

Women in Leadership

Training Manual

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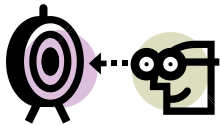
Don't just stand for the success of other women – insist on it.

Gail Blanke

Module One: Getting Started



Women make up almost half the US workforce, yet they are promoted to leadership positions at a rate far lower than are their male colleagues. What accounts for this leadership gap? How can organizations foster and develop women leaders? Studies show that having women in leadership positions brings many benefits to an organization, including greater accountability and a culture of work-life balance. Yet it can be difficult to determine the barriers to women's advancement, and even more difficult to surmount them. Learning how to foster and develop women as leaders not only benefits individual employees, but can benefit your entire organization.



Course Objectives

Research has consistently demonstrated that when clear goals are associated with learning, it occurs more easily and rapidly. With that in mind, let's review our goals for today.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Discuss the barriers women face in entering leadership positions
- Understand the importance of developing women leaders
- Determine steps your organization can take to foster women leaders
- Understand the benefits of developing women leaders
- Apply the principles of fostering women leaders to your own organization



*Women are leaders everywhere you look,
from a CEO to a housewife who holds
together a home.*

Denise Clarke

Module Two: Women and the Workforce



American women have always been part of the paid workforce, since the earliest days of our history. Since the 1940s, increasing numbers of women have been entering the paid workforce, and today the number of American women who are employed outside the home is the greatest it's ever been. Women are a key part of our economy and our organizations, yet they lag behind men in assuming leadership positions.

50% of the Population



Women make up half – 50% -- of the United States population. In the US, as in many countries around the world, women are the primary homemakers and caregivers as well, even when they have outside employment. Women are powerful consumers and make a large share of the decisions about household expenditures, too. In spite of the fact that they make up half the population, however, women are underrepresented in many of the most vital areas of society, including government, finance, and business. While the number of women in these areas has been growing steadily over the last decades, women still do not occupy positions of power at a level that reflects their numbers.



60% of College Degree Earners



Women earn college degrees at a higher rate than do men. As of 2013, 60% of all bachelor's degrees in the United States are earned by women. Women enter college at higher rates than do men, and are less likely to drop out than are men, too. Studies show that girls, and later women, tend to earn higher grades than do their male peers, and also seem to understand better the impact not earning a degree may have on their later earnings. Recent studies show, however, that women with college degrees earn less and are promoted less often than their male counterparts who do not hold degrees. Those same studies also indicate that women may take on more college debt than their male peers, yet earn less upon graduation and may struggle to pay those loans back. If women are earning degrees at a higher rate than any time in American history, it is imperative that we ask why this does not translate into more women in leadership positions in business, finance, and government.



47% of the US Workforce

One explanation that has been put forth for why women are underrepresented in leadership positions is that there simply aren't enough women in the workforce to fill those positions. However, 47% of workers in the United States are women. And while women, especially women of color, do tend to be concentrated in low-wage or part-time labor, women outnumber men in the professional fields as well. With such representation in the workforce, it would seem to make sense that women should also occupy a similar proportion of leadership positions. However, this is not the case. Even in fields where women make up the majority of the workforce, the majority of leadership positions tend to be held by men.



52% of Professional Jobs

Women have entered the professions at higher and higher rates over the last three decades in the United States. Women now hold more than half – 52% -- of all professional jobs. They earn professional degrees at about the same rate. While women are also overrepresented compared to men in low-wage, part-time, and service work, clearly women are represented in great numbers in the professional fields. Studies show, however, that women in the professional fields tend to be concentrated in lower level and administrative positions, rather than leadership or managerial positions. Even in professional fields where women far outnumber men, the leadership positions tend to be held by men.





Module Three: The Leadership Gap



In spite of their high numbers in the workplace, including the professional fields, women are still subject to what many studies call the “leadership gap.” This refers to the fact that even in fields where women make up the majority of workers, leadership positions are overwhelmingly occupied by men. Many theories have been put forth to explain the leadership gap, but none satisfactorily explain why that gap exists even as women earn degrees at higher rates than do men and enter the workforce at higher rates than ever.

