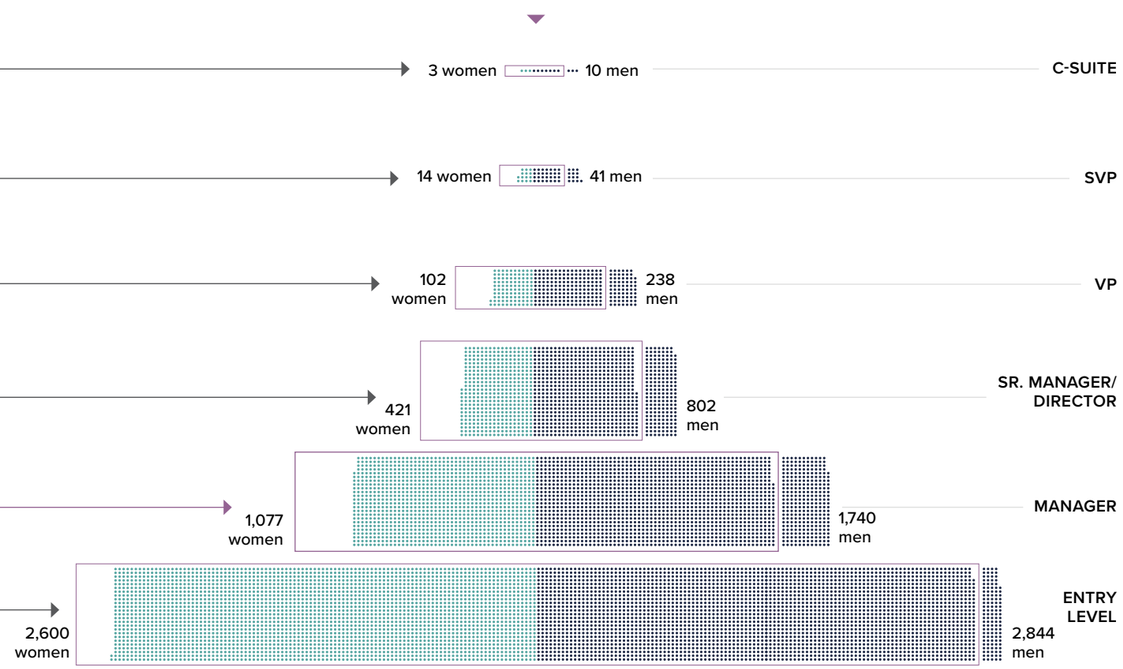
Progress at the top is constrained by a broken rung. The biggest obstacle women face on the path to senior leadership is at the first step up to manager. For every 100 men promoted and hired to manager, only 72 women are promoted and hired. This broken rung results in more women getting stuck at the entry level and fewer women becoming managers. Not surprisingly, men end up holding 62 percent of manager-level positions, while women hold just 38 percent.

This early inequality has a long-term impact on the talent pipeline. Since men significantly outnumber women at the manager level, there are significantly fewer women to hire or promote to senior managers. The number of women decreases at every subsequent level. So even as hiring and promotion rates improve for women at senior levels, women as a whole can never catch up. There are simply too few women to advance.

Black women and Latinas are more likely to be held back by the broken rung. For every 100 entry-level men who are promoted to manager, just 68 Latinas and 58 Black women are promoted. Likewise, for every 100 men hired to manager, 57 Latinas and 64 Black women are hired.

AT THE MANAGER LEVEL, THE GAP IN TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN AND MEN IS THE LARGEST

Each dot represents the number of women and men at each level in a typical company

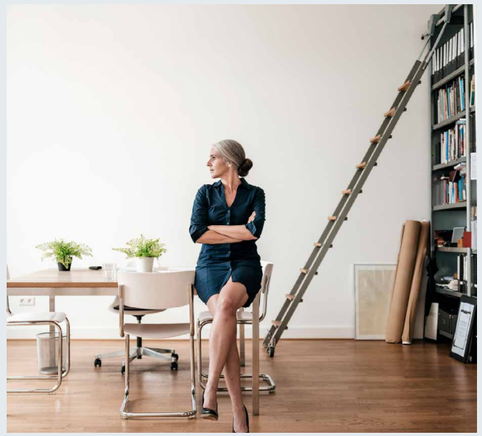


A CLOSER LOOK

The broken rung is an unseen problem

Despite the profound impact of the broken rung on the trajectory of women, both HR leaders and employees underestimate the scope of the problem and its effect on the representation of women at senior levels in their organization. More than half of HR leaders and employees think their company will reach gender parity in leadership over the next 10 years. In reality, we are many decades away from reaching gender parity at the highest ranks—and may never reach it at all.

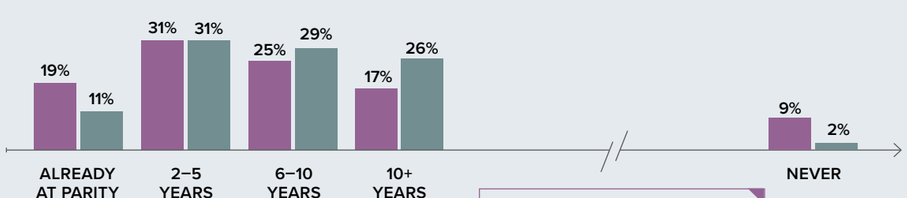
In addition, most people don't fully understand the problem. When asked what the biggest challenges are to getting to equal numbers of women and men in leadership, awareness of the promotion gap at the first step up to manager is low. HR leaders more often point to less access to sponsorship or a lack of qualified women in the pipeline. On the bright side, almost everyone says that women are doing their part: very few HR leaders and employees think women are less willing to do what it takes or are less likely to aspire to positions in management.



Employees are overly optimistic about the state of women. When 1 in 3 managers in their company is a woman, 62% of men and 54% of women think women are well represented at first-level management. Likewise, when 1 in 10 senior leaders in their company is a woman, 44% of men and 22% of women think women are well represented in senior leadership.

PEOPLE ARE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT WHEN THEIR COMPANY WILL REACH PARITY IN LEADERSHIP

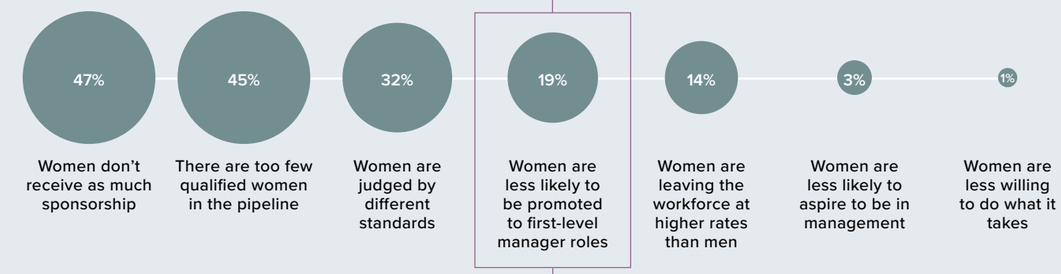
When HR leaders and employees think their company will see 50/50 gender representation at senior levels



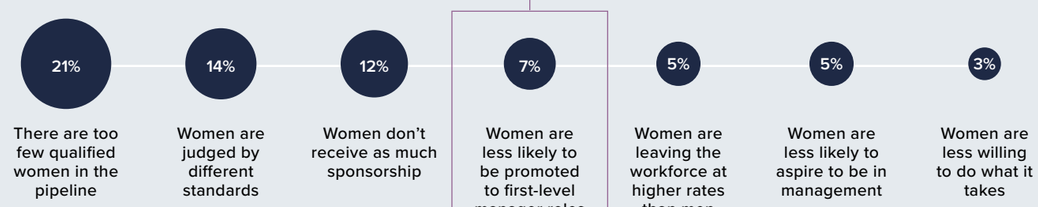
In reality, unless we close the disparities in hiring and promotions that make up the broken rung, we are many decades away from reaching parity, if we reach it at all.

People don't realize the step up to manager—the broken rung—is the biggest challenge to getting equal numbers of women and men into management

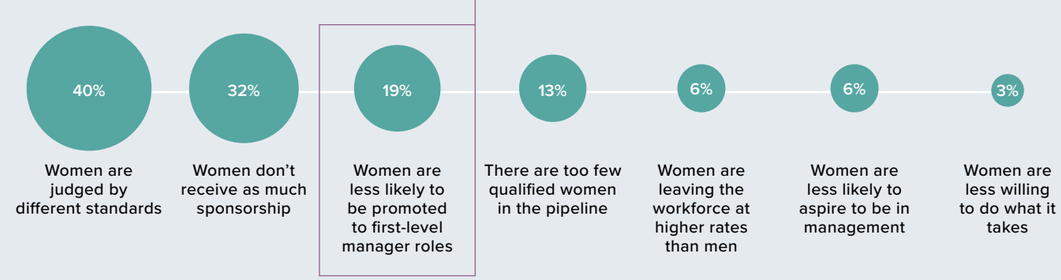
HR leaders say the biggest challenges are . . .



Men say the biggest challenges are . . .

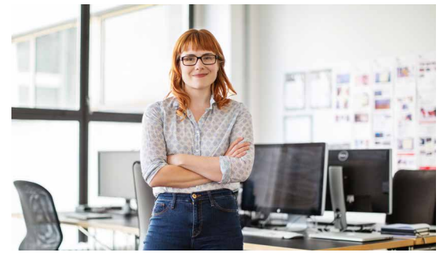


Women say the biggest challenges are . . .



To get to gender parity, companies must fix the broken rung

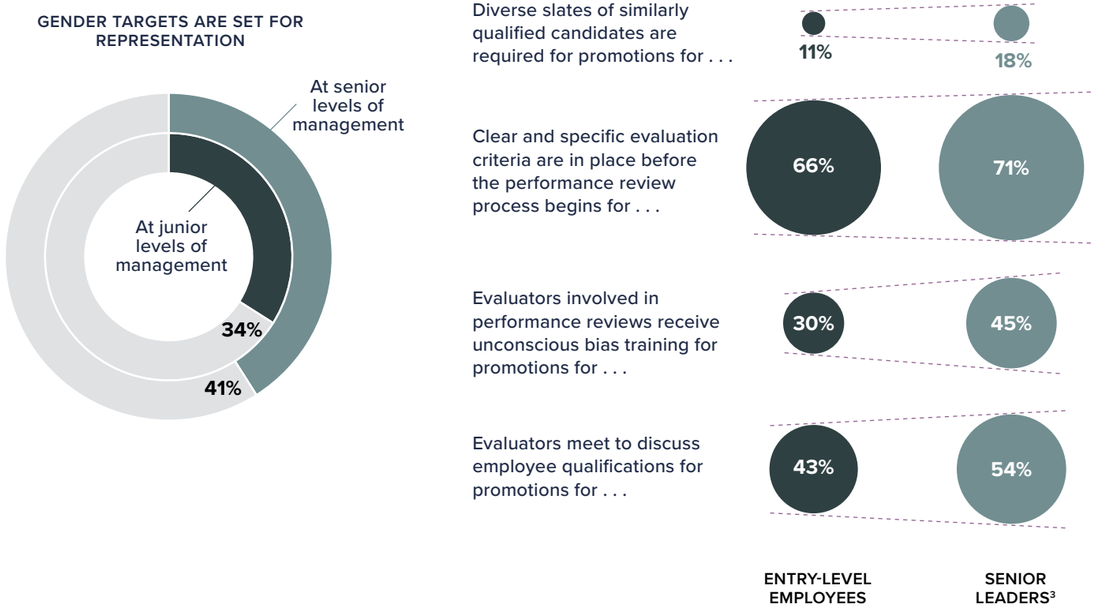
For many companies, diversity efforts in hiring and promotions are focused at senior levels, and we're encouraged by the gains that we're seeing in senior leadership. Now companies need to apply the same rigor to addressing the broken rung. Fixing it will set off a positive chain reaction across the entire pipeline. As more women become managers, there will be more women to promote and hire at each subsequent level. Put another way, more entry-level women will rise to management, and more women in management will rise to senior leadership.



The case for fixing the broken rung is powerful. If women are promoted and hired to first-level manager at the same rates as men, we will add one million more women to management in corporate America over the next five years.

COMPANIES HAVE MORE OF THE RIGHT POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN PLACE AT SENIOR LEVELS THAN JUNIOR LEVELS

% of HR leaders who say their company implements these practices



3 Senior leaders includes VP level and above.

A CLOSER LOOK

Employees and HR leaders differ in what matters for choosing managers

When it comes to evaluating potential managers, HR leaders and employees have different ideas about what matters in their organization. HR leaders are far more likely to say achieving goals, strong leadership, and being good at managing people are the highest priorities. Employees, however, are far more likely to think their organization most values navigating internal politics and being well-liked. As a result, employees who are up for manager positions may be evaluated based on both official and unofficial requirements. To eliminate this disconnect, leaders should clearly communicate what really matters in their organization: meeting goals and being an effective leader.

