NAPABA CONVENTION – WLN WORKSHOP

2022 PROGRAM
Thursday, November 3, 2022

WLN 2: How to Become Powerful at Work
(1:15– 2:15 pm PT)
Dr. Payal Sharma studies organizational dynamics and power and politics in the workplace. Her interactive lecture will analyze what is known about power in organizational research, including how her love of rap music led her to research power dynamics among video models in the entertainment industry. Dr. Sharma will teach us practical strategies to make power accessible to us at work, whether we are associates or partners, employees or managers, and how to leverage that power to impact our career outcomes and remedy power imbalances.

Moderator: Shaila Lakhani Ohri, Exelon, Assistant General Counsel
Speaker: Prof. Payal Sharma, University of Nevada Las Vegas

WLN 3: A Panel Discussion with APA Women Influencers and Power Brokers
(2:30- 3:45 ET)
This panel will feature women lawyers from a variety of backgrounds including government, non-profit, in-house, and law firm, who have found power and influence in social media, podcasting, politics, and in their respective careers. They will discuss how to find your voice, take your seat at the table, and influence your teams, peers, and bosses, as well as share their personal stories of how they have navigated power dynamics and become influential at work and elsewhere.

Moderator: Bonnie Lau, Morrison & Foerster LLP, Partner
Speakers

- Christine Chen, APIA Vote, Executive Director
- Kalpana Srinivasan, Susman Godfrey, Managing Partner
- Cecillia Xie, former BigLaw, social media and TikTok influencer
- Sarita Venkat, Cisco, Head of Global IP Transactions, host of Heels of Justice podcast
How to Become Powerful at Work
Speaker
• Dr. Payal Sharma, Assistant Professor of Management, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)

Moderator
• Shaila Lakhani Ohri, Assistant General Counsel, Exelon
Agenda

1. Warm-up
2. An evidence-based toolkit: 3 takeaways
3. Closing thoughts
Power conceptualized

“An individual’s relative capacity to modify others’ states by providing or withholding resources or administering punishments” (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003)

“Having the discretion and the means to asymmetrically enforce one’s will over others” (Sturm & Antonakis, 2015)

“Power of an organizational unit is determined by the extent to which the unit controls resources that are valued by others” (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978)
Warm-up

According to Professor Jeff Pfeffer (Stanford GSB), power is a ‘game’ to be played in organizations.

1. To what extent, if at all, do you agree with this thinking? Including the ideas that there are “players” and “rules.”

2. Why or why not? Explain, providing examples from your own professional experiences, as you feel comfortable sharing.
Takeaway #1

• Accurately diagnose the power landscape thru recognizing that power lies both formal and informal levels within an organization

• Sources of power: (Lingo & McGinn, 2020)
  (1) structural/positional
  (2) relational (example to follow)
  (3) Individual
Exemplar research
Takeaway #2

Change the rules, change the game
# Power and abuse at work

**Abused employees**
- Are often powerless
- May struggle to manage such situations on their own

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thwarted needs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Sense of belonging</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Feeling that one is a worthy person</td>
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<td>- Being able to trust others, and believing that one has the ability to predict</td>
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<td>- Control one’s environment</td>
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<th>Deleterious outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Depression</td>
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<td>- Withdrawal behaviors</td>
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<td>- Turnover intentions</td>
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<td>- Reduced self-efficacy</td>
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<td>- Lower organizational commitment</td>
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<td>- Reduced and job satisfaction</td>
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• Research question: (Wee, Liao, Liu, & Liu, 2017)
  • How can the leader-follower power imbalance be addressed – such as where employees influence leaders to engage in reconciliatory behaviors following abuse?

• Quantitative data collection: Survey administered to Chinese real estate firm (study 1); followed by commercial bank setting (study 2)

• Two “approach” coping strategies
  • Coalition forming = “united front” / cohesion (enlisting participation from other followers under the same leader to coordinate behaviors in ways that constrain leader attainment of valued goals or resources)
  • Value enhancement = making yourself indispensable (by demonstrating unique knowledge, skills or abilities) ... like French tobacco factory workers!

• These strategies:
  ✓ Promoted leader dependence on followers over time
  ✓ Buffered likelihood that abuse would beget abuse over time
  ✓ Increased likelihood that leaders would engage in reconciliation with followers, following abuse
Takeaway #3: Proactivity matters... think agency
<table>
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<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intentionality</td>
<td>People form action plans and strategies to realize their intentions <em>(what are your intentions?)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Forethought</td>
<td>People set goals and foresee likely outcomes of their actions, to guide and motivate their efforts in anticipatory ways <em>(what efforts do you anticipate putting forth?)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-reactive</td>
<td>Self-regulation <em>(can you understand and manage your behaviors / emotions / reactions?)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>Reflecting on one’s personal ability to achieve goals, the soundness of one’s thoughts and actions, the meaning of what one pursues -- and making adjustments accordingly <em>(reflecting and pivoting, as/where needed)</em></td>
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**Agency conceptualized:** The human capability to influence one’s functioning and the course of events by one’s action *(Bandura, 2006, 2008, 2017)*
Closing thoughts

1. Which, if any, of the takeaways resonate with you and your career experiences?

2. How might application/use of the takeaways depend on demographic factors such as one’s race and/or gender?
Stay in touch

For 1:1 consultations, trainings and workshops, and research collaborations (sites for data collection), please feel free to reach out!

Email: payal.sharma@unlv.edu

LinkedIn: Payal Sharma, Ph.D.

Website: http://www.power.faculty.unlv.edu

(my CV/publications and podcasts along with books and audibles by colleagues)
QUESTIONS?
Becoming powerful at work

Payal Nangia Sharma, Rachel E. Sturm

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Power is recognized as a fundamental force in social relationships, especially in work settings. Yet, we find that people are not always aware of its presence or how it can be accessed in their jobs. And, if they are aware, many sources of power (including having control over resources, such as rewards and information) may be viewed as difficult to achieve given one’s [lower ranking] position in an organization’s formal hierarchy. However, to rewrite such narratives around powerlessness and help managers and employees access proximal sources of power in their workplaces, we (1) provide a brief review of what is known about power in organizational research; and (2) discuss practical strategies and implications illustrating how power can be accessible to anyone in their professional contexts. Specifically, we highlight personal (e.g., proactive personality) and relational (e.g., social networks) perspectives for power to be leveraged, thus offering opportunities for individuals to level what may be perceived as an imbalanced power playing field. In essence, we are going after the “low hanging fruit” of power-gaining strategies to help individuals understand how to become more powerful at work.

INTRODUCTION

Power is ubiquitous. From the current political landscape of society, to the #MeToo movement in the entertainment industry, to popular television shows such as Game of Thrones, power is an important part of our culture and day-to-day experiences, and can influence us greatly. Corroborating these themes, Forbes has noted in their annual rankings of the most powerful leaders in the world that the actions of the powerful can “move the planet”.

Despite how pervasive and important power is, we are struck by the contrast of how very few, if any, of our undergraduate and graduate business school students have conversed about power dynamics with their parents, friends, significant others, supervisors, and coworkers. Indeed, when we discuss power in our management courses, it seems to be the first time that students have formally thought about the role power plays in their personal or professional lives, including its impact on their career outcomes. Instead, it seems the notions of (1) work hard and (2) be a nice person, are the golden rules of doing well in organizational landscapes.

Yet, power research and practice would indicate that these principles alone are not enough to be successful in the “power game” that imbues our society, and the very fabric of our social interactions. As Professor Jeffrey Pfeffer at Stanford Business School suggests, the word “game” can induce a sense of discomfort in people, because it presumes that life is unfair, with some of us having more privilege or greater access to power than others. This unfairness is reality, however, and the sooner this is realized, the more people can start to focus attention in productive ways on understanding how their organization works, and to use this knowledge in their favor.

Purpose of paper

The purpose of our paper, therefore, is to inform how a perceived imbalanced playing field in organizations can be leveled. Although perceived hindrances may exist for people to access power and there are societally-imposed narratives regarding powerlessness for marginalized parties, we draw on the empowering premise that a synthesized understanding is needed regarding how we can start to identify our power (and the potential limits of it), and readily understand its accessibility in ways that serve us professionally.

