

Gender Inclusion by Top Leaders: Evidence and Positive Actions

OVERVIEW

This white paper provides positive leadership lessons for gender inclusion for men and women in organizations. It describes the values-based, gender-inclusive leadership behaviors of C-suite executives and top STEM leaders and recommends positive actions that may serve as the basis for further application of evidence-based practice (EBP) methodology.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR USING EBP TO ENABLE GENDER INCLUSION

Gender inclusion and equality remain critical challenges for organizations, the economy, and society. The implications of a lack of parity between men and women are enormous and represent a significant opportunity for economic growth, both in the U.S. and across the globe. Recent analyses have estimated that \$12 trillion could be added to global GDP by 2025 by advancing women's equality.¹

While women's equality and gender diversity have positive economic effects,^{1,2} and women have been attaining higher educational and managerial levels, only 26.5 percent have risen to within two reporting levels of CEO.³ For women in the male-dominated STEM areas of engineering and computer science, the situation is of even greater concern. Research shows that women in STEM leave their organizations before reaching senior management levels.^{4,5} Therefore, it appears that, in the foreseeable future, most women in general management and STEM are likely to report to male bosses who are in senior management roles with larger numbers of direct reports and profit-and-loss responsibility.⁶ Given that women represent

pools of underutilized talent across a wide range of industries, how may we resolve this dilemma and create more positive outcomes for women's leadership?

Organizations have tried a variety of training initiatives, such as diversity and inclusion training and unconscious bias training to address the obstacles that hinder inclusive leadership. Men have been urged to adopt more collaborative behaviors and seek information to gain an understanding of women's experience of the workplace.^{7,8} Business leaders have been encouraged to use metrics to examine organizational practices to see how women leaders are identified, rewarded, developed, and moved through talent management systems.^{9,10} Clearly, gender inclusion by top leadership carries the potential for positive, long-term effects on leadership pipelines and workplace cultures.^{11,12} Yet progress toward gender inclusion remains slow. Might gender inclusion be accelerated in organizations by first defining the leadership behaviors in values-driven leadership and then using evidence-based practice methods to determine the most effective leadership actions to advance it?

When leaders "give voice to their val-

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ues,”¹³ their actions and words serve as models for others and accelerate the learning by others across the organization. Prior research has recognized that there are leaders (“male champions”) who value fairness, equity, and the development of talent in organizations.¹⁴ These “champions” are easily identified by the female leaders in their organizations for their important role in mentoring, coaching, and other proactive approaches in developing women leaders.⁹

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

One of the methods used in EBP is to identify behaviors that differentiate those who are successful from others.¹⁵ As an initial step in applying evidence-based practice to understand how to accelerate gender inclusion, this research asks the following questions:

What are the behaviors of leaders *who are already known to be inclusive leaders*? How are the behaviors and actions of gender inclusive leaders in general management and in STEM different from other leaders? How do senior men and women leaders and STEM leaders use their power, voices, and influence to foster gender inclusion in their teams and organizations?

For this effort, women leaders in senior management were contacted through the author’s business/professional networks and asked to nominate inclusive male leaders and other inclusive senior female leaders to be interviewed. Confidential, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 95 senior leaders in or near C-suite in *Fortune* 500 companies and non-profit organizations who were known to be inclusive leaders. Given the importance of increasing the numbers of females in STEM leadership pipelines, 30 of the



95 confidential interviews were conducted with senior male and female STEM leaders in *Fortune* 500 companies. The results of a qualitative analysis revealed themes and specific behaviors for the general management leaders and the STEM leaders that support women’s advancement and gender inclusion.

The interviews revealed that both women and men must use *proactive* behaviors in advancing women’s career development into top management roles. Unsurprisingly, STEM leaders were more likely to acknowledge that the fewer numbers of women in STEM provided a greater need to provide talented women with development opportunities and access to leadership pipelines. The perspective shared by many interviewees was that gender inclusion was an important aspect of a values-based leadership environment created by many respected top leaders.