HR LEADERS THINK MERIT-BASED SKILLS ARE FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN EMPLOYEES DO

Skills HR leaders and employees say their company most values when choosing new managers

SOLUTIONS

Five steps companies can take to fix their broken rung—and ultimately their pipeline

1. Set a goal for getting more women into first-level management

About a third of companies set targets for the representation of women at first-level manager, compared to 41 percent for senior levels of management. Companies should use targets more aggressively. Given how important it is to fix the broken rung, companies would be well served by setting and publicizing a bold goal to grow the number of women at the manager level. Moreover, companies should put targets in place for hiring and promotions, the processes that most directly shape employee representation.

2. Require diverse slates for hiring and promotions

Companies are more likely to require diverse candidate slates for promotions at senior levels than at the manager level. But outside research shows that diverse slates can be a powerful driver of change at every level. When two or more women are included on a slate, the likelihood that a woman will get the position rises dramatically.[4]

3. Put evaluators through unconscious bias training

Unconscious bias can play a large role in determining who is hired, promoted, or left behind. Companies are less likely to provide unconscious bias training for employees who participate in entry-level performance reviews than senior-level reviews, but mitigating bias at this stage is particularly important. Candidates tend to have shorter track records early in their careers, and evaluators may make unfair, gendered assumptions about their future potential.

There is also compelling evidence that this training works: In companies with smaller gender disparities in representation,[5] half of employees received unconscious bias training in the past year, compared to only a quarter of employees in companies that aren't making progress closing these gaps.

4 Cynthia DuBois, "The Impact of 'Soft' Affirmative Action Policies on Minority Hiring in Executive Leadership: The Case of the NFL's Rooney Rule," *American Law and Economics Review* 18, no. 1 (April 2016): 208–33, https://doi.org/10.1093/aler/ahv019; Stefanie K. Johnson, David R. Hekman, and Elsa T. Chan, "If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired," *Harvard Business Review*, April 26, 2016, https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-your-candidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired; Jean Martin, "A Fairer Way to Make Hiring and Promotion Decisions," *Harvard Business Review*, August 13, 2013, https://hbr.org/2013/08/a-fairer-way-to-make-hiring-an. 5 Defined as companies with the highest ratio of manager-level to entry-level women's representation.

Bias may contribute to the broken rung. Social science research shows that we tend to overestimate men's performance and underestimate women's. As a result, women are often hired and promoted based on past accomplishments, while men may be hired and promoted based on future potential.[6] Because employees early in their careers have short track records and similar work experience relative to one another, performance bias may especially disadvantage women at the first step up to manager.

4. Establish clear evaluation criteria

Companies need to make sure they have the right processes in place to prevent bias from creeping into hiring and reviews. This means establishing clear evaluation criteria before the review process begins. Evaluation tools should also be easy to use and designed to gather objective, measurable input. For example, a rating scale is generally more effective than an open-ended assessment.

Even with the right systems in place, processes can break down in practice. Employees are less likely than HR leaders to say that evaluation criteria are defined before candidate reviews begin, and they report that participating employees do not typically flag bias when they see it. This points to the need for companies to put additional safeguards in place to encourage fair, unbiased evaluations. Without exception, candidates for the same role should be evaluated using the same criteria. Employees should feel empowered to surface bias in the moment and have the training and resources to act when they observe it. In addition, outside research shows that it can help to have a third party in the room when evaluators discuss candidates to highlight potential bias and encourage objectivity.[7]

5. Put more women in line for the step up to manager

It is critical that women get the experience they need to be ready for management roles, as well as opportunities to raise their profile so they get tapped for them. The building blocks to make this happen are not new—leadership training, sponsorship, high-profile assignments—but many companies need to provide them with a renewed sense of urgency.

6 Corinne A. Moss-Racusin et al., "Science Faculty's Subtle Gender Biases Favor Male Students," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109, no. 41 (2012): 16474–79; Rhea E. Steinpreis, Katie A. Anders, and Dawn Ritzke, "The Impact of Gender on the Review of Curricula Vitae of Job Applicants and Tenure Candidates: A National Empirical Study," *Sex Roles* 41, nos. 7–8 (1999): 509–28; Madeline E. Heilman and Michelle C. Hayes, "No Credit Where Credit Is Due: Attributional Rationalization of Women's Success in Male-Female Teams," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 90, no. 5 (2005): 905–26; Joan C. Williams and Rachel Dempsey, *What Works for Women at Work: Four Patterns Working Women Need to Know* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).
7 Shelley Correll, "Reducing Gender Biases in Modern Workplaces: A Small Wins Approach to Organizational Change," *Gender & Society* 31, no. 6 (December 1, 2017): 725–50, https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/publications/reducing-gender-biases-modern-workplaces-small-wins-approach.

CASE STUDY

Supporting women at the critical step up to manager at MetLife

The challenge

MetLife realized that in order to see more women in leadership they needed to fuel their own pipeline. This meant developing talented women from the entry level up and promoting more of them to management roles.

What they did

MetLife launched a 14-month career development program for high-potential women called Developing Women's Career Experience. The program not only trains women in key leadership skills like business acumen and strategy, but also increases the sense of urgency to promote women. This effort has paid off, with many participants taking on expanded roles and responsibilities within six months of completing the program. In addition, through its Women's Business Networks, MetLife runs **Lean In Circles**—a program that brings small groups of employees together for monthly peer support and mentorship.

MetLife has also focused on increasing diversity in hiring and promotions. The company uses diverse candidate slates and makes sure that managers consider diversity when they make succession plans. MetLife also uses external recruiters to identify diverse talent, ensures that job requirements are gender-neutral, and trains recruiters on issues in the selection process that could impede diverse hiring. To foster diverse talent in the company's own ranks, MetLife has trained leaders to be mindful of potential bias in the review and career development process.

Results

Since 2015, MetLife has strengthened the representation of women in its workforce. More than half of its managers and entry-level workers are now women.

SECTION 2

The Culture of Work

To reach true equality, changing the numbers is not enough. Companies also need to invest in creating a strong culture. This means putting three important foundational elements in place:

1. Equal opportunity and fairness
2. Work-life flexibility
3. A safe, respectful workplace

1. The importance of equal opportunity and fairness

Together, opportunity and fairness are the biggest predictors of employee satisfaction

Employees universally value opportunity and fairness. Across demographic groups, when employees feel they have equal opportunity for advancement and think the system is fair, they are happier with their career, plan to stay at their company longer, and are more likely to recommend it as a great place to work.

In fact, we looked at a number of factors that outside research has shown influence employee satisfaction and retention—including leadership accountability and manager support—and together opportunity and fairness stand out as the strongest predictors by far.

Diversity efforts are the key to fairness for everyone. Companies may benefit from reframing the importance of diversity and inclusion. Diversity efforts are often viewed as only benefiting women and underrepresented groups. In reality, they are about ensuring that employees of all genders, races, and backgrounds have access to the same opportunities. These efforts start with understanding what's really getting in the way of fairness and addressing the barriers disadvantaged groups face head-on—this is in fact the path to fairness.

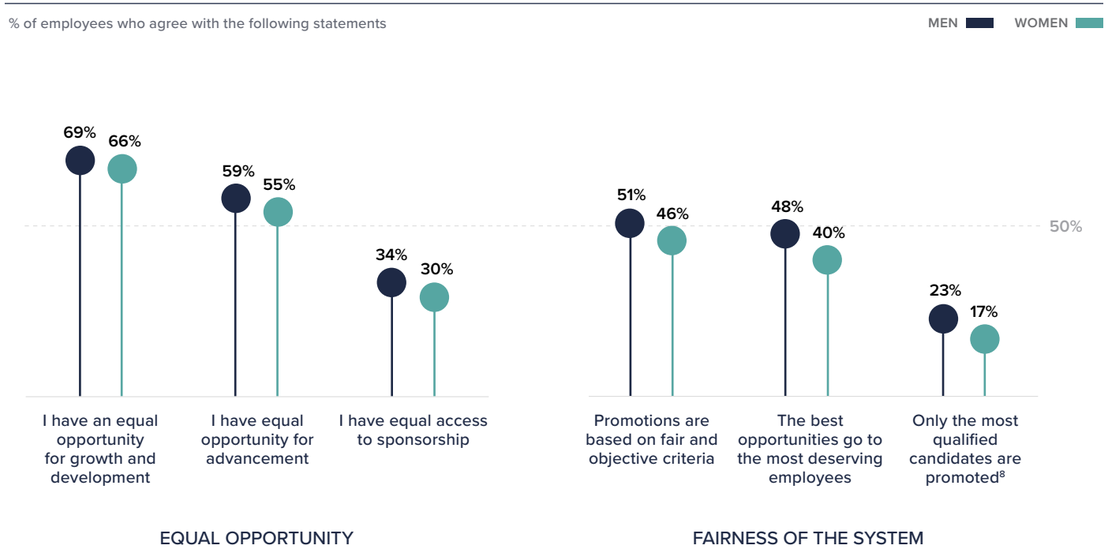
Many employees think they have equal opportunity to advance—but they are less convinced all employees do

A majority of employees believe they personally have equal opportunity to grow and advance, but they are less convinced the system is fair for everyone. Fewer than half of women and men think the best opportunities go to the most deserving employees, and fewer than a quarter say that only the most qualified candidates are promoted to manager. On both fronts, women are less optimistic than men.

Women are less optimistic about their opportunity to advance: 1 in 4 women thinks that their gender has played a role in missing out on a raise, promotion, or chance to get ahead—and slightly more women think their gender will make it harder going forward.

EMPLOYEES ARE MORE LIKELY TO THINK THEY HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THAN THEY ARE TO THINK THAT THE SYSTEM IS FAIR FOR EVERYONE

% of employees who agree with the following statements



8 Full question: Thinking about the most recent promotions to manager in your organization, would you say: Only the most qualified candidates were promoted.

A few key practices shape how employees view opportunity and fairness

Manager support, sponsorship, and impartial hiring and promotion practices are key elements in creating a workplace that delivers opportunity and fairness to everyone. Managers and sponsors open doors that help employees advance. And when hiring and promotions are unbiased, the most deserving employees can rise to the top—and employees feel more confident that the process for advancement is fair.

1. Manager support

Managers have a big impact on how employees view their day-to-day opportunities. Employees are more likely to think they have equal opportunities for growth and advancement when their manager showcases their work, helps them manage their career, and advocates for new opportunities for them on a regular basis.

Most managers provide this type of career support, and women and men report receiving similar amounts of help from their manager. However, managers don't do these things with enough consistency: About a third of employees say managers advocate for new opportunities for them a great deal, and less than a quarter of employees say managers regularly help them manage their career.

Companies can help by making sure managers have the tools and training they need to more fully support their team members—and by rewarding them when they do.

"My last manager was an important sponsor for me. She helped me get the role I'm in now. She'd known me for six years and knew the role would stretch me in a good direction. She was very deliberate in how she helped me navigate my career."

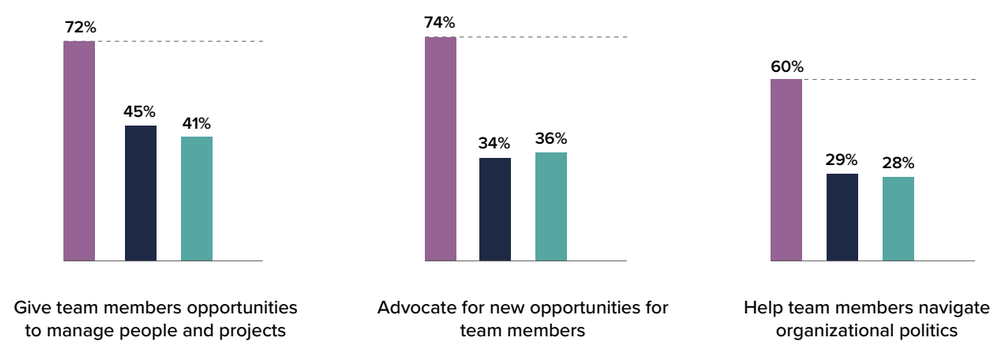
–Senior manager, Black straight woman

WHEN MANAGERS ARE SUPPORTIVE, EMPLOYEES THINK THEY HAVE GREATER OPPORTUNITY

	. . . to think they have equal opportunity for growth and development[9]	. . . to think they have equal opportunity for advancement[10]
When managers advocate for new opportunities for employees, employees are . . .	**2.3x** more likely	**3.0x** more likely
When managers provide opportunities for employees to showcase their work, employees are . . .	**2.6x** more likely	**3.3x** more likely
When managers help employees manage their career path, employees are . . .	**2.2x** more likely	**2.9x** more likely
When managers help employees navigate organizational politics, employees are . . .	**2.0x** more likely	**2.3x** more likely

MANAGERS CAN DO MORE TO SUPPORT THEIR TEAM MEMBERS

% of managers who say they provide support on a consistent basis versus % of employees who say they receive manager support a great deal



9 Comparison between employees who say their manager does this a great deal and employees who say their managers don't do this at all. 10 Ibid.