For example, power seems to be seen in its highest form among executives in an organization because they technically have access to the greatest of resources (due to their formal position in the organizational hierarchy, also known as positional power). However, a recent Korn Ferr
survey found that about 90% of the 1,817 executives polled in 2017 said that retention of new hires is a major issue in their organization; hence, these executives must feel rather powerless as they cannot hold on to top talent (and according to the Work Institute’s 2017 Retention Report, the replacement cost is $15,000 per person for an employee earning a median salary of $45,000 a year). Yet, the new hires that are leaving probably feel quite powerful in their exit decisions, even though they are technically in a lower formal position.

Following this, our paper begins with a review of what is known about power in management and psychology research—including what it means to have power, and whether power is inherently good, bad, or ugly. We then discuss practical strategies and implications for becoming powerful at work. We specifically bring attention to personal and relational-based perspectives of power that tend to be overlooked, but are easily accessible to practicing managers and their employees. In other words, we identify the “low hanging fruit” of power sources to encourage professionals to not only be more aware of their power, but mindful in their exercise of it in work contexts. Collectively, our view is that although we may not all have the same “starting points,” we nevertheless do have access to power; thus, we are all technically players in the power game—one in which there are both important challenges and opportunities to be recognized and leveraged.

What it means to have power

To inform our efforts, we seek to build on a rich history of scholarship that recognizes that power comes from a myriad of sources. As a classic example, in 1959, two social psychologists, John French and Bertram Raven, identified five bases of power that are especially common and important to workplaces: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert power. Scholars have since identified many other sources of power, including posture (e.g., Professor Amy Cuddy’s work on power posing has led to one of the most-watched TED talks), having a need for power, the number of followers a leader has, a brief yet positive interaction with a powerful other, political coalitions, having decision alternatives, and the list goes on and on. Acknowledging these perspectives, we next discuss three themes regarding power: (1) feeling versus being powerful; (2) the relationships between power, influence, and dependence; and (3) questioning socialized norms that power is inherently bad.

Feeling versus being powerful. In a recent review and critique of interpersonal power research, researchers Rachel Sturm and John Antonakis defined power as having the discretion (which taps into our right to choose as independent agents) and means (our access to power from different sources including resource control, positional authority, likeability, political coalitions, gender, etc.) to enforce one’s will. From this definition, power can be conceived of as a psychosocial force, which captures both feeling (part of means) and being (enforce one’s will) powerful states Diff id=156”>[156_TDSDIFF]. For example, social psychologists have described power as “social power” whereby the powerholder is the one who has control over resources, such as money or information. Importantly, the resources controlled must have value to, and be regarded as scarce and/or hard to acquire, by others in the work setting. However, management and psychology researchers tend to measure feeling powerful differently from this conceptualization, by asking people to think about a past experience with power (i.e., priming). Much of the current literature on power has addressed how feeling powerful can affect our thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and even our physiology (or how our bodies respond to stress when we are in a powerful state). As examples, people who feel powerful are more likely to approach rewarding outcomes, spend more money on themselves, have increased perceptions of self-confidence and optimism, and be more risk-taking.

Behavioral economists, on the other hand, address power from a perspective of being powerful (e.g., having the decision right to break ties in a voting committee). In addition, they have considered what having power means in terms of policy implications. For example, the hormone testosterone can magnify corruption for powerholders (measured in a real-stakes game), and since men tend to have more testosterone than women, the policy implication would be to have a more inclusive gender approach regarding who is able to wield power in organizations, including governmental settings. Research has also found that people who gain “real” power will contravene social norms for their own benefit, and therefore, become corrupt over time.

Taken together, there seems to be a potential “divide” in power research concerning feeling and being powerful. As a real-world parallel, in an interview with Bill Simmons in 2015, then President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, explained how he did not fully appreciate how decentralized power was in the country’s political system until he was in the position. In other words, Obama probably felt pretty powerful when he was first sworn in as president because of his title and what comes along with it (such as access to information and resources), but quickly found out he was not always able to enforce his will and change policy in desired ways.

How we interact with, and manage, others’ impressions of us could then impact their views of our own power. As Professor Pfeffer has suggested, power dynamics can work as a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, having a reputation for power brings more power (i.e., perception influences reality). Hence, for those individuals who may feel powerful, in turn, they may offensively convince others (e.g., via influence tactics) of their felt power. That is, feeling powerful could lend itself to convince others that one is powerful, even when formally not.

Whereas facades of power can actually become conduits for power, we caution managers and employees that feeling and being powerful are indeed different, and that the former may not bring the desired results. For example, feeling powerful can have an impact on how people manage conflict at work, but whether or not someone actually has power tends to be essential in determining the outcomes of conflict management. Being powerful in this example, then, can affect one’s level of control over others. As a second example, posing a certain way before an interview to make one feel more powerful does not equate to one having actual power in the interview. Indeed, even if individuals feel powerful by making a fist with their hand, this feeling does not necessarily imply that one has power. As such, feeling powerful may make a person assume s/he can actually affect
consequential outcomes, but this is an invalid assumption to make considering one may not have decision-making authority nor the means to do so.

**Influence and dependence.** Other terminology associated with definitions of power are influence and dependence. When we have influence over people, we can get them to behave or change in a way we desire. We can also increase the likelihood that others are dependent on us, rather than us being dependent on them and concomitantly, feeling powerless. In support, in his book, the *48 Laws of Power*, Robert Greene noted the following description regarding power dynamics and dependence:

Law 11. Learn to Keep People Dependent on You

“To maintain your independence, you must always be needed and wanted. The more you are relied on, the more freedom you have. Make people depend on you for their happiness and prosperity and you have nothing to fear. Never teach them enough so that they can do without you.”

We would temper the above sentiments at the same time by recognizing that mutual dependence may be a more logical and sustainable strategy in work settings. As a related perspective, sociologist James Thompson explains how tasks between organizational members can be characterized as pooled (end product reflects sum of individual parts), sequential (classic assembly line division of labor, with one-way dependency on others for their outputs), and/or reciprocal in their interdependent nature (a bi-directional relationship between parties, such that outputs of one person become inputs for another). Following these descriptions, we acknowledge the practical reality that there may be times when leaders need their employees, not just vice versa, and that balance in the relationship is ideal and/or recommended. Our sentiments are further corroborated by the notion that leaders and followers may not always be able to ‘just’ quit on one another given their relationship may have longevity.

We offer a hypothetical example showing how excessive dependence can yield negative consequences in workplaces. Imagine being a human resources manager, and having to terminate several employees who refused to share knowledge about how to fix key equipment on a manufacturing line. These employees could realize the tremendous power they had over management, and choose to use this dependence as a mechanism for misbehavior. In this scenario, management is less likely, or unlikely, to penalize employees that they ‘need’ in order for work to get done. We would advise, however, that, at the end of the day, that neither leaders nor employees should consistently have the ‘upper hand’ in a relationship because this may set the stage for increased relational tensions and power abuses down the line.

**Power: Good, bad, or ugly?** Our discussion of becoming powerful is also premised in challenging the socialized notion that power itself is inherently bad. Although power may have a somewhat negative connotation in society, we purport the counterargument that what is done with it matters. Therefore, acquisition and displays of power are acceptable, and should not be uniformly discouraged!

For instance, we know that having power can enable goal setting and action, makes one more creative, decreases distraction from details, enables one to experience and display more positive emotions, and can even buffer our stress levels by decreasing cortisol (our stress hormone). According to research by Professor Katherine DeCellles and colleagues, when individuals in both real-world settings as well as laboratory experiments felt powerful, those with a strong moral identity (or the extent to which an individual holds morality as part of his or her self-view) were less likely to act in self-interested ways (compared to their weak moral identity counterparts). Further, moral awareness (or some level of conscious understanding of moral implications of a decision or situation) was enhanced by the psychological experience of power for people with a strong moral identity, while for those people with a weak moral identity, their moral awareness decreased.