Women are Underrepresented in Leadership



Broadly speaking, women are underrepresented in leadership positions. This is not just true of the paid workforce and the professions, but extends to politics, government, and almost every other arena of society. This is especially true at the uppermost levels of leadership, with women occupying just 14% of senior leadership positions in corporate America, and only around 20% of government leadership positions. The United States ranks 98th out of 100 countries in terms of women’s representation in governmental leadership, and ranks far behind Europe in terms of women in corporate leadership. And while women are entering the workforce at greater rates than ever before, their rates of representation appear to be slipping. All this in spite of gains in terms of women earning college degrees and entering the professions.



Women in Executive Positions



The leadership gap between men and women is most apparent at the highest levels of business. While women make up more than half the labor force in the professional fields, they hold just 14.6% of executive positions. If you look around the executive suite, it doesn't get much better for women. Just about 17% of Fortune 500 board seats are held by women, and less than 5% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women. While there are some high profile executive women blazing trails, such as Sheryl Sandberg of Facebook and Marissa Meyer of Yahoo, the most influential positions at the most influential firms are overwhelmingly in male hands. Women pay a financial price for this as well – less than 10% of the top earners in the United States are women! However, while these numbers are grim, it is worth noting that women's representation in executive positions has been steadily increasing since 1980, when there were no female Fortune 500 CEOs.



Women in Finance, Health Care, and Law

The leadership gap is often most pronounced in fields where women have the greatest presence. This seems counterintuitive. It would seem that more women in a field would give rise to more women in leadership positions. However, studies show that even as women gain in fields such as finance and law, they still lag far behind men in gaining leadership positions. For instance, in the financial sector, women make up about 54% of the labor force. They also earn about 44% of master's degrees in business, including 37% of MBAs. However, they hold only about 12% of executive officer positions, and about 18% of board seats. As of 2014, there are no female CEOs in the financial sector. The legal sector shows similar patterns. Women earn a little less than half of all law degrees conferred, and about 45% of law associates are female. However, at the level of no equity partner only 25% are women, and among equity partners only 15% are women. The healthcare field has the largest gap. Women make up nearly 80% of the labor force in healthcare, including earning just fewer than 50% of all medical degrees. Only about 15% of all executive officers in health care are women, and less than 13% of executive board seats are held by women. No health care or social assistance organization has a female CEO as of 2014. How is it possible that women are so underrepresented in leadership in fields where they have a commanding presence?



Historical Trends



Looking at the statistics about the leadership gap, it can seem depressing or hopeless. There are some historical trends that are important to note, however. Women's representation in almost all fields of work, but particularly in law, medicine, finance, and the professions more broadly has been growing over the last 30 years. There are about 70 million American women in the workforce today, and that number is expected to grow to nearly 80 million by 2018. While women still lag behind men in executive positions, they occupy more today than they did in 1980, where no Fortune 500 company had a female CEO. Today about a dozen do. Women have steadily earned more bachelors, advanced, and professional degrees, another trend that is expected to continue. If these trends hold, an even greater number of women will be poised to enter leadership positions in all sectors of society. Whether they will or not remains an open question, however.



I have yet to hear a man ask how to balance a family and a career.

Gloria Steinem

Module Four: Barriers to Women's Leadership



Even with all the gains women have made in education and workforce participation, many barriers to women's leadership still exist. Some of these barriers are the result of deeply entrenched cultural messages about women. They may seem invisible, or simply the result of common sense, rather than any systematic effort to bar women from leadership. It is important to explore these barriers and create ways to surmount them if women are to assume more leadership positions.

Gender Differences are Overemphasized



No one would argue that men and women are exactly the same. However, the differences between men and women are often overemphasized, and used to justify the lack of women in leadership. For instance, the idea that men are "more rational" and women are "more emotional" is often used to explain why women do not assume executive functions more often. Similarly, physical differences in size or strength may be used to justify the lack of women in some fields. Ideas about women as natural caregivers are also commonly invoked to explain why women make good managers but poor executives. In truth, all humans are capable of a wide range of traits. And while men and women may approach the world differently, based on how they are socialized, these differences seldom mean that one gender is automatically better at leadership, management, or any other aspect of life. This overemphasis on gender differences means that qualified female candidates are often dismissed out of hand for leadership positions.



Gender Differences are Undervalued



Men and women are socialized differently – they learn how to operate in the world differently, and this can impact their approach to leadership. Research shows that men and women often use very different communication styles, for instance, with women more focused on relationships and men more focused on communicating facts. Women tend to be more collaborative, and men more competitive, according to research. These gender differences are often undervalued, and used to justify the dominance of men in leadership. For instance, our “get it done” culture may undervalue female leaders’ focus on building relationships. Learning to see women’s leadership traits and styles as different from, but equally valuable as, men’s leadership styles in one key step in increasing women’s leadership.