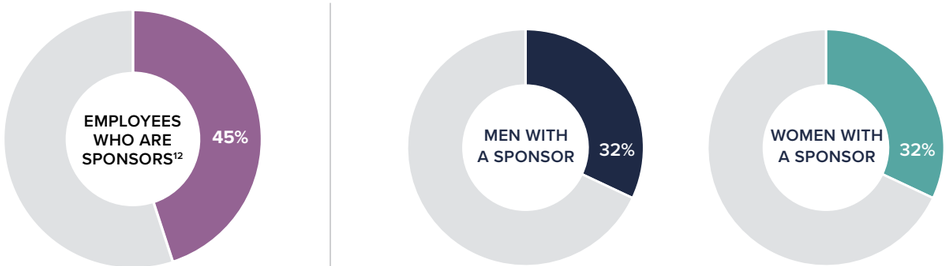
2. Sponsorship

Sponsorship can open doors, and more employees need it. Fewer than half of employees at the manager level or higher serve as sponsors, and only 1 in 3 employees says they have a sponsor—and this is equally true for women and men. Moreover, less than a third of employees say they get the sponsorship needed to advance their career. Fortunately, sponsorship is trending in the right direction—just a year ago, a quarter of employees reported having a sponsor.

Companies would be wise to double down on sponsorship. Other research shows that it accelerates career advancement,[11] and employees with sponsors are far more likely to say they have opportunities to grow and advance.

EMPLOYEES NEED MORE SPONSORSHIP

% of managers who give and employees who receive sponsorship



11 Center for Talent Innovation, "The Sponsorship Dividend" (2019), https://www.talentinnovation.org/_private/assets/TheSponsorDividend_KeyFindingsCombined-CTI.pdf. 12 Employees at manager level or above who are sponsors.

3. Inclusive and unbiased hiring and promotions

When companies have strong hiring and performance review processes in place, employees are more likely to think the system is fair and the most deserving employees are able to rise to the top. Over the past five years, more companies have adopted best practices, but progress toward full adoption is slow. This year, only 6 of 323[13] companies report they do all of the following: set diversity targets, require diverse slates for hiring and promotions, establish clear and consistent evaluation criteria before review processes begin, and require unconscious bias training for employees involved in hiring and performance reviews.

In combination, these are the building blocks needed to foster diversity and minimize bias in decision-making. Given that hiring and promotions are powerful levers in driving pipeline diversity and employee satisfaction, there's a strong business case for adopting more of these best practices.

WHEN THE RIGHT REVIEW PRACTICES ARE IN PLACE, EMPLOYEES THINK PROMOTIONS ARE MORE FAIR

	. . . to think promotions are based on fair and objective criteria[14]	. . . to think the best opportunities go to the most deserving employees[15]	. . . to think only the most qualified candidates have been promoted[16]
When a diverse slate of similarly qualified candidates is considered for positions, employees are . . .	**1.6x** more likely	**1.7x** more likely	**2.3x** more likely
When clear and specific evaluation criteria are put in place before the review process begins, employees are . . .	**1.6x** more likely	**1.6x** more likely	**2.3x** more likely
When evaluators have received unconscious bias training, employees are . . .	**1.4x** more likely	**1.5x** more likely	**2.0x** more likely
When people involved in the review process call out bias, employees are . . .	**1.6x** more likely	**1.7x** more likely	**2.5x** more likely

13 A total of 323 companies completed the HR portion of this year's survey. 14 Comparison between employees who say their company has this review practice in place compared to employees who say their company does not have this in place. 15 Ibid. 16 Ibid.

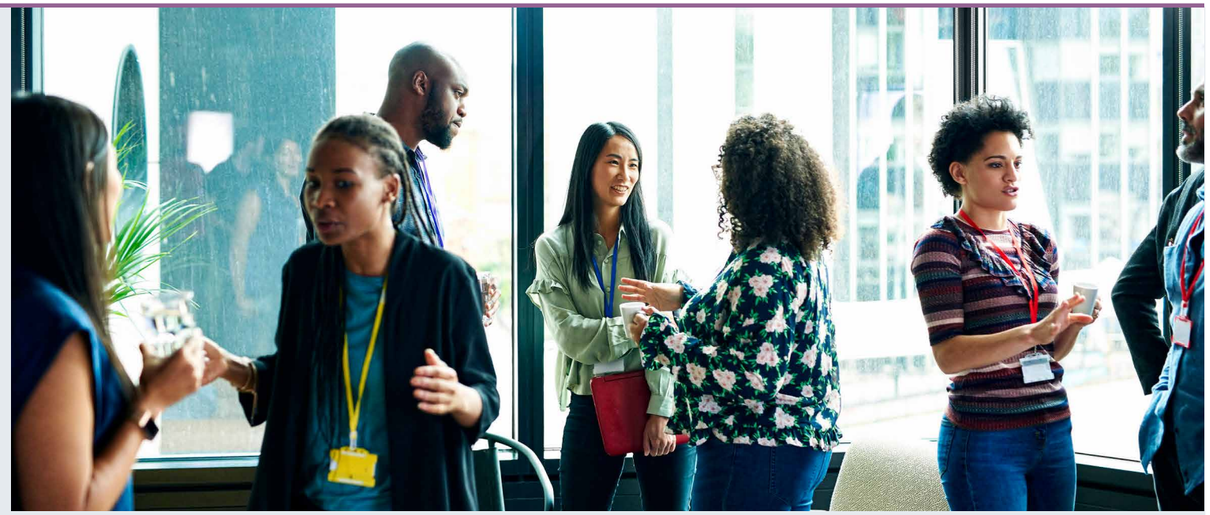
A CLOSER LOOK

Some groups of women receive less support and see less opportunity to advance

There is no one story of women in the workplace. Gender is one of many aspects of women's identity that shapes their experiences. Women of color, lesbian and bisexual women, and women with disabilities are having distinct—and by and large worse—experiences than women overall[17]. Most notably, Black women and women with disabilities face more barriers to advancement, get less support from managers, and receive less sponsorship than other groups of women.

Not surprisingly, Black women and women with disabilities are far less likely to feel they have an equal opportunity to grow and advance, and are far less likely to think the best opportunities go to the most deserving employees. They are also less happy at work and more likely to leave their company than other women are.

It's important for companies to understand that all women are not having the same experience and to directly address the unique challenges that different groups of women face.



BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES ARE HAVING A NOTABLY WORSE EXPERIENCE AT WORK

% of employees who say . . .

HAVING A BETTER EXPERIENCE — HAVING A WORSE EXPERIENCE

	ALL MEN	ALL WOMEN	LESBIAN WOMEN	BISEXUAL WOMEN	WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES	WHITE WOMEN	ASIAN WOMEN	LATINAS	BLACK WOMEN
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ON FAIRNESS									
I have equal opportunity for growth and development	69%	66%	70%	66%	54%	69%	63%	62%	56%
I have equal opportunity for advancement	59%	55%	57%	54%	41%	57%	54%	54%	42%
I have equal access to sponsorship	34%	30%	33%	26%	21%	32%	28%	30%	26%
Promotions are fair and objective	51%	46%	48%	44%	36%	48%	42%	44%	35%
The best opportunities go to the most deserving employees	48%	40%	40%	38%	31%	42%	41%	39%	28%
Only the most qualified candidates are promoted[18]	23%	17%	16%	15%	13%	18%	17%	15%	11%

17 "Lesbian women" includes all women who identified themselves as gay, lesbian, or homosexual in the survey. 18 Full question: Thinking about the most recent promotions to manager in your organization, would you say: Only the most qualified candidates were promoted.

BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES ARE HAVING A NOTABLY WORSE EXPERIENCE AT WORK

% of employees who say . . .

HAVING A BETTER EXPERIENCE — HAVING A WORSE EXPERIENCE

	ALL MEN	ALL WOMEN	LESBIAN WOMEN	BISEXUAL WOMEN	WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES	WHITE WOMEN	ASIAN WOMEN	LATINAS	BLACK WOMEN
MANAGER SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP[19]									
My manager helps me navigate organizational politics	29%	28%	31%	26%	22%	30%	24%	28%	24%
My manger advocates for new opportunities for me	34%	36%	35%	37%	28%	37%	35%	35%	29%
My manager gives me opportunities to manage people and projects	45%	41%	45%	38%	32%	43%	40%	39%	36%
My manager provides opportunities for me to showcase my work	42%	39%	40%	38%	31%	41%	39%	38%	36%
My manager helps me manage my career path	24%	25%	26%	26%	19%	26%	24%	26%	22%
I have the sponsorship needed to advance my career[20]	33%	30%	29%	30%	20%	31%	27%	31%	24%

19 Unless otherwise specified, employees indicated that managers do each manager support and sponsorship action "a great deal". The full scale was: a great deal, somewhat, not at all.
20 Full question: At this company, I have the sponsorship needed to advance my career I Agree.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS[21]

On how identity shapes experience at work

"I don't feel I have the same opportunities as others. If you look like the people making the decisions, it's easier to advance. And I don't look like any of the people making decisions here."

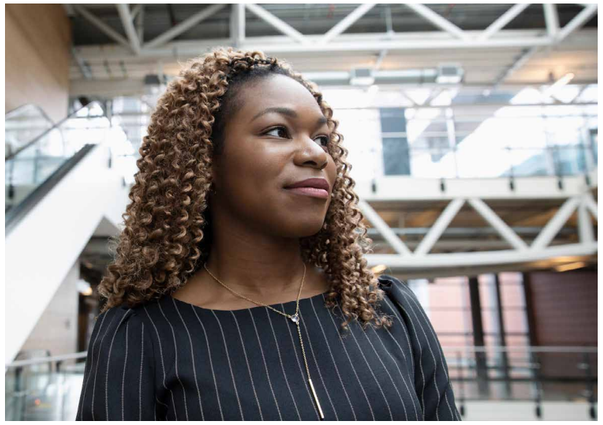
—VP, Black lesbian woman

"I have to out myself in many ways so my colleagues understand they have people who are different in their midst. Diversity isn't always something you can see."

—Entry level, Latina lesbian woman

"A lot of Black women think that many gender initiatives are really tailored toward white women. Are they targeting women of color too? It often doesn't feel like it."

—Senior manager, Black straight woman



"It's a challenge for me to bring my full self to work. I've gotten some pushback, some people saying, 'You know, you've got to be a little careful, watch how you present yourself'...but I'm going to present myself a little differently because I am a little different. Because I am Lesbian, because I am Hispanic, because I'm not a tech person, my perspectives on life are completely different."

—Individual contributor, Latina lesbian woman

21 This report contains stock photographs for illustrative purposes only. Images do not reflect the identities of the women quoted. Within the quotes, some identifying details may have been altered and/or withheld to protect the speaker's anonymity.

CASE STUDY

How AB InBev changed their culture

AB InBev

The challenge

In 2015, AB InBev, which owns Anheuser-Busch, participated in the first *Women in the Workplace* report. As a result, they realized that employing more women was a business opportunity: They could both diversify their talent and reach more women consumers.

What they did

AB InBev's leaders designed a comprehensive strategy and took many actions to drive change, but these are the three steps that they believe moved the needle most:

1. Got employees to buy into diversity:
   It's crucial to make the business case for diversity—and make it stick. AB InBev's leadership shared research showing that more diverse teams make better business decisions and helped employees see that diversity would help the company reach more consumers.

2. Built managers' skills:
   AB InBev used the recommendations in the 2017 *Women in the Workplace* report as a playbook to create a toolkit for D&I leaders in regions around the world. A key focus of the toolkit was to develop managers' skills in D&I. It included training to help them reduce bias in hiring and promotions and foster inclusive teams. All managers receive feedback on how they are championing D&I as part of their annual 360 review. They also get feedback from their team members, who are surveyed on the manager's D&I performance.

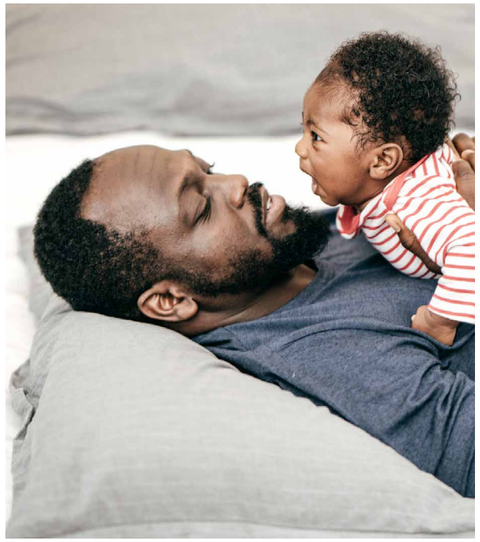
3. Created a supportive culture:
   AB InBev has created a network of trained D&I allies so employees feel safe raising issues. The company has also created a Global Parental Standard that increased parental leave to be competitive in local markets. For instance, in Mexico, when primary caregivers return after four months of leave, they work four hours per day—the number of months old their babies are—and add an hour per day each month until they're working full-time.