Specifically, key behaviors and actions from women leaders and female-nominated male leaders known for supporting women’s leadership fall into the following themes:

- » Benefitting Own Team and the Overall Organization
- » Showing the Courage to Overcome Resistance to Gender Inclusion
- » Expanding the Visibility of Female Leaders
- » Accessing Key Developmental Experiences and Organizational Resources
- » Building Confidence for Female Leaders
- » Encouraging Honest Feedback and Communications

BENEFITTING OWN TEAM AND THE OVERALL ORGANIZATION

Leaders understood the practical benefits of advancing women’s leadership for both their teams and organizations. Recognizing that many biases push women out of STEM,¹⁶ male STEM leaders were particularly focused on the issue of developing and retaining talented STEM women for the good of their

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teams and the organization.

As one CEO of a financial services company stated, “Boards of Directors should be 50-50 men and women. Male leaders have a responsibility to develop others and need to have gender diversity as a goal...It's up to the majority group to pull in others to be part of the team.” As the Chief Technical Officer and Senior Vice President of Technology and Engineering of a multinational semi-conductor company said, “I share my perspectives on the challenges that women share in the workplace...and advise other male champions to do the same as part of bringing change to the culture of the company.”

Male leaders, particularly those in technology roles, were aware of the research on the positive effects of diversity and inclusion on innovation and creativity. As expressed by a Senior Vice President of a company in the life sciences and applied chemical markets, “I have a strong

interest in getting women into leadership positions. To be a champion for diversity is very important, because the industry is very male-dominated. Women leaders bring different perspectives, which we need for strategy. If you look at the customer base, it is 50 percent female, and there is something fundamentally wrong if the customer base is largely female but the company leadership is overwhelmingly male.”

A Chief Technology Officer of an automotive systems company spoke of his encouragement of mentoring between other male leaders and talented women engineers, “In situations when I have encouraged males to serve as mentors with female engineers, at first sometimes they are reluctant, because they have not had the

experience before. But invariably they have seen successful mentoring relationships and most come back and say, ‘I'm going to do more of it because I've seen the benefit.’”

Inclusive leaders' concern with fairness and equity is evident in their talent recruitment and their appreciation of the value that diversity brings to the organization. As one leader noted, “I'm a conduit for the goals of the organization. I consciously go out of my way to get more diversity into the company. I always try to get at least 50 percent women in my group. There's a lot of research that shows you need diversity for creativity and innovation, and it's just smart to do that.”

Leaders also acknowledged that inclusive leadership demands new learning. An Executive Vice-President and Chief Information Officer of a diversified global insurance organization stated, “The benefits are obvious—half of the technical talent are women. I want to be regarded as a leader with a balanced profile of technical

talent...To be an inclusive leader, you have to acknowledge that the person is different and therefore brings something different to the table. It's a new learning for many people.”

In talking about diversity initiatives that she has seen male champions take, a Regional President of a communications company has observed that she has seen, “leaders who have talked openly about diversity in their teams and have made some decisions about not hiring anyone until they have had options to look at more diverse slates of candidates.”

In the words of a female President and CEO of an international organization, describing her former boss, “He's creating the environment that says, ‘I care about



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all.' This attitude extends beyond gender inclusion, but he is modeling an environment that makes it harder for others not to be champions, too."

Actions for Male and Female Leaders: Examine the organization's alignment between the leadership models and the organization's vision and strategy, values, and mission. Insist on organization-wide gender balance on candidate slates. Encourage recruiters to include qualified female candidates for all job openings on your own teams. In succession planning sessions, be conscious of the stereotypes and biases that can exclude women from promotional opportunities. Examine the talent development processes in your organization for hidden biases that cause women to be excluded from leadership pipelines. Ask questions to find out what derails high-potential women and how you and the organization can prevent it. Solicit ideas for innovative ways to foster inclusion and then measure the results.

SHOWING THE COURAGE TO OVERCOME RESISTANCE TO GENDER INCLUSION

For some organizations, a culture of inclusion has progressed slowly. To foster cultures of inclusion, many male leaders accept the difficult task of modeling new behaviors such as creating dialogues to explore differences, *taking an active stance* in dealing with resistance in others, and setting boundaries when others exhibit unacceptable behaviors.

What can male leaders do to deal with resistance to gender inclusion by others in the organization? In the words of a male Managing Director of an investment organization, "I tell other men, 'So you think you're a male champion? Help them to be female champions, which they are'.... Sometimes you just have to get some boulders out of the way for them. Give them the forum,

the help, the guidance, the tools."