Women Lack Professional Networks

One of the most profound barriers to women’s leadership is the degree to which women lack professional networks. Numerous studies have shown that men’s professional networks are instrumental to their success. A strong network alerts you to opportunities, may give you a foot in the door with a new organization, serves as a source of support and development, and generally encourages personal and professional growth. People who lack a strong professional network typically lag behind those with solid networks in terms of employment, promotion, and compensation. Women may face barriers to forming networks for many reasons. Men may be reluctant to network with women because of an overemphasis on gender differences or because of fear of appearing to engage in inappropriate relationships by socializing with female colleagues. (Our culture still lacks a good script for non-sexual or non-romantic friendships between men and women.) Women may be reluctant to network with men for the same reasons. Women are also the primary caregivers and homemakers, and so family responsibilities may mean that after-work socializing and other networking activities are not possible or not prioritized.



Work and Family Conflict

The conflict between work and family often underlies the lack of women in leadership. Even in two-partner families, women tend to take on the bulk of responsibility for childcare, housework, and other family needs. Many women also find themselves the primary caretaker for an aging parent. Cultural messages that a woman who puts her career before her family is a “bad mother” put a great deal of pressure on women to balance work and family, and to sacrifice career for family if it becomes necessary. While not all women who are in the paid labor force have children or otherwise engage in care work, a large proportion do and thus face this dilemma. Because many organizations do not promote work-life balance, women who must balance career and family often miss out on opportunities that other



colleagues can leverage. When it comes time for promotion, this may be used against a female candidate who is seen to not be sufficiently invested in her career due to family obligations. Family obligations may also mean women forgo important educational and development opportunities that would help them advance into leadership.



Define success on your own terms, achieve it by your own rules, and build a life you are proud to live.

Anne Sweeney

Module Five: Traits of Women's Management



While it is important not to overemphasize gender differences, studies show that women often do lead differently than men do. By examining some common traits of women's leadership, it is possible to see how having women in leadership positions can benefit your organization. Not every woman will lead exactly the same way, any more than every man leads the same way. The traits that are common to women's leadership styles, however, can be highly valuable to your organization, both in terms of employee development and in terms of the bottom line in a rapidly globalizing

business world.

Women Lead By Uniting Diverse Groups



One of the common themes in women's leadership is a focus on uniting diverse groups. Because women in general tend to be more collaborative, they focus on finding common ground and getting everyone to buy in to a common vision. This has clear advantages when working in a fast paced, team based environment.

Getting diverse groups to work together rather than compete increases the chances of ultimate success and also helps to alleviate conflict. Women leaders have been shown to focus on people's commonalities rather than their differences. In this way, they are able to get people who are on the surface very different, whether in terms of culture or function or background, to pull together toward a common goal. This builds workplaces that are more collegial and collaborative, in which interpersonal relationships are valued and maintained.



Women Value Work-Life Balance



Perhaps because they so often struggle to achieve it, women tend to value work-life balance more than do men. Women in leadership positions tend to create workplaces where work-life balance is easier to achieve (or at least work toward); including offering flexible work arrangements (work from home, flex time, shared positions), family-friendly benefits, and otherwise acknowledging that employees' non-work lives are important and should be respected. Women leaders may also be less likely to penalize employees who take time off for family obligations or who do not work overtime due to the need to care for children when it comes time for advancement. Broadly speaking, women leaders foster a work environment where excellence is important, but employees are not expected to sacrifice their families and personal lives for the sake of the bottom line. This tends to lead to higher employee morale, which in turn can foster greater job satisfaction and employee retention.



Women Value Interpersonal Relationships

Much research has shown that women tend to be more relationship-focused than are men, in all aspects of life. Women leaders tend to focus on interpersonal relationships in the workplace much more than do their male peers. They do this by seeking to build rapport and relationships with colleagues and direct reports, and engaging in “rapport talk” – conversation in which they check in with others, talk about feelings, or otherwise connect. In contrast, men tend to engage in “report talk,” where they are interested in facts and getting a task done. Employees tend to respond better to a leader who seems to be personally invested in them, and for this reason may respond better to women’s leadership style of building interpersonal relationships. This focus on interpersonal relationships gives rise to workplaces where employees feel heard and valued, and where they are much more likely to build healthy collaborative professional relationships as well. While women’s leadership style has sometimes been critiqued as inefficient compared to men’s, studies show that workplaces where there is a focus on building and maintaining interpersonal relationships may in fact be more productive and may have better employee retention.