How people view relationships matters in the exercise of power as well. Communal or exchange-oriented individuals, or those who tend to respond to others’ needs and interests, are known to act more altruistically when feeling powerful. However, exchange-oriented individuals, or those who tend to keep “tally” on what is given and received in relationships, tend to act in more self-serving ways when they feel powerful. As such, we know that the relationship between power and potential outcomes is quite complex and depends on a number of factors — rather than being consistently negative.

**THE FLUID NATURE OF POWER**

Can having the discretion and means to enforce one’s will ebb and flow in organizations? Or, is power static and fixed in organizations, implying that once you either have it or not (i.e., are powerless), this becomes the status quo? We explore these questions in the following sections regarding power dependence theories and power-lending leadership practices. In doing so, we illustrate how power dynamics in work settings are fluid in reality, which provide opportunities for those who may seek to become more powerful in their professional contexts.

**Power dependence.** A seminal theory by Richard Emerson on power dependence from the 1960s describes four “balancing operations” that can change existing power dynamics in a relationship. First, the weaker party reduces their motivational investment in goals requiring involvement by the more powerful party (or the less powerful party does without the powerful party). Second, the weaker party cultivates alternative sources for gratification of these goals (which can reduce the stronger party’s power). Third, the more powerful party increases their motivational investment in goals of the weaker party (or increasing dependence of the stronger party on the weaker party). And fourth, the more powerful party is denied alternative sources for achieving their goals by the weaker party.

A recent study by management professor Elijah Wee and coauthors drew on this theory to provide important insights regarding the stability of power within the context of employees experiencing abuse from their supervisors. **Abusive supervision** is defined as the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors (excluding physical contact), and occurs when leaders ridicule their employees, put them
down in front of others, lie to them, and tell them they are incompetent. On the one hand, abused employees may feel powerless, trapped and constrained, and struggle to manage situations on their own in the aftermath. These effects can stem partly from the notion that leader-follower interactions are typically characterized by power asymmetry. By virtue of their hierarchical position, leaders (in the positional sense) are more powerful than their followers — with the latter being dependent on the former for valued resources including job security, money, and career advancement and/or promotion opportunities. Not surprisingly then, this asymmetry makes employees vulnerable to abuse from their leaders.

On the other hand, abused employees can re-write interactions with their leaders in ways that work in their favor. Specifically, according to the research, when employees created a ‘united front’ — i.e., by enlisting participation from other employees under the same leader to coordinate behaviors in ways that constrained leader attainment of valued goals or resources — and made themselves indispensable to their leaders (by demonstrating unique knowledge, skills, or abilities), several power dynamics shifted. The leader became more dependent on the followers, it was less likely that abuse would beget more abuse, and the likelihood increased that leaders would engage in reconciliation with their employees following the abuse. These findings highlight opportunities for employees to not only be protected from leader abuse, but elucidate how employees can leverage power dynamics to help them in their interactions with their supervisors even in non-abusive work relationships.

Importantly, despite the practical reality that power is dynamic, and not static, we still need to better understand how power, once gained, can be taken away and/or reduced by the actions of others. For example, within a department in an organization, individual A may decide to assume power (such as by rising to leadership ranks) because s/he is concerned that individual B (a less effective and/or unethical colleague) could move to gain that position. This power play by individual A, as we will call it, would then limit or block the access to power for individual B. Power can also be given to others, a point we address in the next section.

Power-lending. The pendulum of power is apparent in the domain of leadership when leaders choose to empower their employees as well. At its core, empowering leadership is about motivating employees to their highest potential, and includes leaders lending their power via task and leadership responsibilities. Empowering leadership reflects the practical reality that leaders cannot be everywhere all the time, and do not have all the answers. Research suggests that leaders are more likely to delegate, as a related behavior to empowering, when they trust in their followers’ performance and integrity. Therein lies an opportunity for followers to gain power by building a positive and well-regarded track record and reputation. Indeed, reputation has been previously identified as a source of power for individuals in traditionally low hierarchical positions (i.e., employees).

LEVERAGING POWER SOURCES

Given that power in organizations is more dynamic, than static, we next turn our attention to discussing sources of power that are readily accessible to professionals as they navigate the political terrain of their work settings. As shown in Fig. 1, we focus specifically on personal and relational perspectives of power, as opposed to more structural sources of power (i.e., legitimate power tied to one’s position), to reveal how anyone can leverage power-gaining strategies that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Personal perspectives

To highlight personal sources of power, we utilize a framework previously identified by diversity scholars that captures surface-level and deep-level characteristics of people. Surface-level factors are overt demographic differences such as biological sex, age, and race, while deep-level factors are not as easy to observe and refer to personality, values, and attitudes.

Surface level: Sex and age. In her research, Professor Herminia Ibarra, who is part of the World Economic Forum’s Expert Network, has discovered that women tend to have less power than men in organizations for a number of reasons. One primary reason pertains to systematic barriers at work that tend to keep women from advancing in social networks; without these advancements, women may not be able to signal their legitimacy to others. In other power scholarship, Professor Adam Galinsky has found that many so-called sex differences (e.g., men negotiate more than women) are actually power differences in disguise (e.g., regardless of gender, people in high power roles feel more comfortable negotiating), thus supporting the notion that...
men naturally tend to have more power than women in many societies. Also, Professor Ibarra points out that individual attributes such as experience and seniority, both of which are tied to age, can lead others to think one has expertise, which is a source of power. Thus, older individuals (up to a point) are more likely to have greater access to power for a variety of reasons, and an advantage over less experienced others.

From research, we know that surface-level characteristics are difficult to modify; age obviously cannot be changed no matter how much one alters his or her physical appearance. These characteristics can affect how power can be gained at work due to stereotypes, biases, and/or prejudices people hold towards others based on these characteristics. Women, for example, are expected to be nurturing at work, but as leaders, they are also expected to be assertive and confident. Yet, there is ample research that shows when women leaders behave in more assertive ways, they can be penalized for this behavior (e.g., held back from promotions, which can decrease their access to power). We, therefore, believe it is important for managers and employees to be aware of any potential biases and stereotypes they may hold of others so as to identify where they are potentially limiting the power of others at work. And, knowing that others can be exclusive in their perceptions can better prepare individuals as players in the power game.

To supplement and extend the above perspectives, we next discuss deep-level factors. We examine personality predictors of power, which we believe showcase how individuals can have more control leveling the imbalanced playing field in the power game. Whereas deep-level characteristics can remain fairly consistent over time, we provide additional guidance in Table 1 as to how to leverage them to become more powerful at work. Our personality stems partly from genetics, but also from our upbringing, hence, we can take steps to improve those areas we are weaker in, or where there could be limitations that are developmental opportunities. Also, there are ample online assessments of the personality predictors we describe next, and which we would recommend as starting points for leaders and employees to explore, as exercises in self-awareness.

**Deep level: Self-monitoring.** Self-monitoring is a personality trait which reflects an individual’s aim for adaptability. Consistent with this, people who are high self-monitors scan their environments, are responsive to social and interpersonal cues from others, and will be tuned in to the appropriateness of their behaviors within a given context. Given their highly adaptable nature, high self-monitors have been described by researchers as ‘chameleon-like’. As these descriptions may allude to, high self-monitoring provides a gateway to gain power in the form of relational capital, through individuals being able to understand, and read, other people’s needs, then adjusting their behaviors accordingly. Empirical findings further suggest that because of concerns about their reputations, high self-monitors will advance faster than their low self-monitor counterparts, and are more likely to receive promotions into leadership positions.

However, high-self monitors also can run the risk of being perceived as inauthentic. Given these patterns, our recommendation for high self-monitors is to use the information they pick up from others to groom their best selves in a manner that is authentic. For example, if a high self-monitor notices there are certain behaviors — such as supporting colleagues — that are rewarded in their work setting, and can serve as a source of power but which do not come easily, practicing those behaviors until they become genuine can be helpful.