Resistance to women's leadership may come from anyone anywhere, including peers or direct reports. As one male Vice President of software for a high-tech company recalled, "There have been times where somebody has expressed to me that they think a woman is advancing more because of attractiveness. I've taken the opportunity to coach them to see their biases and be more inclusive."



As the Chief Technical Officer and Senior Vice President of Technology and Engineering of a multinational semi-conductor company said, "You really have to also look for blockers in an organization who are actively working against women and may not realize it. Blockers have biases that come out in non-verbal responses and passive resistance in the form of a lack of interaction with a women leader."

As a President of Technology Development for a major U.S. telecommunications company said, "Males have to stand up to skepticism and push-back from their male peers to explain to multiple people why a woman should be promoted. I've seen them have to have conversations explaining why a woman is the best candidate.... When challenged, they have to be willing to go out on a limb and say 'You can stay and work for her, or you can go.' If the focus is on talent, it's an appropriate stance to take."

Performance management and succession planning sessions were seen as occasions when conscious and unconscious biases and stereotypes may likely surface. Male leaders reported experiencing resistance in these settings when they proposed promotions or important, career-building job experiences

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for talented women. In anticipation of such resistance, many men prepared in advance to effectively defend their proposals by readily citing the reasons why the promotion or job assignment was appropriate or by questioning the challengers. A Chief Commercial Officer explained one of his tactics, “There is hidden bias. I find it so dismaying when you just know that somebody is heaping a pile of you-know-what...as an apparently rational argument for not selecting a woman for a particular role. All they’re doing is giving some kind of post-rationalization to their own bias. One of the best ways of countering it is to keep asking them questions to challenge their arguments.”

Some of the more difficult situations that some male leaders have encountered are those involving veiled implications of improper, unethical behavior that require their immediate, unequivocal responses. As one Vice President of software for a high-tech company said, “I’ve had guys say to me, ‘Wow, you’ve gotta *love* mentoring *her*.’ I tell them, ‘You are *totally* out of line here. I’m not blind, she’s an attractive woman, but it’s got nothing to do with the gray matter between her ears and I think she can be a fabulous executive in this company. It’s *entirely inappropriate* for you to make any comment or judgment. When they say ‘OK, I was just joking,’ I tell them, ‘*NOT* a good joke.’”

Although some male champions confided that they occasionally become discouraged and weary at having to defend their gender inclusive actions, all were strongly motivated that their recommendations should prevail over others’ objections. To increase the likelihood that their recommendations for advancing talented women would be accepted, these leaders arrived at meetings well-prepared with facts and data

to support their recommendations. The strong value these men placed on gender inclusion compelled them to act with courage to overcome resistance, pressure, and criticism from others.

When men believe they have a role to play, their motivation for fairness and justice creates more effective gender parity efforts.⁸ As one senior female leader, who has held numerous Board of Directors’ roles, described, “One way I’ve seen male leaders



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show interest in women success is that they have public as well as company visibility around the need to advance women. At a business session or meeting, you find men publicly telling women they did a good job, giving them this affirmation in a public forum. That kind of feedback means a great deal to women and I see more men willing to do this.”

Actions for Male Leaders: Show courage to stand up to disparaging, sexist remarks. Prepare in advance by obtaining information and data to support your decisions and to deal with challenges and resistance to women’s leadership. Recognize that your courageous actions provide a model for others to follow. Collaborate with women leaders and other inclusive male leaders to learn ways to support gender inclusion in the organization.

Actions for Female Leaders: In addition to the above actions, recognize that many men may believe in gender equity but may be unsure about appropriate actions to take to promote fairness and equity. Reinforce

actions and behaviors by male allies by acknowledging their contributions toward gender inclusion. Find ways to contribute to their knowledge and understanding of the ways in which they may support gender inclusion.

EXPANDING THE VISIBILITY OF FEMALE LEADERS

Senior leaders are in the position to provide opportunities for visibility to the talented people on their teams. Such opportunities may include taking the lead on critical projects or presenting at forums and meetings attended by other senior leaders. The feedback and discussion that may ensue then offers the chance for women to build relationships with the influential senior men and women in the organization.

Reflecting back on her past experiences, one President and CEO of an international agency said, “What the male leaders do to develop women as leaders... is firstly, they look for opportunities to give them a



chance, and secondly, push them outside their comfort zones to increase comfort limits. Even if we women don't have all of the information at our fingertips, or all of the skills required for the next leap of the job—they encourage us to take the gamble that we can do it.”