Results

In the past three years, AB InBev has made major changes that set the stage for increasing its representation of women. They have already achieved an important milestone: They've equalized promotion rates at the first step up to manager.

2. The importance of work-life flexibility

Opportunity and fairness matter deeply to employees. So does fitting work into life. All employees benefit from the flexibility to shape their work schedule and time off for big life moments, like recovering from surgery or caring for a newborn. When workplace policies support balancing work and life, employees are happier at work.



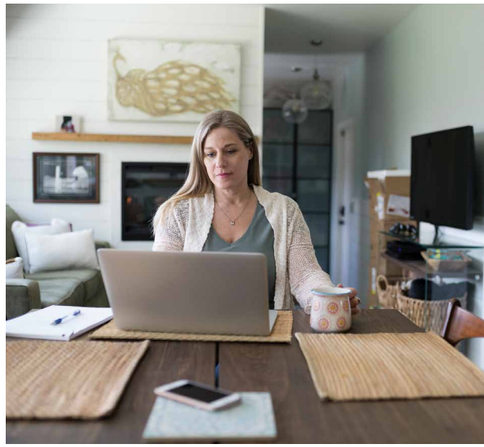
Employees want more flexibility, and companies are delivering

Balancing work and life is a juggling act for most employees, and flexibility is key to making it possible. Companies have responded to this need over the past five years. Almost all companies offer employees time off for family or personal reasons, and a vast majority of companies give employees some freedom to set their own schedules or work from home. Employees recognize the benefits of these policies, but they still think companies can go further: Work-life flexibility was the number one issue raised by employees in 2019, followed by the need for more mentorship and sponsorship.

Work-life flexibility is on the rise: In 2019, more than 70% of employees said their companies offered some flexibility to work from home, compared to about 40% of employees in 2015.[22]

"I work remotely, and it's the best thing that ever happened to me. I gain at least two hours of my life back daily when I would have been commuting. Now that I work from home, I can give all of those two hours to the company, or I can use those two hours to get my kids to soccer or volleyball practice. That is huge for me."

–Senior manager, white straight woman



MOST COMPANIES GIVE EMPLOYEES WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY

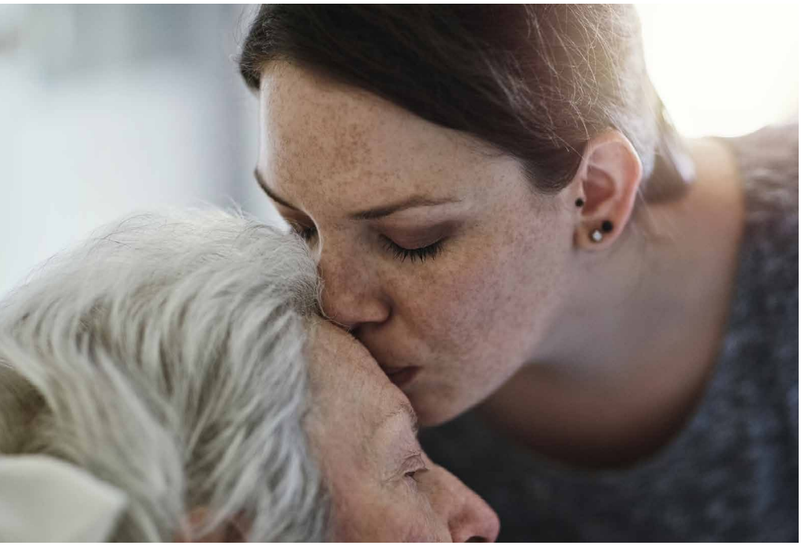
% of companies that offer flexibility versus the % of employees who say they have at least a little bit of flexibility

22 In 2015, the full question was: Which of the following work support/flexibility programs have you participated in at your organization in the last 3 years? | Telecommuting/ Work from home.

Many employees take leave, but some worry about negative consequences

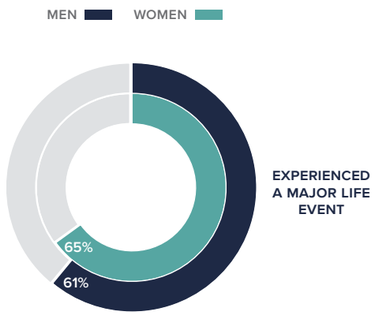
Over the last five years, a majority of employees have become new parents or dealt with a significant personal or family health issue. About half of these employees took leave. Many who did not take leave were able to handle the situation without a break in work, but others point to concerns about work responsibilities, fear that it might negatively impact their career trajectory, or financial concerns. Moreover, more than 1 in 4 employees who took leave say it hurt their career or finances—and this is particularly true for women.

> "I feel that I need to do more to prove my worth now, after taking maternity leave."
>
> —Senior manager, white straight woman



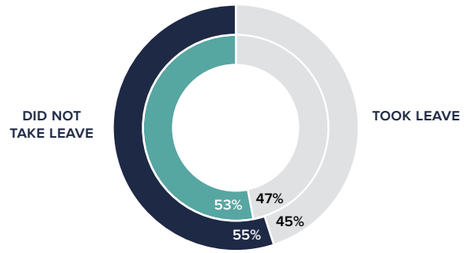
Women feel more negative consequences when they take leave: 20% of women who've taken a leave say it negatively impacted their career, compared to 10% of men. Women are also twice as likely to say it had a negative effect on their financial well being.

Over the last five years, a majority of employees experienced a significant life event[23] . . .

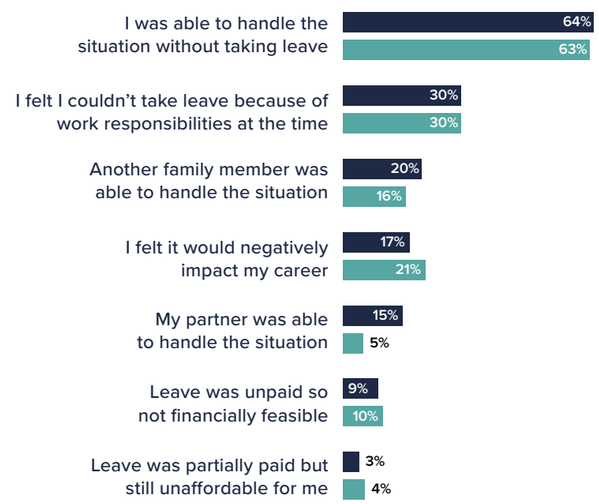


The ability to take leave affects everyone: over 2x as many women and men take leave for personal or family health issues rather than after becoming a new parent.

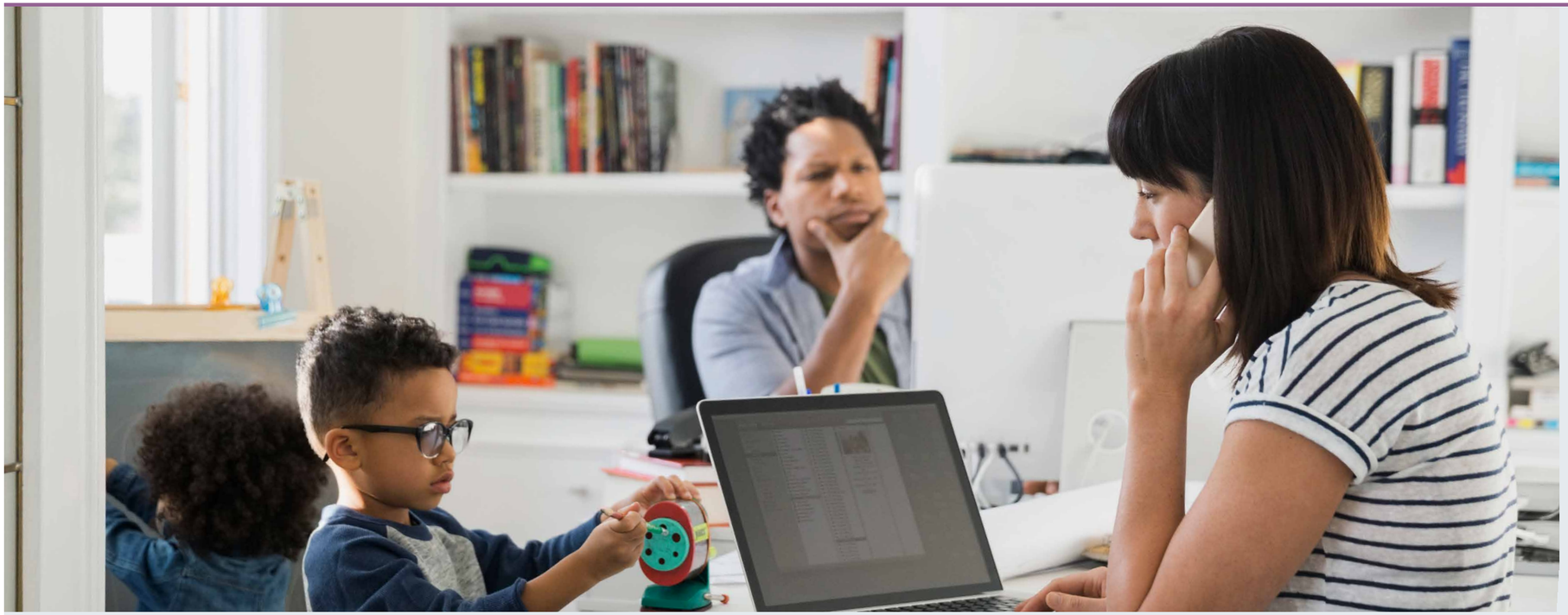
. . . About half of these employees took leave . . .



. . . Of those employees who didn't take leave, they point to these reasons:



23 Full question: Which if any of the following happened in your family during the past five years: Someone in your family had significant life issues, you had significant health issues, you became a new parent.



Dual-career relationships are becoming more common: Today, 56% of men have a partner who works full-time, compared to 47% in 2015. And 81% of women have a partner who works full-time, compared to 75% in 2015.

A CLOSER LOOK

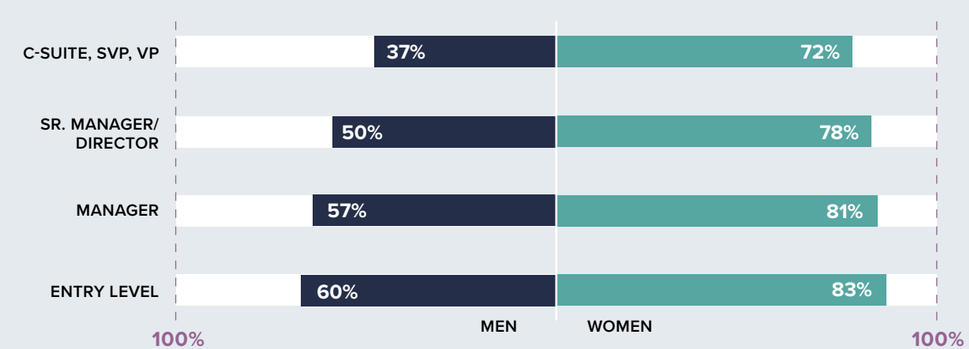
Most women who work also have partners who work, which can make balancing work and life tricky

Eighty-one percent of women have a partner who works full-time, compared to 56 percent of men. And as employees become more senior, this disparity between women and men grows: 72 percent of senior-level women have a partner who works, compared to only 37 percent of men at the same level. In other words, men who rise in the workplace are significantly more likely to have a stay-at-home partner than women at the same level. When it comes to household responsibilities, there is also a big gender disparity: 39 percent of women in dual-career relationships report doing most or all of the housework, compared to just 11 percent of men in dual-career relationships.

The good news is that there may be a generational shift when it comes to housework: younger women in dual-career couples do less of the housework compared to older women in dual-career couples.