For low self-monitors, their behaviors are not controlled by deliberate attempts to be appropriate for the situation. Instead, they act in ways that are aligned with their internal emotions and attitudes. At times, it is likely that low self-monitors’ behaviors may be a liability for gaining power if

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<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Guidance for leveraging personal perspectives of power</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-monitoring:</strong> responsiveness to social and interpersonal cues from others, and being tuned in to the appropriateness of one’s behaviors</td>
<td><strong>Guidance if you are high on this trait</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understand and read other people’s needs, then adjust your behaviors accordingly</td>
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<td>• Act sincerely, to avoid being perceived as inauthentic</td>
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<td><strong>Proactive personality:</strong> a stable disposition towards proactive behaviors such as identifying and acting on opportunities, showing initiative, and persevering until change is brought about</td>
<td><strong>Guidance if you are low on this trait</strong></td>
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<td>• Leverage your proactive nature to thoughtfully consider how to present one’s ideas — that is, optics matter and being self-aware will benefit you</td>
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<td><strong>Locus of control:</strong> beliefs regarding control of our environments, and are outcomes we experience a result of internal or external forces</td>
<td><strong>Guidance if you are high on this trait</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• If you are an <em>internal</em> person, actively search for conditions of the environment that you have no control over that can impact you (e.g., advancements in technology) and make necessary adjustments</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Guidance if you are low on this trait</strong></td>
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<td>• If you are an <em>external</em> person, identify where you feel things are out of control at work, or where you are making excessive excuses and/or blaming others — then, start taking more responsibility in these areas</td>
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they over-share in ways that are deemed inappropriate. Thus, for low self-monitors, our recommendation is to try to be prudent in scanning the workplace environment, understanding key social relationships, and identifying those organizational members with whom they share values (or morals) and can be allies. Also, low self-monitors can reach out to trusted others for feedback about their behavior in certain situations. For example, a low self-monitor may not always filter their language to be appropriate in certain contexts so following up with others to learn what word choices are appropriate and not so appropriate in certain contexts could be really beneficial.

**Deep level: Proactive personality.** In a related sphere, an individual’s proactive personality, or stable disposition towards proactive behaviors, can yield power. Proactive behaviors include identifying and acting on opportunities, showing initiative, and persevering until change is brought about. As an example, consider an employee who offers to write ideas on a whiteboard during a brainstorming meeting. By identifying an opportunity to help, and by speaking up with action-oriented approaches, this individual can gain respect, be viewed by others as valuable, and s/he helps out the committee overall. Having a proactive personality can benefit employees by facilitating higher salaries, greater productivity, and receiving more awards and promotions.

For such individuals, we recommend thoughtfully considering how to present one’s proactivity in order to ensure optimal results and not negative ones, such as offending one’s leader. As Professor Adam Grant and colleagues point out, proactive employees who engage in strong prosocial values (i.e., focus on people in the organization, rather than themselves) and have a positive mood, will gain higher performance ratings from their leaders. As such, being other-focused and positive can enable employees with a high proactive personality to successfully, and strategically, maneuver their work settings.

By contrast, individuals who are not proactive tend to be more passive and reactive, and are compliant with the status quo. Because proactivity is generally well-regarded in organizations, we advise such individuals to know that their personality may predispose them to not experience benefits relative to their high proactive personality counterparts. However, we would also qualify this by recognizing that less proactive employees may be viewed by some leaders as less of a threat. For example, proactive employee behaviors such as raising new ideas or challenging the status quo could be perceived as attempts to undermine the leader’s identity, rock the proverbial boat in the organization, and/or as an ill-timed distraction. Indeed, another law from the *48 Laws of Power* book reflects these themes:

**Law 1. Never Outshine the Master.**

“Always make those above you feel comfortably superior. In your desire to please or impress them, do not go too far in displaying your talents or you might accomplish the opposite — inspire fear and insecurity. Make your masters appear more brilliant than they are and you will attain the heights of power.”

People with low proactive personality may then benefit by preparing their mindsets in anticipation of situations where they may have opportunities to gain power. For example, imagine if a low proactive personality employee is asked to attend a committee meeting in place of his/her supervisor (that is, as the leader’s proxy). We would suggest to this employee to utilize tactics which can facilitate an action-oriented mindset during the meeting. To illustrate, this employee can write down his/her thoughts to one of the following three prompts across a short (e.g., 5 min) span of time as a means to activate his/her approach system in the brain: (1) describe your ambitions and what you hope to achieve in life (leads to a *promotion* mindset); (2) recall and describe an incident in which you had power over another person (leads to a *feeling powerful* mindset); and (3) write about a time when you felt excited and joyful (leads to a *happy* mindset).

**Deep level: Locus of control.** Third, locus of control is the extent to which individuals believe they have the ability to control their environment, and captures one’s perception of whether outcomes stem from internal or external forces. Individuals with an internal locus of control (i.e., internal employees) attribute control of events to themselves, while individuals with an external locus of control (i.e., external employees) attribute control of events to outside forces (e.g., luck, fate). Research has found that internal and external employees approach their work differently. Internal employees tend to see a strong link between their actions and consequences, whereas external employees tend to be more passive since they see control as something outside of themselves. Interestingly, research has demonstrated that between 1960 and 2002, Americans have come to believe that their lives are controlled more so by outside forces than inside factors. This trend towards being more “external” is surprising given that the “American Dream” is all about having an internal locus of control and being able to “pull oneself up by his or her own bootstraps”. Hence, it seems broader social/cultural, political, economic, and/or technological factors may influence one’s locus of control.

Of particular relevance to our paper, research has further revealed important links between locus of control and the discretion aspect of power holding. For example, internal CEOs tend to see themselves as active agents and are more task-oriented than their counterparts, which may stem from their trust in their capacity to influence others. And, whereas external CEOs tend to withdraw from stressful events, internal CEOs approach these events in a problem-solving way and are therefore likely to function better in stressful environments. In addition, internal individuals perceive themselves as having more discretion than external individuals in environments that industry experts believe would not typically be conducive in terms of discretion to act successfully (e.g., being Vice President of Production during the acquisition of another company given that s/he may not have as much of a say in strategic decisions).

Thus, individuals’ beliefs that they control what happens to them can afford them power because they are more likely to choose to exercise their decision-making authority accordingly. That being said, individuals with a high external locus of control tend to thrive in structured and directed work contexts, such as those involving compliance and conformity. Therefore, external employees may be more likely to assert their will in these types of environments, and can choose these types of roles at work, but are not generally as effective in contexts that require independent action.
Relational perspectives

In addition to these personal perspectives on power, which capture demographic differences and personality traits, we next highlight the importance of relational perspectives, which illustrate how power is in some way “shared” between two (or more) parties. Specifically, as revealed in Table 2, individuals can learn skills and tactics to more optimally inter-relate with others, as well as use informal relationships to gain power at work.

**Political skill.** The ability to effectively understand other organizational members, and use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s own personal and/or organizational objectives, is termed political skill. According to management scholars, political skill involves four behaviors of: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. There are numerous benefits of using these behaviors including experiencing higher levels of: job performance (especially in enterprising contexts, which encourage people to manipulate others to attain one’s own goals and to view the world in terms of money, power, status, and responsibility), income level, hierarchical position, and career satisfaction for early career employees. Thus, people with a high level of political skill can gain power by being able to accurately assess and understand the behaviors that others deem desirable in a given situation and properly execute situationally appropriate actions in effective ways.

At the same time, as noted by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), political skill has a dark side when it is misused. With social awareness, overanalyzing people to the point of it being perceived as judging or labeling can backfire; managing relationships upward only (rather than downward too) as part of interpersonal influence can prompt negative perceptions by others; networking can benefit a person by having lots of connections, but there might be a lack of depth, and a person could come off as overly instrumental; and when people try to be sincere, they might come across as not being real or authentic. The takeaway here is that people can gain power through using political skill, but this must be carefully managed with regards to the impressions that others may develop of you.