Male champions understand the val-

ue and importance of taking the time to coach and mentor in preparations for public events. Many will make coaching and mentoring a high priority and make time in their busy schedules for these activities. One male CIO offered this example, “There was one meeting where I spent a lot of time coaching her in advance of a big meeting, and it was like her ‘coming out party’ with senior leadership. I wanted it to go very well for her so I spent the time preparing with her to help make sure that it did.”

As a male Senior Vice President of a company in the life sciences, diagnostics, and applied chemical markets expressed, “I was working with a female leader who used to always take a seat in the corner in meetings. I told her that I wanted her to sit at the head of the table in every meeting so that she would be seen by others as a leader.”

Actions for Male Leaders: Recognize that the risks when women make their work visible may include having to deal with biases, stereotyping, and hostile remarks from both genders. Be alert to the need to point out biases when they occur in feedback from others. Maintain a supportive environment that enables talent to flourish.

Actions for Female Leaders: Take a proactive stance in your career management. Show a willingness to take on visible roles and receive candid performance feedback. Show support when other deserving colleagues are given visibility, and show appreciation for support in kind from others.

ACCESSING KEY DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

People learn from their experiences. The importance of on-the-job, key developmental experiences has been well-recognized by organizations and documented by learning development professionals.¹⁷ Access to other organizational resources such as executive shadowing and programs providing access

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to senior executives were cited as critical learning experiences. Combining challenging experiences with mentoring and coaching maximized the ability to capture the important lessons learned from their experiences. Many of the women interviewed continue to be regarded as high-potential leaders, even as they move into C-suite roles, because they are expected to grow into even larger roles in the future. How did they obtain leadership experiences that targeted their particular needs? How did they extract and optimize the value of their learning from key experiences?

Among the key developmental experiences utilized by companies are “executive shadowing” programs for leadership development. These experiences provide the opportunity to spend time with an executive leader, observe the executive performing in the role, and ask relevant questions. In describing her shadowing experience, a female leader of a global business team explained, “He allowed me, in a sense, to follow him around. I sat in on phone calls, I listened to everything he did, and I learned how to go about conducting business.” One senior executive in a major high-tech company used these rotational experiences to foster greater inclusion in his organization. He explained, “One of the things I would regularly do is to ask one of our high-performing women executives to be chief of staff to me. They would run my office, set agendas, and work with senior executives, participate in executive committee meetings. They functioned as an extension of my office to give them an opportunity to see the world top down. It was a very important developmental experience for them.”

As a woman Vice President of Engineering for an automotive systems company explained, “Early in my career I had an excellent male mentor who required me



to take assignments that would give me an appreciation of the entire company. He helped me be a better, more well-rounded leader. The company now identifies high-potential leaders early and gives them rotational assignments designed to broaden their knowledge of the company.”

As a Senior Vice President of a company in the life sciences, diagnostics, and applied chemical markets expressed, “When developing female leaders, it’s a matter of giving them opportunities across groups and organizations. It allows them to build a network across the departments and it allows them to build teams that are not just in their own area of influence. I put a company-wide program into place that provides these types of development opportunities.”

As one Vice President of software for a high-tech company explained, “There’s the direct mentoring and the organized formal programs where the company has gotten me involved with the technical women’s leadership pipeline. We pair them with a coach and a sponsor as part of their leadership development.”

As a Chief Technical Officer and Head of Engineering of a company that applies cutting-edge technology to financial data, “Since computer games are overwhelmingly male-centric, I have invited one of my female mentees to a meeting with a computer game company because it will be very valuable to get her perspective.”

Companies have learned that key experiences and access to organizational resources, such as coaching and mentoring, is one of the most powerful ways to develop and manage talent. As a female Executive Vice President, a leading candidate for a CEO role in a U.S.-based agribusiness, described a key experience, “I’m allowed to be in the room where

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I'm learning all the key lessons that it takes to be a senior-most leader in a company.”

Actions for Male Leaders: Use important, on-job developmental experiences coupled with mentoring and coaching to place talented women in leadership pipelines. Find ways to remove the barriers to women's access to key developmental assignments. To insure fairness and no hidden biases, put metrics into place that allow you to keep track of gender assignments to key experiences.