FAR MORE WOMEN ARE IN DUAL-CAREER RELATIONSHIPS

% of employees with partners who work full-time by level



Paternity leave has increased, but maternity leave is stagnant

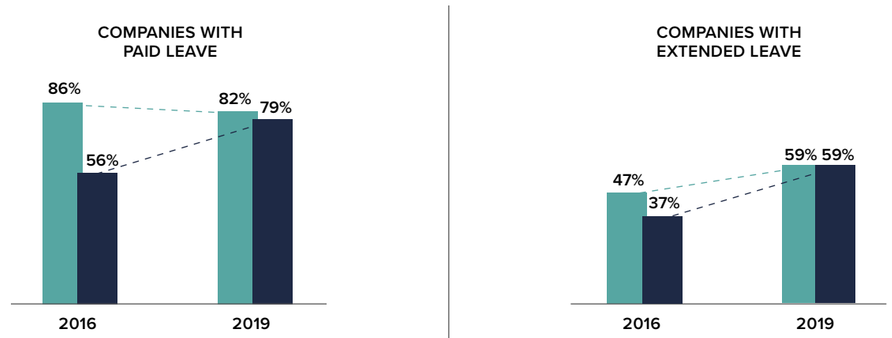
Significantly more U.S. companies offer paid paternity leave compared to three years ago, and the average paid leave available to new fathers has increased from four to seven weeks. Similarly, the number of companies offering extended paternity leave has increased by 59 percent. New fathers appear to be taking advantage of these expanded policies: In 2019, men were roughly as likely as women to take leave when they became new parents.

Taken as a whole, however, there is still significant room for improvement. About 40 percent of companies do not offer extended parental leave, and there is very little progress being made on maternity leave. Most notably, the average length of paid maternity leave has remained stuck at 10 weeks—compared to the 20 weeks women, on average, receive in Europe.[24] Since parental leave is critically important to many employees, companies would be well served to provide it more generously.

COMPANIES HAVE MADE PROGRESS ON PARENTAL LEAVE, BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH

% of companies that offer the following types of leave[25]

MATERNITY PATERNITY



THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE HAS INCREASED FOR FATHERS BUT NOT FOR MOTHERS

	2016	2019
Paternity leave	4 weeks	7 weeks
Maternity leave	10 weeks	10 weeks

24 Based on countries in the European Union. European Commission (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), "Your rights country by country," https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=858&langId=en. 25 Paid parental leave is defined as companies providing any amount of leave paid. Extended parental leave is defined as leave that exceeds the legal U.S. requirements.

CASE STUDY

Supporting women's advancement at JPMorgan Chase

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

The CEO and operating committee at JPMorgan Chase (JPMC) wanted to increase women's representation at senior levels more quickly in order to have diverse perspectives at the top. In 2013, several women on the operating committee launched the Women on the Move program to connect women executives across JPMC locations around the world.

This effort was accompanied by other new initiatives, including increased paid parental leave and a ReEntry Program for employees returning to the industry. JPMC also launched a "30-5-1" campaign to foster employees to support women colleagues. The program encourages employees to set aside 30 minutes a week to have coffee with a talented woman colleague, five minutes a week to recognize a woman colleague's success, and one minute a week to share that success with others at the firm. JPMC's leaders believe that these programs, along with the firm's other diversity and inclusion initiatives, have helped them develop and retain more talented women. JPMC has increased its representation of women in the C-suite at more than double the industry average.

3. The importance of safe and respectful workplaces

The foundation of a good culture is a safe and respectful workplace. To put this in practice, companies need to make it clear that disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated and hold everyone accountable. They also need to equip employees to call out bias and everyday discrimination when they see it so they become part of the solution.

"The way leaders at my company conduct themselves really sets the tone for how people should be treated. I can only think of one person at work who was disrespectful to people with disabilities. He didn't remain in his job very long. There is no tolerance for disrespectful leaders and for those who are not inclusive."

—Senior manager, white straight disabled woman

A safe and respectful culture requires accountability

Companies need to hold leaders and employees accountable for good behavior and have systems in place to surface and address bad behavior. This is worth getting right: When employees think their company is serious about accountability, they are happier and more likely to stay at their company. Yet only 32 percent of women and 50 percent of men believe disrespectful behavior toward women is often quickly addressed by their company.

EMPLOYEES ARE HAPPIER WHEN THEIR COMPANY EMPHASIZES ACCOUNTABILITY

	. . . to be happy with their career[28]	. . . to say they plan to stay at the company[29]	. . . to recommend the company[30]
When senior leaders are held accountable for performance on gender diversity, employees are . . .	**1.4x** more likely	**2.0x** more likely	**1.6x** more likely
When disrespectful behavior toward women is quickly addressed, employees are . . .	**1.5x** more likely	**1.8x** more likely	**1.8x** more likely
When the company provides a clear and safe way for employees to voice concerns, employees are . . .	**1.8x** more likely	**1.9x** more likely	**2.1x** more likely
When senior leaders clearly communicate that there will be no tolerance for sexual harassment, employees are[26] . . .	**1.2x** more likely	**1.3x** more likely	**1.4x** more likely
When employees expect that reporting sexual harassment to management would be effective or helpful, employees are[27] . . .	**1.6x** more likely	**1.6x** more likely	**1.8x** more likely

26 This comparison is between employees who answered "Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree" compared to employees who answered "Strongly disagree" or "Somewhat disagree" 27 This comparison is between employees who say if they saw or experienced sexual harassment at work, reporting it to management would be "effective, it would be fairly investigated and addressed" or "helpful, it's a good first step" compared to employees who say it would be "pointless, it wouldn't be taken seriously" or "risky, you might be penalized". 28 Unless otherwise noted, the comparison is between employees who say this happens "almost always" or "often" compared to employees who say this happens "seldom" or "almost never". 29 Employees who answer that they plan to stay at their current company for 5+ years. 30 Ibid.

Companies should empower employees to speak up

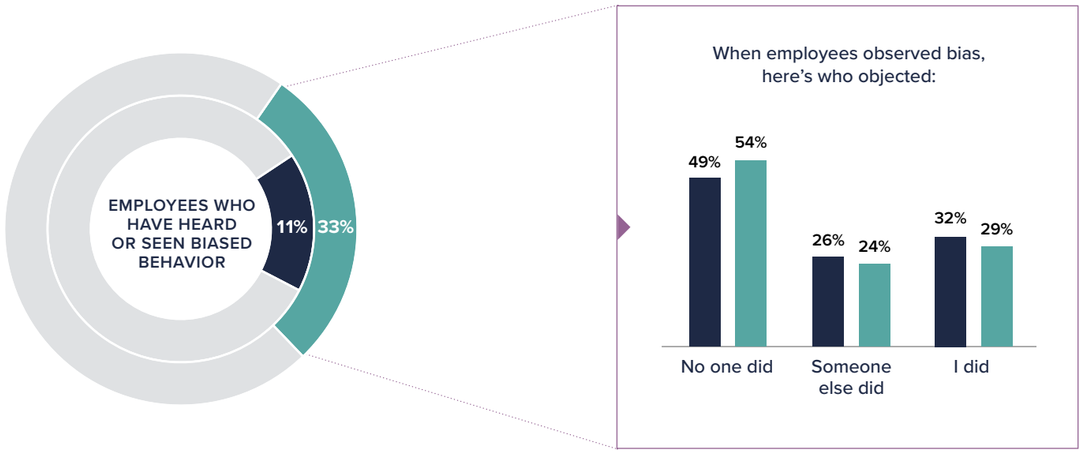
In the past year, 33 percent of women and 11 percent of men say they have seen or heard biased behavior toward women. Yet 73 percent of women experience microaggressions, or everyday slights rooted in bias. This points to a disconnect: Many employees aren't recognizing biased behavior, and even when they do see it, they don't speak up. Only about a third of employees who've seen bias over the past year spoke up personally to challenge it—and a quarter say someone else did. Employees may be apprehensive about speaking up because it feels like a high-risk endeavor: 37 percent say it could hurt their career. Or they might not think it will make a difference: Half of employees who've spoken up say nothing happened as a result.

Unconscious bias training can help employees learn to recognize bias[31] and should be reinforced on a regular basis. This training needs to be coupled with a culture that encourages people to speak up and engage in difficult conversations.

ABOUT ONE IN FOUR EMPLOYEES SAYS THEY'VE OBSERVED BIASED BEHAVIOR TOWARD WOMEN

% of employees who sometimes or very often saw biased behavior toward women in the past year

MEN WOMEN



31 Correll, "Reducing Gender Biases in Modern Workplaces"; Joelle Emerson, "Don't Give Up on Unconscious Bias Training—Make It Better," *Harvard Business Review*, April 28, 2017, https://hbr.org/2017/04/dont-give-up-on-unconscious-bias-training-make-it-better.

Managers need to challenge bias

Managers play a central role in shaping employees' day-to-day work experiences. When managers regularly[32] challenge gender-biased language or behavior, employees are several times more likely to say their company values people's differences and quickly addresses disrespectful behavior toward women.[33] But only a third of employees say managers do this often—and women are significantly less likely than men to think this is true.

"My manager is a white man. He always pushes for greater inclusion. He pushes for women. He pushes for the African-American community, the Hispanic community, the Asian community. We just recently rolled out an LGBTQ employee resource group. He was the biggest advocate of that. Because he believes—I believe."

–Individual contributor, white straight woman

WHEN MANAGERS CHALLENGE BIAS, EMPLOYEES SEE THEIR CULTURE AS SAFER AND MORE RESPECTFUL

When managers often challenge gender-biased language or behavior, employees are . . .

4.6x more likely to say disrespectful behavior toward women is quickly addressed[34]

2.0x more likely to say their organization values the differences that people bring to the workplace

32 Full question: Managers challenge gender-biased language or behavior when it happens | Often. 33 Full question: At this company, disrespectful behavior toward women is quickly addressed | Often.
34 The comparison is between employees who say this happens "almost always" or "often" compared to employees who say this happens "seldom" or "almost never".

It's important for senior leaders to model the right behavior

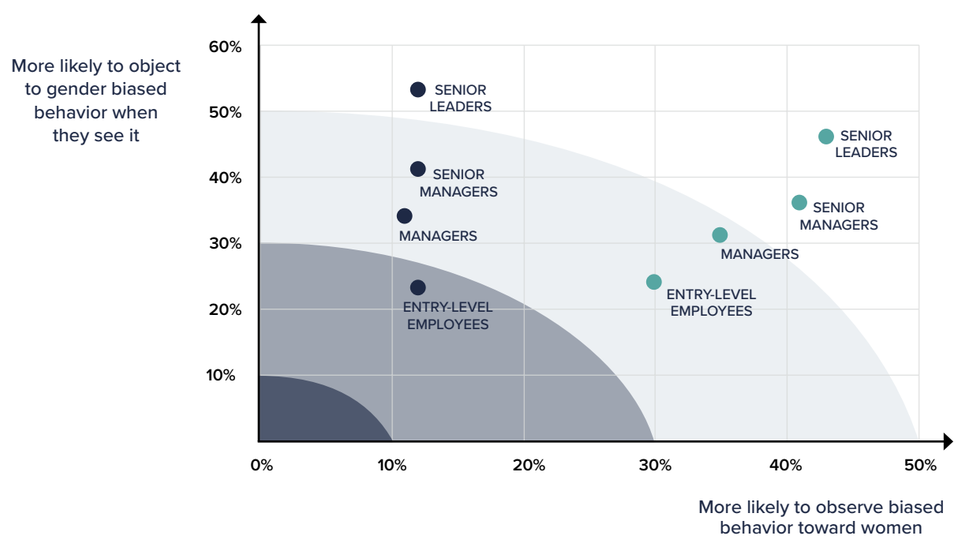
Compared to employees at other levels, senior leaders are more likely to challenge biased behavior when they see it. About a quarter of entry-level employees say they do this, compared to 53 percent of senior-level men and 46 percent of senior-level women.

But senior-level men, in particular, say that they don't observe a lot of gender bias. Only 12 percent say they've seen biased behavior toward women in the last year.[35] On the other hand, 43 percent of senior-level women say they have. The challenge is educating senior-level men so they can better spot bias. When senior leaders speak up more often, employees may feel empowered to speak up, too.

> "I'm involved in a program that mentors women. My last manager wasn't supportive of my involvement. But I felt empowered to do it anyway because of senior-level support. I think support from top management is key."
>
> –Senior manager, Latina straight woman

SENIOR LEADERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO CHALLENGE GENDER-BIASED BEHAVIOR THAN OTHER LEVELS

% of employees who sometimes or very often see biased behavior toward women



35 Full question: Have you heard or seen biased behavior toward women in the past year? | Very often, often, or sometimes.

CASE STUDY

Candid conversations are important

SunTrust executives have focused for several years on promoting a more open, inclusive dialogue at the company. In 2018, the company participated in the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion's "Day of Understanding." The event helped employees to embrace differences, build awareness of unconscious bias, and nurture inclusivity inside and outside the bank. It included workshops to foster candid conversations around race, gender, disability, LGBTQ identity, religion, and military service.

In response to high demand from employees, SunTrust has since held more than 30 similar workshops across the U.S. In addition, thousands of employees participate in one of the company's eight Teammate Networks (TMNs), which build awareness and appreciation for different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives, each led by an executive council member. These efforts seem to be making a difference: 80 percent of employees report that the company's environment is inclusive, up 11 percentage points in three years.