As previously stated, working hard and being nice at work is not enough in the power game. Those low in political skill can struggle with this reality because they assume that it is a “just world”. This means they believe that they can gain power over others at work by simply performing well. Bill Gates is a relevant example of a CEO who initially refused to buy into the importance of being politically skilled at Microsoft. He was a brilliant software developer but avoided media attention and shied away from actively dealing with outside groups who could challenge him in his leadership role. However, once Microsoft was sued by the United States Department of Justice for antitrust violations, Gates needed to interact more with the media, attorneys, and government agencies, which required him to develop his political skill to become powerful. As noted by Professor Pamela Perrewé and coauthors, “He practiced brinkmanship and taking a hard-bargaining position and bought the company time and the hope of more favorable treatment from a Republican Administration.” Commensurate with this anecdote, we recommend that those lower in political skill gain power by focusing more on establishing rapport, and communicating well, so as to get others to like them more, which can increase their interpersonal influence.

**Impression management.** Another relational perspective on power regards individuals’ use of impression management. This body of research is grounded in ideas that social

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**Table 2 Guidance for leveraging relational perspectives of power**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political skill (social astuteness, apparent sincerity, networking, influence): use these skills to influence people to do what you want</th>
<th>Guidance if you are strong in this technique</th>
<th>Guidance if you are weak in this technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefully manage impressions that others may develop of you, so as to avoid the ‘dark side’ impressions that are possible (e.g., “fake”)</td>
<td>Focus on establishing rapport with others, as well as communicating well with others, so as to get others to like you more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impression management: how we present ourselves and influence others to view us</td>
<td>Recognize there are potential drawbacks to each impression management tactic</td>
<td>Appear to be completely in control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Capitalize” on the positive side of ingratiation</td>
<td>Remember that an impression, or perception, is not necessarily reality, hence, do not go overboard with these tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Mask” the negative side of intimidation</td>
<td>Build operational, personal, and strategic networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networks: social exchanges and connections that exist outside of the formal organizational chart</td>
<td>Become more central in your networks</td>
<td>Do not only form and maintain relationships out of convenience or with people just like you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not underestimate the importance of relationships with people you do not know well yet nor see often</td>
<td>Identify possible cliques that have occurred and adopt a mentality that all the members are in ‘it’ together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group unity: the absence of faultlines that can divide group members</td>
<td>External conflict can provide opportunities to reduce the salience of faultlines and associated boundaries between members</td>
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life is highly constructed, and how we present ourselves and influence others to perceive us / our characteristics, can profoundly impact outcomes. Sociologist Erving Goffman has detailed how we engage in ‘face work’ as a type of social influence; and this can offer us power when, like political skill, it is managed appropriately.

There are five categories of impression management tactics. First, ingratiation is when we seek for others to see us as likeable through behaviors including giving compliments or granting favors. On the downside, we may be viewed as insincere or deceitful. Second, self-promotion reflects how we are trying to influence others to view us as competent by boasting or showing off. The risks associated with these behaviors include being viewed as conceited or even fraudulent. A third tactic regards intimidation or when we strive to be viewed as powerful and ruthless, through use of threats. The negative perceptions that can follow include being viewed as reviled or ineffectual. Fourth, exemplification refers to being perceived as virtuous or moral through engaging in self-denial or martyrdom. On the downside, we may come off as hypocritical or sanctimonious. Finally, supplication is when we are viewed as helpless and self-deprecate ourselves. The risks of using this tactic can include others’ perceptions of us as manipulative or demanding. Individuals who use a high level of impression management tactics may gain power through any of these tactics, but also must be very careful not to overdo it and then suffer negative perceptions and outcomes.

Individuals who are not as familiar with using impression management tactics can start by managing one’s impression of their level of control — something Steve Jobs did early on in his career. As context, Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari in the 1970s, was Jobs’ entrepreneurial role model, and knew that managing impressions of others at work was important. He thus advised Jobs to pretend to be completely in control, because then others will assume you are. In fact, Elizabeth Holmes who founded Theranos, a now-defunct health technology company, modeled her behavior after Jobs in an almost obsessive way (even wearing a black turtleneck to work, which was Jobs’ signature look), attempting to appear to be in complete control. Even after Holmes was indicted on 11 counts of fraud and her company dissolved, she still told documentary producers that she was in the process of getting more funding for her business. Furthermore, it seems Holmes altered her voice, choosing a deeper, baritone speaking voice in interviews and at public events, to manage how others saw her (lower-pitched voices are seen as more dominant and professional). Following these examples, we recommend that individuals wanting to appear in control to gain power should remember that an impression is different from reality! Hence, the reminder is to use this tactic in its intended way, and not to expect it to do all of the work for you.

Interestingly, there is research highlighting the importance of the intersection of political skill and impression management. That is, highly politically skilled people can manage their own behavior to consciously and effectively influence others in two ways, and enhance their performance in turn: (1) by “capitalizing” on positive sides of ingratiations, supplication, and exemplification; and (2) by “masking” negative side of intimidation and supplication. Thus impression management and political skill can directly influence our ability to gain power when interacting with others around us.

Social networks. In addition to how we generally interact with others at work, according to Herminia Ibarra and Steven Andrews (1993, p. 299), “much of what occurs in organizations is only remotely related to the social exchanges prescribed by the formal organizational chart”. That is, our informal network of connections to others at work (i.e., those that fall outside of formal supervisor-subordinate dyads and job roles alone) is very important for gaining power.

From the social networks research, accessing informal relationships can reflect operational (needed to accomplish assigned tasks), personal (needed for social support), and strategic foci (needed to achieve key organizational objectives past one’s routine tasks). Indeed, social networks can provide individuals with relational capital in varying ways, such as advice and information about tasks and career-related matters, opportunities for role performance (i.e., instrumental linkages), and friendship (i.e., expressive ties). Hence, networks can be leveraged to become powerful at work.

For those who already have developed these different types of networks, we offer two recommendations. First, try to identify your centrality in your social network, which is structural in nature and refers to the number of ties you have with others. More formally, as the name suggests, network centrality is your position within emergent (as opposed to formally prescribed) networks of relationships, and can indicate whether people are coming to you (incoming ties, reflecting your importance) or if you are going to people (outgoing ties, reflecting your ability to disperse or solicit information quickly). The more central you can become in your networks, the more you can regulate access to power sources (i.e., information, resources, and support). Second, we recommend honestly assessing (1) how weak or strong your connections are to others in your networks and (2) whether your relationships exist with people who are just like you (termed homophily) or quite different and can thereby offer novelty in their perspectives and experiences. It is important to have strong connections with a diverse array of individuals at work, rather than relying on ties of convenience or familiarity.

Although situated outside of work settings, another concept in the social networks research that can be leveraged to become more powerful refers to ties or relationships that were once strong in our lives (people we once knew), but which ‘fell asleep.’ Dormant ties capture relationships that were once meaningful but for non-adversarial reasons such as distance (i.e., moving away or apart), fell away or apart. Examples can include your childhood neighbor, an old teacher or professor, a former coworker, or a previous boss. Dormant ties are known to be useful in networking because they offer unique information — that is, you and the other party led different lives and followed your own, non-overlapping pathways over the years, so if/when you reconnect, you are able to share the novel stories and experiences with one another. These prior connections have clear implications for power because by ‘awakening’ a dormant tie, that person may be able to introduce individuals to influential others and/or lend their reputation or credibility to facilitate interactions with new people (i.e., as a ‘filter’ of sorts).
Indeed, if we were aspiring entrepreneurs who, for example, were seeking venture capital, we would ask our dormant ties, again who have unique relationships and non-redundant experiences than ourselves, to make introductions for us and provide their perspectives on various matters.

**Group unity.** Power can also be gained through group interactions being structured in ways that help the collective be taken seriously by others, such as by using their voice to acquire what they desire. However, less attention has been given in the power literature to tactical strategies that groups can utilize to actually build their unity, and by extension, their influence and control in their organizations.