Women Value Accountability



One of the most intriguing findings to come out of studies of women's leadership is that women tend to value accountability more highly than their male peers appear to. Organizations with women in leadership positions tend to have cultures of personal and group accountability, and in general to foster honesty and transparency. Women's focus on interpersonal relationships seems to foster this sense of accountability. When people are invested in each other, they are more likely to want to hold themselves and others to high standards. A culture of accountability is one in which people take responsibility for their mistakes, are acknowledged for their efforts and successes, and do not seek to undermine others. The greater collaboration that is found when women are leaders further fosters this sense of accountability, as people who work together are invested in each other's success. A culture of accountability also fosters respect for others, which may lead to fewer interpersonal problems (up to and including harassment), as well as honesty, which can lead to fewer incidences of theft of other such issues.



I always did something I was a little not ready to do. I think that's how you grow.

Melissa Mayer

Module Six: Benefits of Women's Leadership



Once you examine some of the common traits of women's leadership, it is clear that there are many benefits to having women in leadership positions. One excellent way to encourage your organization to focus on developing women as leaders is to articulate the many benefits of having women in such positions. While we can never assume that every woman leader will demonstrate all the common traits of women's leadership – nor can we assume that male leaders will not demonstrate any of these traits – putting women in leadership positions does increase the chances of your organization benefiting from these practices.

Greater Collaboration



One of the greatest benefits of having women in leadership positions is that they foster greater collaboration. Because women tend to be relationship focused, they are often able to draw in stakeholders from many different areas to work toward a common goal. Add in the tendency of women leaders to unite diverse groups around common goals and values, and it becomes clear that women leaders value and encourage collaboration.

A culture of greater collaboration is beneficial for countless reasons. Collaboration helps to build relationships among employees and across traditional divisions such as department or function. It helps to clarify common goal and values, which can further boost employee investment in the organization. When people collaborate, they invest in each other. And when people feel invested in, they have higher morale, are more productive, and are more likely to stay and grow within the organization. Finally, greater collaboration makes the best use of the organization's most valuable resource – its people.



Culture of Work-Life Balance



Organizations with women in leadership positions tend to have cultures of work-life balance. They may offer flexible work arrangements – working from home, flextime, shared positions, or part-time options – that allow employees to maintain their career while also attending to life outside the office. Organizations with a culture of work-life balance also help to foster a sense that employees’ lives and happiness outside the office are beneficial to the organization, too. A culture of work-life balance means that employees don’t feel as if they have to choose work or family life, but can instead attend to both equally. Even more, a culture of work-life balance tends to promote employee satisfaction and happiness, stave off burnout, and promote retention. Employees may also end up taking fewer sick days or otherwise being absent, which is good for the bottom line. A culture of work-life balance helps employees feel like people, not just cogs in a machine. This in turn promotes happier, healthier workplaces.



Culture of Accountability

Because they value personal accountability, for themselves and others, women leaders tend to promote a culture of accountability across the organization. A culture of accountability is one in which people take responsibility for their actions rather than seek to blame others, in which people are rewarded and recognized for their efforts and successes, and in which people act with honesty and integrity. The benefits of such a culture are clear and obvious. Accountability fosters a greater sense of trust, both between employee and peers and between employees and management. The knowledge that one will not be blamed for things they did not do, and that they will not be punished for owning up to a mistake, makes people feel safer and more valued at work. On a larger scale, accountability and transparency help to discourage stealing, dishonesty, policy violations, and more – including sexual harassment, financial misconduct, and even more egregious violations. A culture of accountability promotes workplace safety and workplace harmony, which results in better productivity, better retention, better morale, and a better bottom line.



Assists in Recruiting Millennials



One of the most surprising benefits of having women in leadership positions is that it helps in recruiting millennials – an incredibly important group of new workers. Millennials overwhelmingly want to work for organizations where they see women in leadership positions. This appears to hold true for both male and female millennials. Young women, especially, are likely to be less attracted to work at organizations where they do not see women in the ranks of leadership. Seeing women in leadership demonstrates to these young women that they have the potential to advance within the organization. It also indicates a dedication to gender equality, something that millennials of both genders say in repeated studies is important to them. Millennials are also likely to value the traits common to women’s leadership, such as accountability, diversity, and relationships. If your organization wishes to recruit millennials – and there is hardly an organization that does not – having women in visible leadership positions is one key component of your recruiting strategy.