Microaggressions can have a macro impact

Microaggressions are a common occurrence in the workplace. From having their judgment challenged to being overlooked or being mistaken for someone at a more junior level, women are far more likely to experience this everyday discrimination. While 73 percent of women and 59 percent of men have experienced at least one type of microaggression, these everyday slights are more common for women. They are almost twice as likely as men to experience four or more types of microaggressions.

Some groups of women face more types of microaggressions. Compared to other races and ethnicities, Black women are the most likely to have their judgment questioned in their area of expertise and be asked to prove their competence. Lesbian women, bisexual women, and women with disabilities are far more likely than other women to hear demeaning remarks about themselves or others like them and to feel like they cannot talk about their personal lives at work.

Although they can seem small in the moment, these negative experiences add up. Over time microaggressions can have a major impact, and it's important to challenge them when you see them. Women who experience microaggressions are three times more likely to regularly think about leaving their job than women who have not experienced this form of discrimination.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are forms of everyday discrimination that are often rooted in bias. Whether intentional or unintentional, they signal disrespect and are more often directed at those with less power.

WOMEN EXPERIENCE MORE MICROAGGRESSIONS, ESPECIALLY LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN, WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES, AND BLACK WOMEN

% of different groups of employees who say they experience microaggressions

HAVING A BETTER EXPERIENCE — HAVING A WORSE EXPERIENCE

	ALL MEN	ALL WOMEN	LESBIAN WOMEN	BISEXUAL WOMEN	WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES	WHITE WOMEN	ASIAN WOMEN	LATINAS	BLACK WOMEN
HAVING COMPETENCE QUESTIONED									
Needing to provide more evidence of your competence	14%	30%	34%	46%	42%	28%	30%	28%	40%
Having your judgment questioned in your area of expertise	29%	38%	42%	54%	52%	39%	30%	31%	41%
BEING OVERLOOKED									
Being interrupted or spoken over	34%	50%	57%	64%	59%	53%	43%	42%	43%
Having others take or get credit for your ideas	27%	38%	43%	45%	49%	40%	34%	33%	35%
BEING DISRESPECTED									
Being mistaken for someone at a much lower level	9%	18%	15%	27%	21%	17%	18%	16%	20%
Hearing demeaning remarks about you or people like you	11%	16%	24%	25%	27%	15%	12%	16%	18%
Hearing others' surprise at your language skills or other abilities	8%	14%	16%	24%	21%	11%	16%	18%	26%
Feeling like you can't talk about yourself or your life outside work	7%	10%	23%	26%	21%	10%	8%	9%	12%

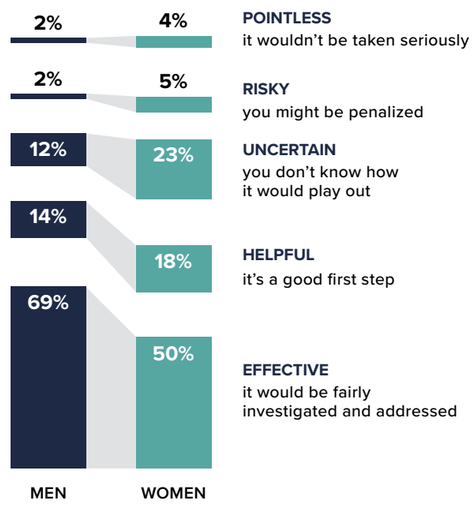
Sexual harassment is far too common . . .

Sexual harassment[36] continues to be a widespread issue at work. Two in five women surveyed have experienced some form of sexual harassment over the course of their career, such as hearing sexist jokes, being touched in an inappropriately sexual way, and receiving unwanted attempts to have an intimate relationship.

For some women, sexual harassment is more common. Lesbian women, bisexual women, women in technical roles, and women in leadership roles are more likely to be sexually harassed. Social science research shows that women who defy conventional expectations of how women should act—for example, because of their sexual orientation or field of work—are targeted more often.[37] Women with disabilities also experience higher rates of sexual harassment, and outside research shows this may be because of their more vulnerable status at work.[38]

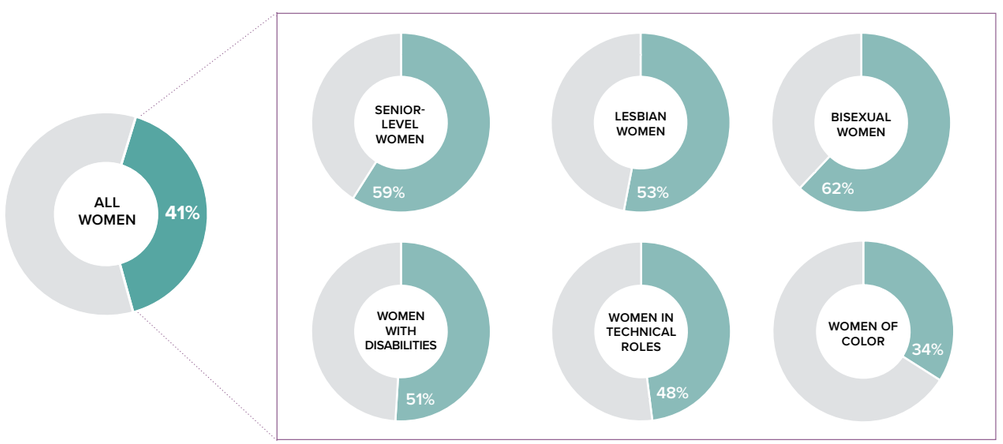
WOMEN ARE LESS CONFIDENT THAN MEN THAT REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT WOULD BE EFFECTIVE

% of employees who think reporting harassment would be . . .



SOME GROUPS ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE HARASSMENT THAN OTHERS

% of employees who report experiencing sexual harassment over the course of their career



36 It's worth noting that the definition of unlawful harassment varies by jurisdiction. In this survey, sexual harassment is defined as experiencing any of the following over the course your career: Hearing sexist comments or jokes about people of your gender; being touched in a sexual way without your consent; having obscene or sexually explicit comments directed at you; suggestions that you would be penalized for not engaging (or rewarded for engaging) in sexual behavior; pressure to "play along" or participate in sexual discussions, humor, or actions; repeated attempts to have a romantic or sexual relationship, despite your efforts to discourage it; seeing or receiving unwanted sexual materials (e.g., explicit photos); someone exposed themselves to you; someone sexually assaulted you (i.e., forced themselves on you sexually). 37 Heather McLaughlin, Christopher Uggen, and Amy Blackstone, "Sexual Harassment, Workplace Authority, and the Paradox of Power," *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 4 (2012): 625–47; Jennifer L. Berdahl, "The Sexual Harassment of Uppity Women," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92, no. 2 (2007): 425–37. that exceeds the legal U.S. requirements. 38 Jenny Dick-Mosher, "Bodies in Contempt: Gender, Class and Disability Intersections in Workplace Discrimination Claims," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2015): 1–14.

. . . And it is critical that companies communicate that it won't be tolerated

Companies need to communicate that all forms of sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Many are doing this effectively. Ninety-one percent of companies say they've communicated their sexual harassment policy to employees in the past year. Eighty percent of employees report that senior leaders at their company have clearly communicated that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. And for the most part, the message is reaching employees: 66 percent of employees say they could describe their company's policy to a new employee.

Some companies would also benefit from making the claim process more transparent and putting an audit process in place to ensure that investigations are intensive and outcomes are appropriate. While 59 percent of employees think a claim of sexual harassment would be fairly investigated and addressed, about 20 percent are uncertain or think it would be risky or pointless to file a claim. Women, in particular, are less likely to trust the reporting process than men—and women who have experienced any form of sexual harassment are particularly pessimistic.

Some employees also fear a backlash for raising the issue: 38 percent of women and 24 percent of men who have been sexually harassed and kept it to themselves say they were worried that reporting could have negative consequences on their career. In addition, companies are wrestling with how to create transparency: Half of employees say that they don't know if top performers are held accountable for violating their company's sexual harassment policy.

WHEN COMPANIES TAKE A STRONG STAND AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT, EMPLOYEES ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL THEIR WORKPLACE IS SAFE AND RESPECTFUL

	SAFE WORKPLACE	RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE
When employees think senior leaders clearly communicate that there will be no tolerance for sexual harassment, employees are[39] . . .	**2.0x** more likely	**1.6x** more likely
When employees think that reporting sexual harassment to management would be effective and helpful, they are also[40] . . .	**4.8x** more likely	**2.5x** more likely
When employees think that top performers are held accountable if they violate the harassment policy, employees are[41] . . .	**4.2x** more likely	**2.3x** more likely
	. . . to say disrespectful behavior toward women is often quickly addressed at their company	. . . to say their company values the differences that people bring to the workplace

39 This comparison is between employees who answered "Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree" compared to employees who answered "Strongly disagree" or "Somewhat disagree". 40 Ibid. 41 Ibid.

A CLOSER LOOK

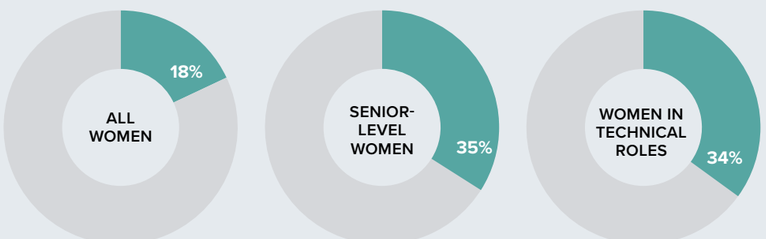
“Only” women are having a worse experience than other women

Given that women are underrepresented across the corporate pipeline, many end up being the only or one of the only women in the room at work. About 1 in 5 women says they are often an “Only,” and this experience is about twice as likely for senior-level women and women in technical roles.[42] By comparison, only 5 percent of men are often the only or one of the only men in the room, and regardless of their race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, they face less scrutiny than women Onlys.

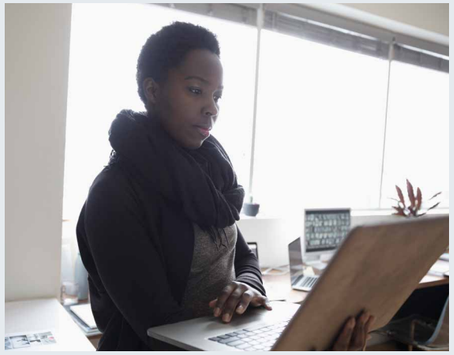
Women who are Onlys are having a notably difficult experience at work. They’re far more likely to experience microaggressions than women who work with other women. They are more than twice as likely to be asked to prove their competence, over three times more likely to be mistaken for someone more junior, and about twice as likely to be subjected to demeaning or disrespectful remarks. Moreover, they are twice as likely to have been sexually harassed at some point in their career.

BEING AN ONLY IS FAR MORE COMMON FOR SENIOR LEVEL AND WOMEN IN TECHNICAL ROLES

% of different groups of women who are often the only or one of the only women in the room



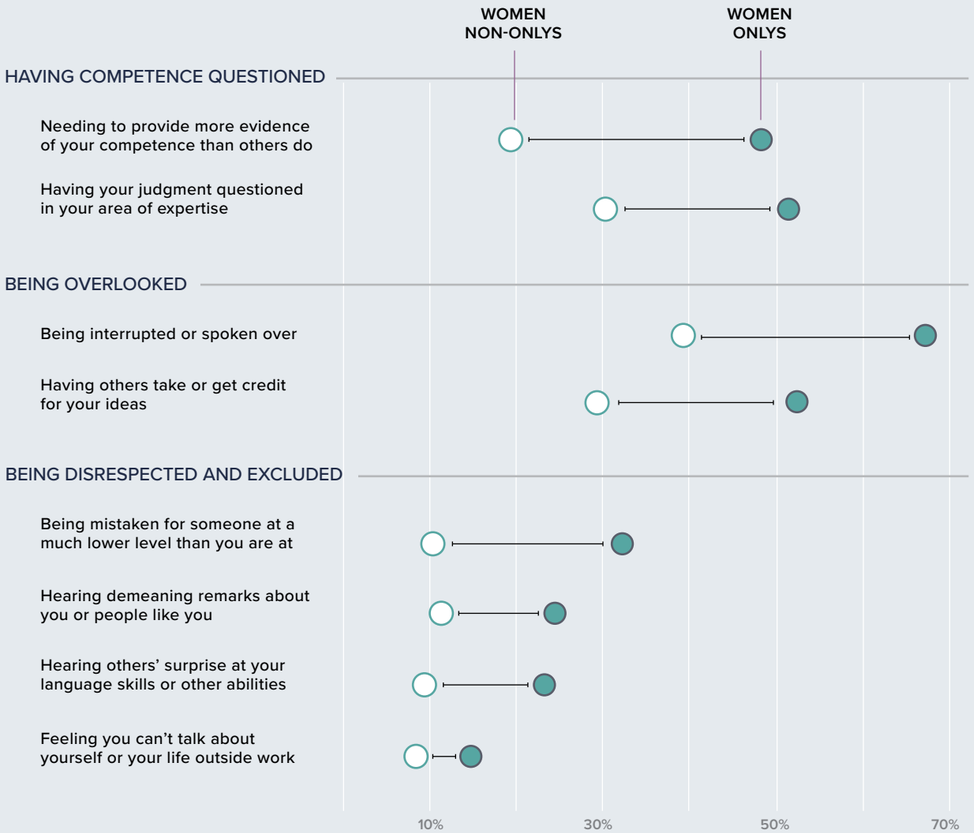
42 Historically, social scientists have used terms such as “numerical minorities” and “tokens” to describe similar dynamics. For the first study on this dynamic, see Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