To guide our discussion, we integrate the concept of *faultlines*, or cliques, in groups. Faultlines can emerge along the aforementioned surface-level (readily apparent or observable features such as age, sex, or ethnicity) or deep-level diversity types (non-observable features such as values or political orientation). When these fissures occur, the group can become sub-divided, which makes it difficult to gain power. Thus, it is important for organizations and their members to consider how groups can maintain unity – which can signal their power to others - rather than dissolving into cliques.

First, groups can benefit from adopting the mentality that all the members are in ‘it’ together. By focusing on a superordinate goal, for example, and promoting a sense of oneness, or identification, amongst members, a unit can develop, or maintain, its power. Second, it is critical for groups to use reward systems or approaches to assigning work that cut across members. If team member A is partnered with team member B who may be different in terms of surface- or deep-level diversity, the two individuals may find reasons to bond and experience less judgement or bias towards one another. In doing so, the group can soften the salience of faultlines and associated boundaries between members. Third, when groups find a common enemy, they are likely to coalesce together and strive towards becoming more powerful. External conflict, for example, can distract the group from internal issues, and help to ensure that members’ attention is focused outward, such as towards ensuring the group has influence and control over others.

One illustrative example is that of the Philadelphia Eagles in the National Football League (NFL). According to CBS Sports, in 2017, “if the Philadelphia Eagles have been full of anything, it’s unity.” Despite an injury plague, reputation as an underdog, and political challenges during their 2017–2018 season, the team was heralded in the popular press for standing together, on and off the gridiron. Clearly, their unity paid off when, on February 4, 2018, the team won its first Super Bowl and first NFL title since 1960, against the favored New England Patriots (go Birds!).

**CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this paper was to collectively review what is known about power in organizational research — including what it means to have power and where it comes from — and to discuss practical strategies and implications illustrating how power is accessible to all in the workplace. We have sought to elucidate the informal and often unspoken ‘rules of the power game’ in work settings so as to enable managers and employees to successfully navigate the power landscape of organizational life. To conclude, we will present some of our key take-aways as next steps that we encourage anyone interested in gaining power in professional contexts to follow:

1. Recognize that you currently have access to power and are a player in the power game. You can then reflect on how, and to what extent, you tend to access your power at work. If you currently feel less powerful at work, ask yourself “why?” You may even consider gathering insights from trusted others about your current versus desired level of power.

2. Consider your personal sources of power. Whereas there are many different ways to gain and maintain power, identifying how you can nurture your deep-level characteristics that are already strong as well as strengthen those characteristics that are weaker is a great start.

3. Look for opportunities to grow your relational sources of power. In particular, assessing the number and type of social networks you already have is a good place to start. From there, you can use political skill and influence tactics to expand your network.

4. Lastly, understand that power is fluid and power shifts occur daily at work. Thus, power is not likely to remain stable in organizations, which we see as an opportunity for all of us as players in the game to access it.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Lastly, Herminia Ibarra’s collective research on social networks provides helpful insights to further examine not only relational perspectives of power, but how personal perspectives (and structural perspectives too) interact with these relational perspectives as well. We recommend her following two articles: “Homophily and differential returns: Sex differences in network structure and access in an advertising firm,” Administrative Science Quarterly, 1992, 37, 422–447, and “Power, social influence, and sense making: Effects of network centrality and proximity on employee perceptions” by Herminia Ibarra and Steven B. Andrew, Administrative Science Quarterly, 1993, 38, 277–303.

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Managing People

Ways Women Lead
by Judy B. Rosener

From the Magazine (November–December 1990)

Women managers who have broken the glass ceiling in medium-sized, nontraditional organizations have proven that effective leaders don’t come from one mold. They have demonstrated that using the command-and-control style of managing others, a style generally associated with men in large, traditional organizations, is not the only way to succeed.

The first female executives, because they were breaking new ground, adhered to many of the “rules of conduct” that spelled success for men. Now a second wave of women is making its way into top management, not by adopting the style and habits that have proved successful for men but by drawing on the skills and attitudes they developed from their shared experience as women. These second-generation managerial women are drawing on what is unique to their socialization as women and creating a different path to the top. They are seeking and finding opportunities in fast-changing and growing organizations to show that they can achieve results—in a different way. They are succeeding because of—not in spite of—certain characteristics generally considered to be “feminine” and inappropriate in leaders.
The women’s success shows that a nontraditional leadership style is well suited to the conditions of some work environments and can increase an organization’s chances of surviving in an uncertain world. It supports the belief that there is strength in a diversity of leadership styles.

In a recent survey sponsored by the International Women’s Forum, I found a number of unexpected similarities between men and women leaders along with some important differences. (For more on the study and its findings, see “The IWF Survey of Men and Women Leaders.”) Among these similarities are characteristics related to money and children. I found that the men and women respondents earned the same amount of money (and the household income of the women is twice that of the men). This finding is contrary to most studies, which find a considerable wage gap between men and women, even at the executive level. I also found that just as many men as women experience work-family conflict (although when there are children at home, the women experience slightly more conflict than men).

**The IWF Survey of Men and Women Leaders**

The International Women’s Forum was founded in 1982 to give prominent women leaders in diverse professions around ...

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*Men and women leaders make the same amount of money. But they describe their leadership differently.*
But the similarities end when men and women describe their leadership performance and how they usually influence those with whom they work. The men are more likely than the women to describe themselves in ways that characterize what some management experts call “transactional” leadership.¹ That is, they view job performance as a series of transactions with subordinates—exchanging rewards for services rendered or punishment for inadequate performance. The men are also more likely to use power that comes from their organizational position and formal authority.

The women respondents, on the other hand, described themselves in ways that characterize “transformational” leadership—getting subordinates to transform their own self-interest into the interest of the group through concern for a broader goal. Moreover, they ascribe their power to personal characteristics like charisma, interpersonal skills, hard work, or personal contacts rather than to organizational stature.

Intrigued by these differences, I interviewed some of the women respondents who described themselves as transformational. These discussions gave me a better picture of how these women view themselves as leaders and a greater understanding of the important ways in which their leadership style differs from the traditional command-and-control style. I call their leadership style “interactive leadership” because these women actively work to make their interactions with subordinates positive for everyone involved. More specifically, the women encourage participation, share power and information, enhance other people’s self-worth, and get others excited about their work. All these things reflect their belief that allowing employees to contribute and to feel powerful and important is a win-win situation—good for the employees and the organization.

**Interactive Leadership**
From my discussions with the women interviewees, several patterns emerged. The women leaders made frequent reference to their efforts to encourage participation and share power and information—two things that are often associated with participative management. But their self-description went beyond the usual definitions of participation. Much of what they described were attempts to enhance other people's sense of self-worth and to energize followers. In general, these leaders believe that people perform best when they feel good about themselves and their work, and they try to create situations that contribute to that feeling.

Encourage participation. Inclusion is at the core of interactive leadership. In describing nearly every aspect of management, the women interviewees made reference to trying to make people feel part of the organization. They try to instill this group identity in a variety of ways, including encouraging others to have a say in almost every aspect of work, from setting performance goals to determining strategy. To facilitate inclusion, they create mechanisms that get people to participate and they use a conversational style that sends signals inviting people to get involved.

One example of the kinds of mechanisms that encourage participation is the “bridge club” that one interviewee, a group executive in charge of mergers and acquisitions at a large East Coast financial firm, created. The club is an informal gathering of people who have information she needs but over whom she has no direct control. The word bridge describes the effort to bring together these “members” from different functions. The word club captures the relaxed atmosphere.

Despite the fact that attendance at club meetings is voluntary and over and above the usual work demands, the interviewee said that those whose help she needs make the time to come. “They know their contributions are valued, and they appreciate the chance to
exchange information across functional boundaries in an informal setting that’s fun.” She finds participation in the club more effective than memos.

Whether or not the women create special forums for people to interact, they try to make people feel included as a matter of course, often by trying to draw them into the conversation or soliciting their opinions. Frieda Caplan, founder and CEO of Frieda’s Finest, a California-based marketer and distributor of unusual fruits and vegetables, described an approach she uses that is typical of the other women interviewed: “When I face a tough decision, I always ask my employees, ‘What would you do if you were me?’ This approach generates good ideas and introduces my employees to the complexity of management decisions.”