Whatever you want in life, someone else is going to want it to. Believe in yourself enough to accept that you have an equal right to it.

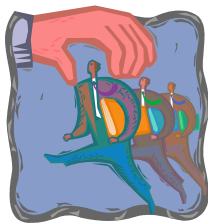
Diane Sawyer

Module Eight: Actively Recruit Women



Actively recruiting women should be part of any organization's recruitment plan. This is even more important if you are in an industry where women are underrepresented overall, or heavily represented in lower positions but underrepresented in leadership. Creating initiatives to recruit women at all levels of the organization helps to create a culture which is gender-diverse, and also creates opportunities to develop women leaders from within, starting at the earliest stages. There are several steps you can take to actively recruit women to your organization.

Discover Your Barriers to Hiring



An important first step is to discover your barriers to hiring women. There are many reasons why an organization might have difficulty recruiting and hiring women candidates. It might be helpful to interview some current women employees, and also to examine research conducted on why women prefer some types of organizations over others. Common barriers to recruiting and hiring women include:

- Lack of women in leadership
- Lack of recruiting efforts directed at women, especially in fields where they are underrepresented
- An organizational history or culture of sexism or sexual harassment, including lawsuits
- Lack of coverage of women's health – pregnancy, contraception, etc. – in benefits packages
- No organizational policy of maternity or parenting leave



It may be difficult to determine exactly what barriers are in place to hiring women, but it is vital to assess the organization to see if you can determine this. If systemic barriers to hiring women exist, even the best recruitment efforts may fail.

Discover Your Barriers to Retention



Another key area to examine is your organization's barriers to retention of female employees. If your organization regularly hires women, but finds that there is significant turnover among them, this is a clue that there are barriers to retention. Examining employee exit interviews is one excellent source of data on why women do not stay with your organization. While not every woman who leaves your organization will do so for reasons grounded in gender, it is key to identify whether there are systemic barriers to retaining women employees. Common barriers to retention include:

- Lack of opportunity for advancement
- An organizational history or culture of sexism or sexual harassment, including lawsuits
- Lack of coverage of women's health – pregnancy, contraception, etc. – in benefits packages
- No organizational policy of maternity or parenting leave
- Culture that does not promote work-life balance
- Pay inequities between male and female employees in the same or similar positions

Recruit via Women's Organizations



Women's professional organizations are a valuable resource when creating efforts to actively recruit women into your organization. Umbrella organizations for professional women, such as the American Association of University Women and the National Association of Women Executives, are one place to start. You should also look to large professional organizations in your field to see if they have women's caucuses or women's interest groups that can help in your recruitment efforts. Also look to organizations specifically for women in specific fields, such as the Financial Women's Organization or organizations for women in STEM. When creating efforts to recruit new college graduates, look to women's organizations on local university campuses, which are often organized around majors or industries (women in engineering, for example). These are all potential resources of talented women.



Create and Promote a Woman-Friendly Culture



One of the major barriers to hiring and retention is the existence of – or the perception of – an organizational culture that is not friendly to women. The most obvious examples of this are of course organizational history and culture of sexism, discrimination, and harassment. These should have course be rooted out immediately. However, there are more subtle issues that may make an organizational culture less friendly to women. Seeking out these issues and helping to create an organizational culture that is woman-friendly is vital if you are to recruit and retain women. Common features of a woman-friendly organizational culture include:

- Zero tolerance for sexism, gender-biased language, and sexual harassment
- Policies which consider women, such as maternity leave and coverage of women's health in benefits packages
- Flexible work options
- Women in visible leadership
- Women's networking and training opportunities
- Women at all levels of the organization



*Women are not inherently passive or peaceful.
We're not inherently anything but human.*

Robin Morgan

Module Nine: Encourage Networking Opportunities



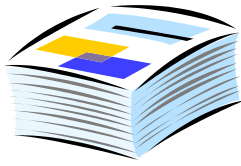
Research has repeatedly shown that a strong professional network is vital to career advancement and success. Other studies have shown that men tend to have larger, stronger professional networks than do their female peers. Women may miss out on networking due to entrenched ideas about the genders, unwillingness (either their own or male colleagues') to engage in mixed-gender networking, or due to work-family conflicts that prevent them from accessing networking opportunities. A key strategy in developing women leaders is creating and encouraging networking opportunities for women, both within the organization and outside of it.