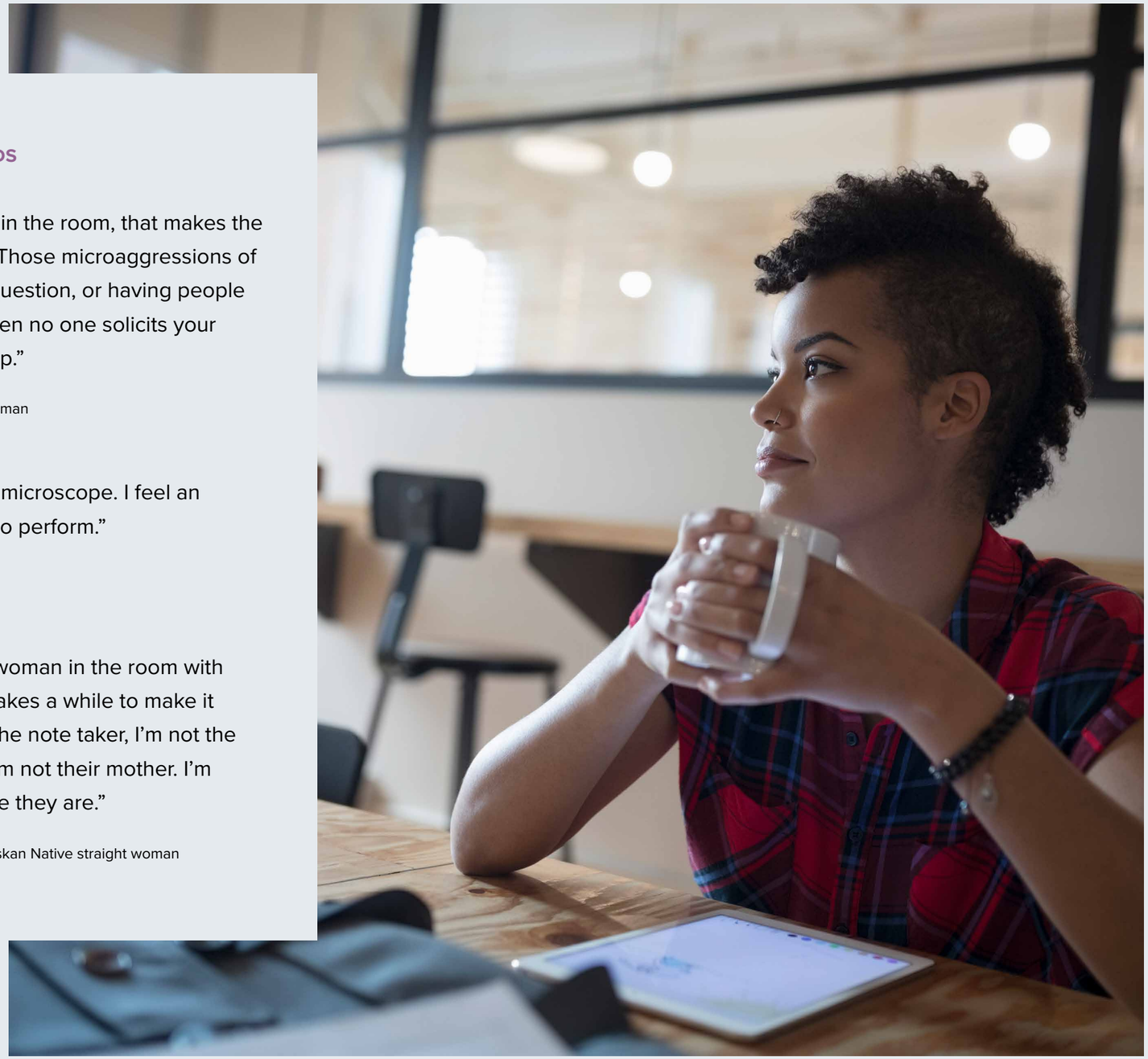


Women Onlys stand out in the spaces they occupy, and this added visibility can make the biases they face more pronounced. As a result, women Onlys tend to be heavily scrutinized and held to particularly high standards. In addition, they are often seen as the standard-bearer for all women. Thirty-seven percent of women Onlys report feeling under pressure to perform and 35 percent feel on guard or closely watched. Black women, who are often the only woman and the only person of their race in the room, can feel especially on guard and closely watched—50 percent report feeling this way as an Only.

WOMEN ONLYS EXPERIENCE MORE MICROAGGRESSIONS

% of women Onlys and non-Onlys who have these experiences during the normal course of business





IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"How you're treated in the room, that makes the biggest difference. Those microaggressions of not being asked a question, or having people talk over you, or when no one solicits your opinion. They add up."

— Director, white straight woman

"At work I'm under a microscope. I feel an immense pressure to perform."

— VP, Black lesbian woman

"I am often the only woman in the room with a bunch of guys. It takes a while to make it known that I'm not the note taker, I'm not the party planner, and I'm not their mother. I'm just a worker just like they are."

— Individual contributor, Alaskan Native straight woman

SOLUTIONS

Strategies to counteract the Only experience

Companies can't change the representation of women overnight, but there are strategies they can use to counteract the Only experience. Companies can hire and promote women in cohorts so that there are multiple women at similar levels. In addition, companies should pay close attention to teams or functions where there are Onlys and be deliberate about staffing: rather than staffing one woman on a team, they might put groups of two or three women on teams together. As well as making the Only experience less common, companies can make the experience better by helping women build connections with each other through mentorship programs or by staffing them on cross-functional projects.

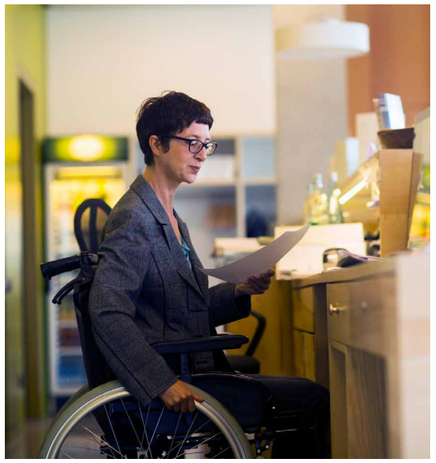
The Only experience isn't limited to gender. Being an Only is common for people of color and gay people. Thirty-eight percent of people of color are often the only or one of the only people of their race and ethnicity in the room. Likewise, 68 percent of gay men and 70 percent of lesbian women are often Onlys for their sexual orientation.

For people who are Onlys because of their race, the stakes can feel especially high. They are more likely to feel like everyone is watching their every move or as if their actions reflect positively or negatively on other people of the same race. Similar to other Onlys, gay people who are Onlys tend to feel under pressure to perform, closely watched, and left out.

SECTION 3

Commitment to Diversity

Companies are far more committed to gender diversity than ever before. Now they need to double down on their efforts to turn that commitment into action.



Commitment to gender diversity has increased significantly

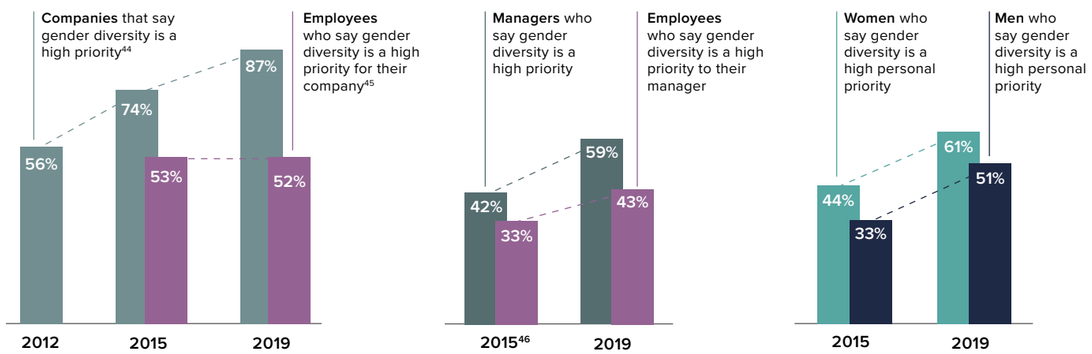
Today, 87 percent of companies are highly committed to gender diversity, compared to 56 percent in 2012, when McKinsey & Company first conducted a similar study on the state of women at work. Since 2015, manager commitment to gender diversity has also increased, and employee commitment—especially among men—has risen significantly.

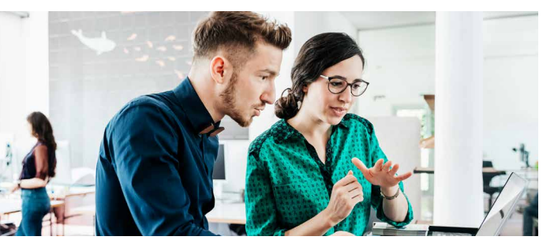
It is encouraging that so many companies prioritize gender diversity. However, it's worth noting that employees are less convinced: only half of employees think gender diversity is a high priority to their company, and that number hasn't changed over the last five years.

What employees think matters. When employees say their company is highly committed to gender diversity, they are happier and plan to stay at their company longer. This is equally true for women and men.[43]

Companies, managers, and employees are similarly committed to racial diversity as they are to gender diversity: 77% of companies, 59% of managers, and 56% of employees say it is a high priority.

COMMITMENT TO GENDER DIVERSITY HAS RISEN OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS





There are also signs that commitment will continue to trend in a positive direction. Younger generations are more likely to see bias in the workplace—for example, managers under 30 are more likely to say they see bias than older employees at the same level.

43 Seventy-six percent of employees are satisfied with their job when they feel that their company prioritizes gender diversity, compared to 57% of employees who do not feel like their company prioritizes gender diversity. 44 In 2019, % of HR leaders who answered: How much of a priority is gender diversity for your company | A very important priority; in 2015, % of HR leaders who answered: Where does gender diversity rank on the CEO's strategic agenda? | Top 3 priority or top 10 priority; in 2012, % of HR leaders who answered: Where does gender diversity rank on the CEO's strategic agenda? | Top 3 priority or top 10 priority. 45 In 2019, % of employees who answered: How much of a priority is gender diversity for your [company | organization]; In 2015, % of employees who answered: How well does the following statement describe your organization: Workforce diversity is a top priority for my company. 46 Due to changes in data collection, in 2015 managers was defined as L4 (senior manager/director) and L5 (manager), whereas in 2019 managers was defined as L5 (manager).

Turning commitment into action

Many companies need to do more to put their commitment into practice and treat gender diversity like the business priority it is. This starts with taking concrete actions like setting diversity targets and sharing diversity metrics—not just at senior levels, but with all employees. It also means holding leaders accountable and rewarding them when they make progress. In most organizations, what gets measured and rewarded is what gets done.

Over time, more companies are putting the right mechanisms in place, and employees are noticing this progress. Compared to last year, employees are twice as likely to say their companies have gender diversity targets in place for hiring. However, there is more to be done. When companies have the right foundation for change—clear goals, obvious accountability, a reward system—they are in a better position to drive systemic change. Gender diversity efforts shift from a nice-to-have to a must-have, and that leads to broad-based action across the organization.

COMPANIES WOULD BENEFIT FROM HAVING MORE BEST PRACTICES IN PLACE

% of companies that do the following...

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Set gender diversity targets for employee representation	N/A	N/A	38%	35%
Share at least some diversity metrics with all employees[47]	N/A	56%	55%	46%
Hold senior leaders accountable for progress on gender diversity metrics	37%	40%	42%	55%
Have financial incentives in place for senior leaders who meet diversity metrics	N/A	30%	31%	19%

Engaging senior leaders is driving change. More than half of companies hold senior leaders accountable for progress on gender diversity metrics, up from a little over a third in 2015. And it's making a difference. Seventy-three percent of senior leaders are highly committed to gender diversity, and close to half say they're working to improve gender diversity. Senior leaders set the priorities in organizations, so when they're engaged, it has a positive trickle-down effect: Managers are more likely to support diversity efforts, and employees are more likely to think the workplace is fair.