Of course, saying that you include others doesn’t mean others necessarily feel included. The women acknowledge the possibility that their efforts to draw people in may be seen as symbolic, so they try to avoid that perception by acting on the input they receive. They ask for suggestions before they reach their own conclusions, and they test—and sometimes change—particular decisions before they implement them. These women use participation to clarify their own views by thinking things through out loud and to ensure that they haven’t overlooked an important consideration.

The fact that many of the interviewees described their participatory style as coming “naturally” suggests that these leaders do not consciously adopt it for its business value. Yet they realize that encouraging participation has benefits. For one thing, making it easy for people to express their ideas helps ensure that decisions reflect as much information as possible. To some of the women, this point is just common sense. Susan S. Elliott, president and founder of Systems Service Enterprises, a St. Louis computer consulting company, expressed this view: “I can’t come up with a plan and then ask those who manage the accounts to
give me their reactions. They’re the ones who really know the accounts. They have information I don’t have. Without their input I’d be operating in an ivory tower.”

Participation also increases support for decisions ultimately reached and reduces the risk that ideas will be undermined by unexpected opposition. Claire Rothman, general manager of the Great Western Forum, a large sports and entertainment arena in Los Angeles, spoke about the value of open disagreement: “When I know ahead of time that someone disagrees with a decision, I can work especially closely with that person to try to get his or her support.”

Getting people involved also reduces the risk associated with having only one person handle a client, project, or investment. For Patricia M. Cloherty, senior vice president and general partner of Alan Patricof Associates, a New York venture capital firm, including people in decision making and planning gives investments longevity. If something happens to one person, others will be familiar enough with the situation to “adopt” the investment. That way, there are no orphans in the portfolio, and a knowledgeable second opinion is always available.

Like most who are familiar with participatory management, these women are aware that being inclusive also has its disadvantages. Soliciting ideas and information from others takes time, often requires giving up some control, opens the door to criticism, and exposes personal and turf conflicts. In addition, asking for ideas and information can be interpreted as not having answers.

Further, it cannot be assumed that everyone wants to participate. Some people prefer being told what to do. When Mary Jane Rynd was a partner in a Big Eight accounting firm in Arizona (she recently left to start her own company—Rynd, Carneal & Associates), she encountered such a person: “We hired this person from an out-of-state CPA firm because he was experienced and smart—and because it’s always fun to hire someone away from
another firm. But he was just too cynical to participate. He was suspicious of everybody. I tried everything to get him involved—including him in discussions and giving him pep talks about how we all work together. Nothing worked. He just didn’t want to participate.”

Like all those who responded to the survey, these women are comfortable using a variety of leadership styles. So when participation doesn’t work, they act unilaterally. “I prefer participation,” said Elliott, “but there are situations where time is short and I have to take the bull by the horns.”

*Share power and information.* Soliciting input from other people suggests a flow of information from employees to the “boss.” But part of making people feel included is knowing that open communication flows in two directions. These women say they willingly share power and information rather than guard it and they make apparent their reasoning behind decisions. While many leaders see information as power and power as a limited commodity to be coveted, the interviewees seem to be comfortable letting power and information change hands. As Adrienne Hall, vice chairman of Eisaman, Johns & Laws, a large West Coast advertising firm, said: “I know territories shift, so I’m not preoccupied with turf.”

One example of power and information sharing is the open strategy sessions held by Debi Coleman, vice president of information systems and technology at Apple Computer. Rather than cloistering a small group of key executives in her office to develop a strategy based on her own agenda, she holds a series of meetings over several days and allows a larger group to develop and help choose alternatives.

The interviewees believe that sharing power and information accomplishes several things. It creates loyalty by signaling to coworkers and subordinates that they are trusted and their ideas respected. It also sets an example for other people and therefore
can enhance the general communication flow. And it increases the odds that leaders will hear about problems before they explode. Sharing power and information also gives employees and coworkers the wherewithal to reach conclusions, solve problems, and see the justification for decisions.

On a more pragmatic level, many employees have come to expect their bosses to be open and frank. They no longer accept being dictated to but want to be treated as individuals with minds of their own. As Elliott said, “I work with lots of people who are bright and intelligent, so I have to deal with them at an intellectual level. They’re very logical, and they want to know the reasons for things. They’ll buy in only if it makes sense.”

In some cases, sharing information means simply being candid about work-related issues. In early 1990, when Elliott hired as employees many of the people she had been using as independent contractors, she knew the transition would be difficult for everyone. The number of employees nearly doubled overnight, and the nature of working relationships changed. “I warned everyone that we were in for some rough times and reminded them that we would be experiencing them together. I admitted that it would also be hard for me, and I made it clear that I wanted them to feel free to talk to me. I was completely candid and encouraged them to be honest with me. I lost some employees who didn’t like the new relationships, but I’m convinced that being open helped me understand my employees better, and it gave them a feeling of support.”

Like encouraging participation, sharing power and information has its risks. It allows for the possibility that people will reject, criticize, or otherwise challenge what the leader has to say or, more broadly, her authority. Also, employees get frustrated when leaders listen to—but ultimately reject—their ideas. Because information is a source of power, leaders who share it can be seen
as naive or needing to be liked. The interviewees have experienced some of these downsides but find the positives overwhelming.

*Enhance the self-worth of others.* One of the byproducts of sharing information and encouraging participation is that employees feel important. During the interviews, the women leaders discussed other ways they build a feeling of self-worth in co-workers and subordinates. They talked about giving others credit and praise and sending small signals of recognition. Most important, they expressed how they refrain from asserting their own superiority, which asserts the inferiority of others. All those I interviewed expressed clear aversion to behavior that sets them apart from others in the company—reserved parking places, separate dining facilities, pulling rank.

Examples of sharing and giving credit to others abound. Caplan, who has been the subject of scores of media reports hailing her innovation of labeling vegetables so consumers know what they are and how to cook them, originally got the idea from a farmer. She said that whenever someone raises the subject, she credits the farmer and downplays her role. Rothman is among the many note-writers: when someone does something out of the ordinary, she writes them a personal note to tell them she noticed. Like many of the women I interviewed, she said she also makes a point of acknowledging good work by talking about it in front of others.

Bolstering coworkers and subordinates is especially important in businesses and jobs that tend to be hard on a person’s ego. Investment banking is one example because of the long hours, high pressures, intense competition, and inevitability that some deals will fail. One interviewee in investment banking hosts dinners for her division, gives out gag gifts as party favors, passes out M&Ms at meetings, and throws parties “to celebrate ourselves.” These things, she said, balance the anxiety that permeates the environment.
Rynd compensates for the negativity inherent in preparing tax returns: “In my business we have something called a query sheet, where the person who reviews the tax return writes down everything that needs to be corrected. Criticism is built into the system. But at the end of every review, I always include a positive comment—your work paper technique looked good, I appreciate the fact that you got this done on time, or something like that. It seems trivial, but it’s one way to remind people that I recognize their good work and not just their shortcomings.”

Energize others. The women leaders spoke of their enthusiasm for work and how they spread their enthusiasm around to make work a challenge that is exhilarating and fun. The women leaders talked about it in those terms and claimed to use their enthusiasm to get others excited. As Rothman said, “There is rarely a person I can’t motivate.”

Enthusiasm was a dominant theme throughout the interviews. In computer consulting: “Because this business is on the forefront of technology, I’m sort of evangelistic about it, and I want other people to be as excited as I am.” In venture capital: “You have to have a head of steam.” In executive search: “Getting people excited is an important way to influence those you have no control over.” Or in managing sports arenas: “My enthusiasm gets others excited. I infuse them with energy and make them see that even boring jobs contribute to the fun of working in a celebrity business.”

Enthusiasm can sometimes be misunderstood. In conservative professions like investment banking, such an upbeat leadership style can be interpreted as cheerleading and can undermine credibility. In many cases, the women said they won and preserved their credibility by achieving results that could be measured easily. One of the women acknowledged that her colleagues don’t understand or like her leadership style and have called it cheerleading. “But,” she added, “in this business you get credibility from what you produce, and they love the profits I
generate.” While energy and enthusiasm can inspire some, it doesn’t work for everyone. Even Rothman conceded, “Not everyone has a flame that can be lit.”