Create a Women's Networking Group

One of the simplest and most powerful steps you can take to encourage women's networking within your organization is to create a women's networking group. Peer networking groups have been shown to be valuable sources of support, mentoring, and development. Work with Human Resources or another appropriate division to create a networking group for women employees – or several, if it makes more sense to have groups that are geared for women at different levels of the organization (administration, management, etc.). Then be sure that employees are aware that the group or groups exist! You may fit this group into already existing peer networking groups, or it may be the beginning or a larger program that encourages peer networking in a number of ways.



Encourage Women to Join Organizations



Encourage women within your organization to join women's professional organizations. You may need to make women aware of such organizations. You can provide literature, discuss them in employee reviews, or invite representatives to come talk to your employees. Women's professional organizations are valuable sources of development and training, networking, support, and information. When possible, subsidize membership fees. In addition to encouraging women to join such organizations, encourage and reward participation, such as presenting at conferences or holding leadership positions within the professional organization.



Networking Builds Confidence

No matter their gender, leaders need confidence. Studies show that a strong network helps to build confidence. Because networking gives people a chance to build and use skills, as well as build relationships, it builds self-confidence and self-esteem. Because women may sometimes lack the confidence needed for leadership – or be perceived to lack the confidence needed – due to ideas about gender and entrenched barriers to women's leadership, developing confidence is vital. Investing in women's networking is an investment in not only the individual confidence of women employees, but in women's leadership more broadly in your organization.

Networking and Recruiting

Having strong
be a major asset
way that people
looking to recruit
may have the



networking opportunities for women in your organization can when attempting to recruit women. Networks are a major of all genders hear about job opportunities. When you are qualified women, it is likely that women in your organization perfect candidate in their own networks. Encouraging women to network with women in their field or industry can be a major step forward in recruiting more women. Professional networking organizations are also a major way to recruit, through advertising jobs on their websites or in their newsletters, by attending their events to meet women in the industry or field, and by getting your organization known as a place that supports women's leadership and development. Encouraging women to network benefits individual employees, but also has the potential to benefit the organization as a whole.







I think the key is for women not to set any limits.

Martina Navratilova

Module Ten: Pair Women with Mentors



Mentoring is one of the best investments you can make in employees. Studies show that women especially benefit from being mentored by other successful women. Taking the time to pair women with mentors demonstrates that your organization invests in helping women grow and develop not just in their current roles, but toward their career goals.

Benefits of Mentoring

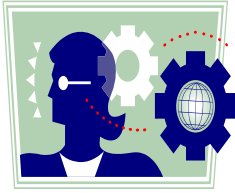


Numerous studies have shown the benefits of mentoring. Being paired with a mentor demonstrates organizational investment in each individual employee. Mentors also serve as models for what is possible within the organization, and within an industry or field. Mentors serve as valuable support persons and sounding boards, and can often provide their mentees with training and development experiences and one on one chances to grow. Mentors also benefit from the mentoring process, as they are able to share their knowledge and expertise and feel invested in the future of the organization. Other benefits of mentoring programs include:

- Increased employee investment in the organization
- Employee investment in their own growth and development
- Improved succession planning
- Fostering a culture of continual learning



Think Creatively



When many people think of mentoring, they think of pairing an employee with someone who occupies the position he or she might aspire to. However, given that women are often underrepresented in management and leadership, it may not be possible to pair every female employee with a female mentor in her division or specialty. Think creatively when pairing women with mentors. You might pair a female employee with a female mentor who is in another division but has expertise that can benefit the employee. It is also appropriate to pair a female employee with a male mentor, if it is a good fit in terms of personality, expertise, and goals. While it is desirable to pair women with female mentors, the ultimate goal should be to foster a strong mentorship relationship, which can absolutely happen across gender lines. Also be willing to encourage female employees to find women mentors from outside the organization, drawing on their networks.



Incorporate Mentoring at Every Stage

Mentoring should be incorporated at every stage of an employee's career. Do not wait to pair a woman with a mentor until she expresses leadership or management goals. Instead, pair women employees with mentors almost as soon as they begin work at your organization. They may have different mentors at different stages, or may work with the same mentor long-term. Incorporating mentoring at every stage of an employee's career allows for the greatest potential for benefit from the mentorship experience. Incorporating mentoring at every stage of the career demonstrates long-term investment in employees and may help to promote retention as well.