As a next step, companies should push deeper into their organization and engage managers to play a more active role. Compared to senior leaders, fewer managers say gender diversity is a high priority, and far fewer managers say they are actively working to improve diversity and inclusion.

47 In 2019, the full question was: How often do each of these stakeholder groups review your company's gender diversity metrics? | All employees, all time frames except "never"; in 2018, the full question was: To what degree does each group of stakeholders see your company's gender diversity metrics? All employees, % of companies who answered many or some; in 2017, the full question was: To what degree does each group of stakeholders see your company's diversity metrics? | All employees, companies who answered all but "none".

CASE STUDIES

Companies are putting commitment into action

Accountability pays off at NextRoll

What they did

Each year, NextRoll shares its results from Women in the Workplace and internal employee surveys at a company-wide meeting, as well as concrete diversity targets for the year ahead. Then, at subsequent all-hands meetings, the company updates employees on progress and encourages them to ask questions and share input. Members of the executive team also have a diversity and/or inclusion goal every quarter, and the goals are publicly displayed at the company. Because leaders are open about their goals—and talk about D&I as if it's every employee's responsibility—employees are more invested in reaching those goals.

Results

This strategy is paying off: from 2016 to 2019, women's representation rose from 27 percent to 40 percent in senior management roles.

Committed leaders drive big gains at Nordstrom

What they did

In 2016, Nordstrom set a bold goal of increasing representation in their leadership to better reflect their consumer base, which is 70 percent women. At the time, a majority of their employees were women, but their leadership was mostly men. To kick-start the initiative and get senior buy-in, Nordstrom's leadership took part in a "conscious inclusion" program to better understand how bias plays out in the workplace. They then identified four key "pillars" that drive diversity and inclusion: talent, culture, marketplace, and leadership. Each pillar was sponsored by a small team of executives who established programs to drive progress—from diverse hiring slates to unconscious bias trainings—and managed them like a critical part of the business.

Results

From 2016 to 2019, Nordstrom has seen remarkable gains: their efforts increased the share of women in the C-suite from 7 percent to 40 percent, in SVP roles from 49 percent to 63 percent, and on the board from 17 percent to 46 percent.

Manager scorecards change the game at Sodexo

The challenge

Sodexo's internal data showed that the share of women dropped sharply after entry level—which reduced the number of women in the leadership pipeline.

What they did

In response, senior leaders implemented a two-step plan as part of their comprehensive D&I strategy. To identify high-potential women in operational roles and help them advance through the ranks, Sodexo launched a "mentoring circles" program, in which a small group of women from entry-level to mid-level managers meet monthly. These women then took part in a year-long one-on-one mentorship program.

Sodexo also created a scorecard to hold managers accountable for their efforts on diversity and inclusion. Sodexo leaders believe this has transformed the culture of the company.

If you're a manager or senior leader at Sodexo, 10 percent of your bonus is tied to your scorecard. You can score up to 600 points for hiring, promoting, and retaining more women and underrepresented groups. But the scorecard doesn't just measure numeric progress. You can score an extra 400 points if you take other steps that improve Sodexo's culture by demonstrating inclusive leadership. For instance, you might set up a bias and inclusion training for your team, mentor or sponsor women or people of color, or sponsor SoTogether, their internal women's employee resource group.

Sodexo monitors outcomes closely and refines the scorecards over time. For instance, the initial scorecard awarded points for meeting quantitative representation targets only, but feedback suggested that Sodexo would see more widespread buy-in and less resistance if managers were also rewarded for changing their behavior, changing their processes, and being more inclusive. So Sodexo added points for inclusive actions to the scorecard, and coaches were assigned to work with managers on their action plans to improve outcomes. Leadership believes this expanded focus has helped the company meet its numeric goals faster, as well as made the culture more inclusive.

Results

Over the past five years, women's representation has increased by 10 percent on average at entry and manager levels, more than 20 percent at the SVP level, and has doubled in the C-suite.

CONCLUSION

The path to equality is clear

After five years of the Women in the Workplace study—and a growing body of research from others in the field on how to effectively support diversity and inclusion—companies have what they need to succeed. They know what the best practices are. They realize where the trouble spot is in the talent pipeline. And they understand how vital equal opportunity and fairness are to employees.

This is a critical moment. We can treat diversity like the business imperative it is, or we can treat it as an optional initiative. We can build on the progress we've made, or we can lose momentum. We are optimistic. This year we've seen more bright spots than ever before. We know companies are committed. And the organizations that are doubling down on their diversity efforts are making real progress.

We hope companies take this year's report as a roadmap for change—and a call to action.

Acknowledgments

McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org would like to thank the 329 companies and more than 68,500 employees who participated in this year's study. By sharing their information and insights, they've given us new visibility into the state of women in the workplace and the steps companies can take to achieve gender equality.

We also appreciate the continued help of Women's Foodservice Forum, the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association, Health Evolution, the Equity Collaborative —a program of the Carol Emmott Foundation, and Press Forward in convening participants in their respective industries.

We would also like to thank Getty Images for providing the photography used in this report from the **Lean In Collection**.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR COMPANIES

To read more McKinsey perspectives on gender, diversity, and company practices, visit **mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality**.

Lean In's 50 Ways to Fight Bias program is a card-based activity that highlights 50 specific examples of gender bias in the workplace and offers research-backed recommendations for what to do. 95% of employees who've participated in the program say they are more committed to taking action. For more information or to access the free digital version of the program, visit **leanin.org/50Ways**.

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CORPORATE PIPELINE BY INDUSTRY

Industries have different talent pipelines

Although women are broadly underrepresented in corporate America, the talent pipeline varies by industry. Some industries struggle to attract entry-level women (engineering and industrial manufacturing), while others fail to advance women into middle management (transportation, logistics, food distribution) or senior leadership (retail, healthcare).

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ACROSS INDUSTRIES

% OF WOMEN BY LEVEL

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ACROSS INDUSTRIES (CONT.)

% OF WOMEN BY LEVEL

Methodology

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

This report is based on research from 329 companies across the United States and Canada, building on similar research conducted annually by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org since 2015, as well as research from McKinsey & Company in 2012.

Participating companies from the private, public, and social sectors submitted talent pipeline and / or policies and programs data. In addition, more than 68,500 employees from 77 companies were surveyed on their workplace experiences and we interviewed 39 women and men of different races and ethnicities, LGBTQ women, and women with disabilities at all levels in their organizations for additional insights. We highlight case studies from seven companies that have shown significant progress in increasing diversity over the last five years.

We grouped companies by industry to create benchmarks that provide peer comparisons. The number of companies from each industry is as follows:[48]

- Asset Management and Institutional Investors—28
- Banking and Consumer Finance—28
- Consumer Packaged Goods—5
- Energy, Utilities, and Basic Materials—12
- Engineering and Industrial Manufacturing—18
- Food and Beverage Distribution—14
- Food and Beverage Manufacturing—20
- Healthcare Systems and Services—22
- Insurance—11
- IT Services and Telecom—9
- Media and Entertainment—15
- Oil and Gas—13
- Pharmaceutical and Medical Products—21
- Professional and Information Services—13
- Public and Social Sector—14
- Restaurants—17
- Retail—11
- Tech - Hardware—13
- Tech - Software—26
- Transportation, Logistics, and Infrastructure—8

Companies opted in to the study in response to invitations from McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org or by indicating interest through our public website. Participation in the Employee Experience Survey was encouraged but optional.

All data collection occurred between May and August 2019. Talent pipeline data reflects representation of men and women as of December 31, 2018, as well as personnel changes (e.g., due to promotion, hiring, attrition) during 2018. Human resource professionals provided information on gender diversity policies and programs on behalf of their company as of December 31, 2018.

PIPELINE DATA AND ANALYTICS

Overall metrics

All pipeline metrics (e.g., representation, promotion rates, hiring shares, attrition rates) were initially calculated for each participating company. Company results were then averaged for each industry and each industry's data was weighted by the composition of the Fortune 500 in 2018. This enabled us to avoid overemphasizing or underemphasizing particular industries and better estimate trends over time based on each year's sample of companies.

The industry breakdown of the Fortune 500 used for our weighting[49] was:

- Retail—17%
- Energy and Basic Materials—16%
- Finance—17%
- Tech—12%
- Healthcare—8%
- Automotive and Industrial Manufacturing—9%
- Food and Restaurants—7%
- Media and Entertainment—4%
- Transportation, Logistics and Infrastructure—5%
- Professional and Information Services—2%
- Engineering—2%

Definition of Job Levels

Companies categorized their employees into six levels based on the following standard definitions, taking into account reporting structure and salaries. The levels and definitions provided were:

- L1—C-suite level executives and presidents: CEO and his or her direct reports, responsible for company operations and profitability (board members are not included in our primary analyses)
- L2—Senior vice presidents: Senior leaders of the organization with significant business unit or functional oversight
- L3—Vice presidents: Leaders of the organization who report directly to senior vice presidents
- L4—Senior managers/directors: Seasoned managers with responsibility for multiple teams and discrete functions or operating units
- L5—Managers: Employees who have management responsibility over a store, team, or project
- L6—Entry level: Employees who carry out discrete tasks and participate on teams, typically in an office or corporate setting (field employees like cashiers or customer service representatives are not included in our primary analyses)

48 320 organizations submitted pipeline data. Overall weighted pipeline is based on 304 private sector firms and does not include Public and Social Sector organizations or Law Firms. 49 Percentages sum to 99% due to rounding.

Metrics and Analytics

Talent pipeline data included the representation of men and women (overall and, optionally, by race/ethnicity). Additionally, companies reported the number of men and women who were hired, promoted, and who left the company (overall and, optionally, by race/ethnicity).

Promotion and attrition rates were estimated for women and men at each level. Promotion rates were calculated by dividing the number of promotions of that gender into a level by the start of the year number of employees of that gender in the level below. Attrition rates were calculated by dividing the number of each gender who left the company at a given level by the number of employees of that gender in that level at start-of-year. Hiring shares were calculated at each level by dividing the number of hires of that gender by the total number of hires at that level.

We analyzed two scenarios to examine the potential effect of equitable hiring and promotion on gender representation at the first manager level. Both scenarios assume that the overall average rate of promotions and hiring for men and women remains constant going forward.

Current hiring and promotion trends: To consider the implications of continuing progress at current rates, we assumed that the trends in promotion and hiring from the last four years would continue going forward until women reach equal hiring and promotion rates as men.

Equitable hiring and promotions[50]: To consider the implications of equitable hiring and promotions to first-level manager, we assumed women are promoted and hired at the same rates as men, reflecting the respective gender's representation in the candidate pool.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE SURVEY AND ANALYTICS

Survey Participation

68,500 employees from 77 companies elected to participate in the Employee Experience Survey. The survey questions covered multiple themes (e.g., the state of diversity, equity, manager actions) as well as demographic questions (e.g., age, tenure, sexual orientation, family status).

Bivariate and Multivariate Statistical Reporting

Survey results were reported as an unweighted pooled average of responses across companies. Many of the questions offered a five-point, labeled response scale (e.g., "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). Unless otherwise specified, analyses aggregated the top-two and bottom-two boxes of the response scale (e.g., "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree").

Where we highlight differences between genders or other groups, we highlight only those differences that are substantial and reliable. To that end, all differences noted in this report are statistically significant at a 95 percent confidence level using a two-tailed test and reflect a difference of at least five percentage points between two groups.

Factor Analysis

We used prior research, regression analyses, and a factor analysis approach to identify the conditions and practices most predictive of the following outcomes: employees' likelihood to recommend the company, desire to stay, and happiness with career. To create the factors, we selected the top questions shown by prior research to influence employee satisfaction and retention that also showed a strong pairwise correlation with one or more of the outcome variables. Factor scores were created by applying a principal axis factoring method and direct oblimin rotation. Multiple linear regression was used to quantify the relationship between the factor scores and the outcomes of interest. Findings reported highlight the factors that significantly predicted the three outcomes of interest ($p < 0.05$) where the relationship was also meaningfully large ($\beta > 0.05$).

DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Human resource professionals from 323 companies provided information on gender diversity policies and programs on behalf of their company. We report the percentage of companies that have a program, policy, or priority out of the total number of companies that submitted this type of data.

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

We conducted individual interviews with 39 women and men from 14 companies from a range of industries, including Automotive & Industrial Manufacturing, Food & Beverage, Oil & Gas, Media & Entertainment, Technology, and Transportation, Logistics & Infrastructure. Interviewees were volunteers selected to reflect a range of levels, functions, and demographic groups. Our interviews focused on women's workplace experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings from the employee survey. Individual names, company names, and any other identifying information were kept strictly confidential and individuals are anonymized in this report.

50 This scenario represents a very modest change to address current inequities at the first step up to Manager level. It does not assume that there are equal numbers of qualified women and men for any position beyond entry level.