Actions for Female Leaders: Understand how you can be part of the company's growth strategy. Learn about the organization's most important developmental assignments and the prerequisites you need for them. Let your mentors know about the specific assignments you are seeking. Strategize with mentors about how to obtain and navigate through the developmental assignments.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE FOR FEMALE LEADERS

Much has been written in the popular press about women and self-confidence. It has been one of the most commonly-addressed topics in discussions about women's leadership development. Not surprisingly, prior research has shown that women who were one step away from C-suite positions were less confident than their male counterparts that they would achieve this goal.¹⁸ Many of the women interviewed for this study also confessed to a lack of confidence at various points in their careers. An important factor frequently attributed to their improvements in self-confidence was the support given by their mentors during critical timeframes or events. Many reported that their male champions pushed them out of their comfort zones to take the risks needed to try new things. As one leader in a governmental organization explained, “He

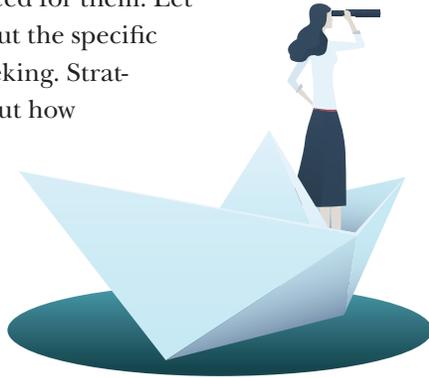
was giving me great positive feedback, but also testing me and pushing me to try something different or to look at things from a different angle. It was incredibly helpful and gave me more confidence.”

As one high-potential CHRO for a national retail electronics chain explained, “Helping me earlier in my career get clear on what was unique about me, what are my strengths, and where they are valuable in the organization helped me develop the courage of my convictions.”

In discussing possible future career moves with her boss at an earlier time in her career, one Senior Vice President of Human Resources for a major insurance company recalled, “He told me that if I aspired to run a business or be head of human resources, then I wouldn't get there from where I was. His encouragement helped me make the right decision, which was to move.”

In delivering effective mentoring and coaching to women leaders, many male champions were comfortable acknowledging perceived behavioral differences between men and women. For example, one Regional President of a telecommunications company said that, in addressing women's reluctance to ask for opportunities, her male boss often counseled her, “You need to say you want things, and you need to know you are more than capable of doing them. Your male peers will tell me that they are absolutely perfect for this job, and I know they are not.”

Many women felt that they possessed insufficient capability, i.e. they “didn't have what it takes” to perform at required levels. Their lack of self-confidence expressed itself as reluctance to be in the limelight or make presentations to large groups. An Executive



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Vice President of an investment management company recalled, “Our region was asked to give a presentation and my boss chose me to give it. I realized before I gave the presentation, that he was giving me the huge opportunity to be seen by a much broader audience.” As a Senior Vice President of a company in the life sciences, diagnostics, and applied chemical markets expressed, “Leaders are judged by the degree they demonstrate confidence. Confidence comes from experience of feeling supported or backed up by others you can rely on.”

Actions for Male Leaders: Encourage mentees to stretch beyond their comfort zones when appropriate. Provide opportunities for the successful experiences that bolster self-confidence and the risk-taking to try new and challenging experiences. Provide coaching and mentoring before and after such events to accelerate their learning and to demonstrate your support.

Actions for Female Leaders: Recognize that larger leadership roles will require you to make calculated risks amidst greater ambiguity and uncertainty. Seek honest and candid feedback after all presentations or during important projects. Practice operating outside your comfort zone and use the feedback and self-reflection to hone your skills and to learn from mistakes. Find ways to understand and leverage your strengths and address your challenge areas.

ENCOURAGING HONEST FEEDBACK AND COMMUNICATIONS

The feedback that women received from their male mentors was viewed as critical for their development as leaders and for their career advancement. In the words of one female leader in the retail electronics industry, “Male champions look for ways to help a person be more and more effective in applying their own unique strengths to the business problems at hand.” As a female Pres-

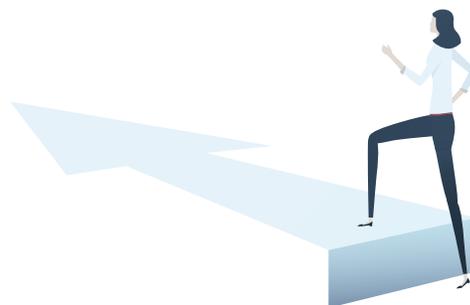
ident of a worldwide-banking and investment company stated, “When you have a mentor/sponsor relationship, honest feedback along the way is part of what comes with it.”