Encourage Women to Mentor

Mentees are only one half of the mentorship equation. It is also important to have mentors who are willing to take mentees! Encourage women in your organization to mentor. This not only extends the benefits of mentorship to those being mentored, but allows women to share their expertise and experience with other women. While it is appropriate for women to mentor men as well, by encouraging women to mentor other women you demonstrate an investment in developing women and also in sharing the expertise of women leaders already in your organization. Being a mentor can be a valuable development experience, so in the process women may develop their own leadership skills and be able to advance their own careers as well as their mentees'.







A good goal is like strenuous exercise – it makes you stretch.

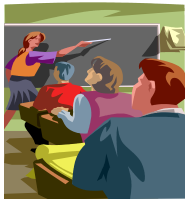
Mary Kay Ash

Module Eleven: Create Educational Opportunities



Growth, development, and learning must be continuous and incorporated at all stages of a person's career, regardless of gender. A key step in developing women into leaders is creating and encouraging educational opportunities. Much like creating networking and training opportunities, there are a number of things you can do to create and encourage educational opportunities that will benefit your female employees specifically and grow them into the next generation of women leaders.

Encourage the Learning of Leadership Skills



Leadership is not a fixed quality of a person, but a set of skills that can be learned. Encourage women to learn leadership skills throughout their careers. This can be done through formal training and workshops, whether they are about leadership skills generally or geared toward women specifically. Women also learn leadership by leading. Give your women employees chances to practice leadership skills by letting them take on leadership roles – low stakes roles at first (such as leading meetings), with steady growth into more responsibility. If there are external workshops or courses on leadership skills that would be valuable, encourage women to take them. The organization should subsidize this if possible. When working one on one with women employees, encourage them to read widely about leadership and to take on leadership roles in professional organizations and other settings where they can practice leadership skills.



Internal Programs and Trainings



Develop and offer an array of internal programs and trainings on leadership skills and other valuable skills. These may be directed specifically at women, or may be directed at employees more generally regardless of gender. In developing these trainings and workshops, consider how to encourage employees (especially women) to attend them. You may make them mandatory, or make them highly suggested as part of development plans. The advantage to internal trainings is that they can be conducted within the organizations' training budget, and logistically they are more accessible than offsite trainings. Your women's networking groups are a valuable resource here, as they can tell you what women want and need to see offered and may offer up experts who can facilitate.



Outside Training and Workshops

Do not negate outside training and workshops when creating plans for developing women leaders. Take advantage of external trainings geared specifically at women, or which teach important leadership skills which can benefit employees of all genders. Encourage women to seek these out, and make them aware of potentially valuable courses. These may be offered by for-profit companies, universities and colleges, or professional organizations. Annual conferences of professional organizations offer another valuable venue for training and skills development. When creating development plans with female employees, include such trainings and workshops as options. When possible, the organization should subsidize such trainings.



Encourage Training at Every Stage of the Career

Like mentoring and other development, training and education should be part of every career stage. While the focus of leadership training is often on those who are currently in or moving into leadership roles, the development of a leader begins long before this. Encourage your women employees to seek out training at every stage. When creating development plans, work with employees to find training and workshops which will foster their goals and ambitions. This should include a mix of internal and external trainings, and trainings directed specifically at women as well as more general leadership trainings. Incorporating education and training at every stage of the career communicates that the organization invests in women and that there is potential for advancement.





Successful people understand that you don't need to make things complicated.

Anne McKevitt

Module Twelve: Wrapping Up



Although this course is coming to a close, we hope that your journey to learning how to develop women's leadership. Please take a moment to review and update your action plan. This will be a key tool to guide your progress in the days, weeks, months, and years to come. We wish you the best of luck on the rest of your travels!

Words from the Wise

- **Lillian Vernon:** I became successful due to several reasons. I never gave up and I never let anyone or anything get in my way.
- **Barbara Walters:** Most of us have trouble juggling. The woman who says she doesn't is someone whom I admire but have never met.
- **Melinda Gates:** A woman with a voice is by definition a strong woman. But the search to find that voice can be remarkably difficult.
- **Madame CJ Walker:** There is no royal flower-strewn path to success. And if there is, I have not found it, for if I have accomplished anything in life, it is because I have been willing to work hard.

