



NEW STUDY FROM WORKING MOTHER: THE GENDER GAP AT THE TOP: WHAT'S KEEPING WOMEN FROM LEADING CORPORATE AMERICA

77 percent of women say a top barrier to gender equity is lack of information on how to advance

June 25, 2019 (New York, NY)—The Working Mother Research Institute unveiled results from its powerful new study: [The Gender Gap at the Top: What's Keeping Women from Leading Corporate America?](#) about why there aren't more women in the C-suite, taking a comprehensive look at the experience of women—and men—at all levels of corporations to ascertain what perceptions and realities are keeping women out of the highest ranks in corporate America. The research provides both quantitative and qualitative results, and offers real solutions to close this gap.

“We repeatedly call out that there's a deficit of women at the upper echelons of management, and institute policies and programs intended to fix that, but the truth is, change is slow,” said Subha V. Barry, President of Working Mother Media. “The most stunning findings from this study are that many women don't know what career paths they need to get to the top, don't understand the importance of relationships with mentors and sponsors, and are not encouraged to take on revenue-generating jobs that are often requisite for the highest levels of corporate America.”

The research identifies four major areas that impact women's desire and ability to reach the top of their organizations:

Lack of awareness/knowledge by women of what's needed to move up and what opportunities exist

- Women are less likely than men to have a clear vision of how to advance their careers, including acquiring Profit & Loss experience. A significant percentage of women neither understand nor have access to information about career paths that lead to C-suite positions, and are unaware of whether they are considered high-potential or C-suite material. Many women don't realize there are training and development programs, career guidance, mentoring and sponsorship programs available to them.

Key Stats:

— 48 percent of men say they have received detailed information on career paths to P&L jobs in the past 24 months versus just 15 percent of women

- 77 percent of women say a top barrier to gender equity is lack of information on how to advance
- 28 percent of women versus 53 percent of men participated in a leadership-development program in the past 24 months

Insufficient ability to build relationship capital and understanding of how crucial this is to success

- Far more men than women recognize the critical importance and benefits derived from networking, mentoring, and sponsorship in elevating one's personal profile, developing one's brand, and finding allies to help move up.

Key Stats:

- 54 percent of men had a career discussion with their mentor or sponsor in the past 24 months versus just 39 percent of women
- Men are three times as likely to have been encouraged to consider a P&L role and twice as likely to have received a promotion in the past 24 months

Lack of confidence and the willingness to take risks for new jobs or stretch assignments

- The importance of being able to visualize oneself at the top, to seek role models, and to be encouraged cannot be overestimated. Some women hesitate to take on stretch assignments or new positions unless confident they already have all of the qualifications. Moreover, there are not enough role models for women to visualize themselves in these roles, as well as too few senior executive women to provide coaching, mentoring and sponsorship for more-junior women.

Key Stats:

- 59 percent of men aspire to be CEO versus 40 percent of women
- Multicultural women are more than twice as likely to aspire to be CEO and less likely to be satisfied with their current level than white women
- Black and Hispanic women are more likely to aspire to CEO than Asian women
- 14 percent of women versus 46 percent of men have been encouraged to consider P&L roles

Lack of corporate cultures that “walk the talk” of accountability in creating opportunities for women

- Real implementation—and holding people accountable for measurable results—is rare. Companies are checking the boxes with diversity programs, especially those aimed at advancing women, but they aren't ensuring successful implementation of programs by tying results to managers' compensation and promotions. The business case for diversity must assume the same degree of importance in the C-suite as market share and bottom line.

Key Stats:

- 51 percent of women versus 69 percent of men agree that senior management is open to different styles of leadership
- The top obstacles for women cited by survey respondents were lack of training, lack of information about jobs, and understanding career paths
- 64 percent of women versus 21 percent of men cited a male-dominated culture as the reason they never held a P&L job

This research is sponsored by AON, JLL, Johnson & Johnson, Prudential and State Farm.

METHODOLOGY

In October 2018, a nationally representative sample of 3,038 professionals—2,289 women and 749 men across race/ethnicity and levels of experience - was surveyed with more than 100 questions detailing demographics, aspirations, career progress and derailing factors. There was an even distribution of respondents in their early, middle and late career, as well as at varying levels in their companies and with varying degrees of experience managing a P&L. We define P&L as having responsibility that involves monitoring the net income after expenses for a department or entire organization, with direct influence on how company resources are allocated.

Respondents represented 24 industries, including accounting, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, nonprofits, pharmaceuticals, professional services and technology.

We followed up the quantitative research with eight in-person focus groups and six executive interviews conducted by WFD Consulting, giving us extensive qualitative and experiential information to better understand the context for the data.

ABOUT WORKING MOTHER MEDIA

Working Mother Media (WMM), a division of Bonnier Corporation, publishes *Working Mother* magazine and its companion website, workingmother.com. [The Working Mother Research Institute](#), the [National Association for Female Executives](#), [Diversity Best Practices](#), and [Culture@Work](#) are also units within WMM. WMM's mission is to serve as a champion of culture change and *Working Mother* magazine is the only national magazine for career-committed mothers. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Pinterest](#).

PRESS CONTACT

Stefanie McNamara, 212.779.5119, stefanie.mcnamara@bonniercorp.com