Male leaders stressed the importance of giving performance feedback informally and on a more frequent basis, particularly for the behaviors viewed as necessary for career advancement. They saw the value of constructive feedback and paid attention to how it was delivered. As stated by the Chief Information Officer of a worldwide banking and financial services company, “When providing performance feedback, I set the bar high and I get disappointed when someone is not fulfilling their potential. If they are capable of doing excellent things, and they are not, I tell them, ‘you can do better than this.’ I feel that giving candid feedback is better.”

As the Chief Technical Officer and Senior Vice President of Technology and Engineering of a multinational semi-conductor company said, “People often don’t receive straight feedback, but I am just trying to be helpful, so I call it as I see it. Tears are not absent in some of my feedback conversations, but if there is a performance issue, I am candid.”

Women leaders reported that they welcomed honest and candid feedback, no matter how direct the delivery. A Senior Vice President of Human Resources observed “He gave very direct feedback about areas you need to develop, and it was the only time in my career I’d had development discussions. His approach was to hit you in the

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face with it, but when bosses only focus on the positives, it doesn't tell you what areas you need to develop."

As a female Vice President of Engineering for an automotive systems company stated, "As a woman in an engineering function, you must be candid and very direct. You can't beat around the bush, not get to your point, and expect your male managers are going to get it. Your interaction style has to be direct in what you are requesting."

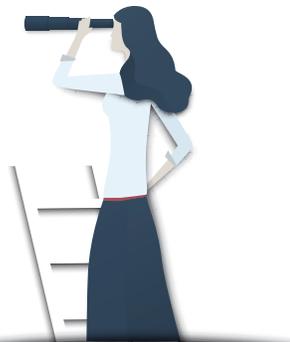
Some male champions view feedback as the opportunity for reverse mentoring and a two-way conversation. As one Chief Purchasing Officer said, "I give regular feedback. I don't wait for the half-year evaluation or something... and they're allowed to criticize me." These leaders are open to receiving information from those whom they are coaching and know that for feedback to be most effective, it is a two-way communication process.

A Vice Chair and Chief Technology Officer of a worldwide banking and financial services holding company described key features of their 5,000-member women's resource group, whose purpose is developing talent, "Our Executive Committee is involved and we are engaged in mentoring as well as reverse mentoring to build awareness at the top of the organization. Although it is coming from the women's network, we encourage men to participate and we are building courses that are open to all."

A more informal avenue for gender inclusion that has received much attention is communications in meetings. As one female CEO of a non-profit organization stated, "There are the important signals of support, such as showing up at the right events, but it's also smaller behaviors, for example, paying attention to how women get called on in meetings, and making the effort to not let

the woman's voice be the one that gets overlooked." Several senior leaders mentioned a new practice adopted for their meetings: insisting on allowing women to speak without interruption in meetings.

In describing the effective actions of male champions, giving clarity to the reasons for specific assignments was seen as helpful by a high-potential woman who later became the CEO of her company. "They're very direct and tell you 'we think you have a lot of potential.' It's not a 'hide the football' sort of thing. It's more like Let me give you the clarity—we think these roles are important for you."



Actions for Male Leaders: Be honest and candid in delivering your feedback—don't sugar-coat it. Give her examples of behaviors that will make a real difference in improving her chances at the bigger picture of career advancement. Give feedback that helps her see her strengths and address her challenges.

Actions for Women Leaders: In advance of receiving performance feedback, verbally communicate that you appreciate honesty and candor. If the feedback you receive seems too vague, ask for specific examples to help you improve performance. Be appreciative and say thank you or hand-write thank-you notes, particularly when the feedback has been honest, clear, and candid. In your own communications with others, learn to be candid, direct, and get to the point succinctly.

CONCLUSION

These behaviors by top leaders, who are known to be gender inclusive within and outside their organizations, provide positive examples for other leaders to emulate. These senior men and women, who work collaboratively

These behaviors by top leaders, who are known to be gender inclusive within and outside their organizations, provide positive examples for other leaders to emulate and show how men and women working collaboratively can create new workplace cultures of inclusion.

ratively as leaders, mentors/mentees, and colleagues, offer positive leadership lessons for fostering gender inclusion. The recommended actions by men and women that I have suggested in this article serve as starting points toward moving gender inclusion forward in organizations. In moving organizational cultures toward gender inclusion, many men mentor women leaders,¹⁹ and may contribute to creating “the conditions that increase women’s prospects for success.”²⁰ These behaviors and actions taken by leaders at the top of organizations show how men and women working collaboratively create new workplace cultures of inclusion.

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39 Positive Actions for Men and Women

THEME	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
Benefitting Team and Organization	<p>Dual Gender Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the organization's alignment between the leadership models and the organization's vision and strategy, values, and mission. • Insist on organization-wide gender balance on candidate slates. • Encourage recruiters to include qualified female candidates for all job openings on your own teams. • In succession planning sessions, be conscious of the stereotypes and biases that can exclude women from promotional opportunities. • Examine the talent development processes in your organization for hidden biases that cause women to be excluded from leadership pipelines. • Ask questions to find out what derails high-potential women and how you and the organization can prevent it. • Solicit ideas for innovative ways to foster inclusion and then measure the results.
Showing Courage to Overcome Resistance	<p>Actions for Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show courage to stand up to disparaging, sexist remarks. • Recognize that your courageous actions provide a model for others to follow. • Collaborate with women leaders to learn ways to support gender inclusion in the organization. <p>Actions for Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above actions, recognize that many men may believe in gender equity but may be unsure about appropriate actions to take to promote fairness and equity. • Reinforce actions and behaviors by male allies by acknowledging their contributions toward gender inclusion. • Find ways to contribute to their knowledge and understanding of the ways in which they may support gender inclusion.
Expanding the Visibility of Women	<p>Actions for Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that the risks when women make their work visible may include having to deal with biases, stereotyping, and hostile remarks from both genders. • Be alert to the need to point out biases when they occur in feedback from others. • Maintain a supportive environment that enables talent to flourish. <p>Actions for Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a proactive stance in your career management. • Show a willingness to take on visible roles and receive candid performance feedback. • Show support when other deserving colleagues are given visibility, and show appreciation for support in kind from others.
Accessing Developmental Experiences and Organizational Resources	<p>Actions for Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use important, on-job developmental experiences coupled with mentoring and coaching to place talented women in leadership pipelines. • Find ways to remove the barriers to women's access to key developmental assignments. • To insure fairness and no hidden biases, put metrics into place that allow you to keep track of gender assignments to key experiences. <p>Actions for Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how you can be part of the company's growth strategy. • Learn about the organization's most important developmental assignments and the prerequisites you need for them. • Let your mentors know about the specific assignments you are seeking. • Strategize with mentors about how to obtain and navigate through the developmental assignments.
Building Confidence for Women Leaders	<p>Actions for Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage mentees to stretch beyond their comfort zones when appropriate. • Provide opportunities for the successful experiences that bolster self-confidence and the risk-taking to try new and challenging experiences. • Provide coaching and mentoring before and after such events to accelerate their learning and to demonstrate your support. <p>Actions for Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that larger leadership roles will require you to make calculated risks midst greater ambiguity and uncertainty. • Seek honest and candid feedback after all presentations or during important projects. • Practice operating outside your comfort zone and use the feedback and self-reflection to hone your skills and to learn from mistakes. • Find ways to understand and leverage your strengths and address your challenge areas.
Encouraging Honest Feedback and Communication	<p>Actions for Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest and candid in delivering your feedback—don't sugar-coat it. • Give her examples of behaviors that will make a real difference in improving her chances at the bigger picture of career advancement. • Give feedback that helps her see her strengths and address her challenges. <p>Actions for Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In advance of receiving performance feedback, verbally communicate that you appreciate honesty and candor. • If the feedback you receive seems too vague, ask for specific examples to help you improve performance. • Be appreciative and say thank you or hand-write thank-you notes, particularly when the feedback has been honest, clear, and candid. In your own communications with others, learn to be candid, direct, and get to the point succinctly.