**Paths of Least Resistance**

Many of the women I interviewed said the behaviors and beliefs that underlie their leadership style come naturally to them. I attribute this to two things: their socialization and the career paths they have chosen. Although socialization patterns and career paths are changing, the average age of the men and women who responded to the survey is 51—old enough to have had experiences that differed because of gender.

Until the 1960s, men and women received different signals about what was expected of them. To summarize a subject that many experts have explored in depth, women have been expected to be wives, mothers, community volunteers, teachers, and nurses. In all these roles, they are supposed to be cooperative, supportive, understanding, gentle, and to provide service to others. They are to derive satisfaction and a sense of self-esteem from helping others, including their spouses. While men have had to appear to be competitive, strong, tough, decisive, and in control, women have been allowed to be cooperative, emotional, supportive, and vulnerable. This may explain why women today are more likely than men to be interactive leaders.

Men and women have also had different career opportunities. Women were not expected to have careers, or at least not the same kinds of careers as men, so they either pursued different jobs or were simply denied opportunities men had. Women’s career tracks have usually not included long series of organizational positions with formal authority and control of resources. Many women had their first work experiences outside the home as volunteers. While some of the challenges they faced as managers
in volunteer organizations are the same as those in any business, in many ways, leading volunteers is different because of the absence of concrete rewards like pay and promotion.

As women entered the business world, they tended to find themselves in positions consistent with the roles they played at home: in staff positions rather than in line positions, supporting the work of others, and in functions like communications or human resources where they had relatively small budgets and few people reporting directly to them.

The fact that most women have lacked formal authority over others and control over resources means that by default they have had to find other ways to accomplish their work. As it turns out, the behaviors that were natural and/or socially acceptable for them have been highly successful in at least some managerial settings.

**Women leaders don’t covet formal authority. They have learned to lead without it.**

What came easily to women turned out to be a survival tactic. Although leaders often begin their careers doing what comes naturally and what fits within the constraints of the job, they also develop their skills and styles over time. The women’s use of interactive leadership has its roots in socialization, and the women interviewees firmly believe that it benefits their organizations. Through the course of their careers, they have gained conviction that their style is effective. In fact, for some, it was their own success that caused them to formulate their philosophies about what motivates people, how to make good decisions, and what it takes to maximize business performance.
They now have formal authority and control over vast resources, but still they see sharing power and information as an asset rather than a liability. They believe that although pay and promotion are necessary tools of management, what people really want is to feel that they are contributing to a higher purpose and that they have the opportunity as individuals to learn and grow. The women believe that employees and peers perform better when they feel they are part of an organization and can share in its success. Allowing them to get involved and to work to their potential is a way of maximizing their contributions and using human resources most efficiently.

**Another Kind of Diversity**

The IWF survey shows that a nontraditional leadership style can be effective in organizations that accept it. This lesson comes especially hard to those who think of the corporate world as a game of survival of the fittest, where the fittest is always the strongest, toughest, most decisive, and powerful. Such a workplace seems to favor leaders who control people by controlling resources, and by controlling people, gain control of more resources. Asking for information and sharing decision-making power can be seen as serious disadvantages, but what is a disadvantage under one set of circumstances is an advantage under another. The “best” leadership style depends on the organizational context.

Only one of the women interviewees is in a traditional, large-scale company. More typically, the women’s organizations are medium-sized and tend to have experienced fast growth and fast change. They demand performance and/or have a high proportion of professional workers. These organizations seem to create opportunities for women and are hospitable to those who use a nontraditional management style.
The degree of growth or change in an organization is an important factor in creating opportunities for women. When change is rampant, everything is up for grabs, and crises are frequent. Crises are generally not desirable, but they do create opportunities for people to prove themselves. Many of the women interviewees said they got their first break because their organizations were in turmoil.

Fast-changing environments also play havoc with tradition. Coming up through the ranks and being part of an established network is no longer important. What is important is how you perform. Also, managers in such environments are open to new solutions, new structures, and new ways of leading.

The fact that many of the women respondents are in organizations that have clear performance standards suggests that they have gained credibility and legitimacy by achieving results. In investment banking, venture capital, accounting, and executive placement, for instance, individual performance is easy to measure.

A high proportion of young professional workers—increasingly typical of organizations—is also a factor in some women’s success. Young, educated professionals impose special requirements on their organizations. They demand to participate and contribute. In some cases, they have knowledge or talents their bosses don’t have. If they are good performers, they have many employment options. It is easy to imagine that these professionals will respond to leaders who are inclusive and open, who enhance the self-worth of others, and who create a fun work environment. Interactive leaders are likely to win the cooperation needed to achieve their goals.

Interactive leadership has proved to be effective, perhaps even advantageous, in organizations in which the women I interviewed have succeeded. As the work force increasingly demands participation and the economic environment increasingly
requires rapid change, interactive leadership may emerge as the management style of choice for many organizations. For interactive leadership to take root more broadly, however, organizations must be willing to question the notion that the traditional command-and-control leadership style that has brought success in earlier decades is the only way to get results. This may be hard in some organizations, especially those with long histories of male-oriented, command-and-control leadership. Changing these organizations will not be easy. The fact that women are more likely than men to be interactive leaders raises the risk that these companies will perceive interactive leadership as “feminine” and automatically resist it.

Linking interactive leadership directly to being female is a mistake. We know that women are capable of making their way through corporations by adhering to the traditional corporate model and that they can wield power in ways similar to men. Indeed, some women may prefer that style. We also know from the survey findings that some men use the transformational leadership style.

Large, established organizations should expand their definition of effective leadership. If they were to do that, several things might happen, including the disappearance of the glass ceiling and the creation of a wider path for all sorts of executives—men and women—to attain positions of leadership. Widening the path will free potential leaders to lead in ways that play to their individual strengths. Then the newly recognized interactive leadership style can be valued and rewarded as highly as the command-and-control style has been for decades. By valuing a diversity of leadership styles, organizations will find the strength and flexibility to survive in a highly competitive, increasingly diverse economic environment.

1. Transactional and transformational leadership were first conceptualized by James McGregor Burns in Leadership (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) and later by Bernard Bass in Leadership

A version of this article appeared in the November–December 1990 issue of Harvard Business Review.

JR

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Women hold just 11 percent of the most senior-level leadership positions in U.S. corporations -- a number that hasn't changed in more than 30 years.

BY PETER ECONOMY, THE LEADERSHIP GUY @BIZZWRIITER
Having influence is one of the keys to a successful career for anyone. In business, you've got to be able to convince others that your ideas or point of view make sense and are worth pursuing. As psychology and marketing professor Robert Cialdini points out, "People will do business with people they know, like and trust based on your knowledge, your creativity, and your credibility."

However, is there a difference in the influence that men and women have in the workplace? According to new research conducted by the bestselling authors of the new book, *The Influence Effect*, there is a difference. In fact, according to lead author Kathryn Heath, founding partner of leadership firm Flynn Heath Holt (FHH), "Studies show that imitating male behavior doesn't translate to professional advancement for women. We women do not like unbridled competition, backroom deals, or trading favors. We favor collaboration, inclusion, and win-win outcomes. The distinctive missing link is influence."

So, what can women do to have more influence in the workplace, and better their career prospects as a result?

According to the authors of *The Influence Effect*, these 5 strategies will increase your influence, and get your career on the right path.

1. **Think bigger and aim higher**

You are better than you know! It is easy to stay in your day-to-day activities because you "already have more than enough to do." Reflect! If you knew you could not fail what is it you truly want to do? Write it down and act accordingly! Say "Yes!" when a scary opportunity comes your way. Raise your hand even if you are not sure you know exactly how you will do it. Explore new areas of your company. Take on tasks or projects that are completely outside your comfort zone.
2. Develop your executive presence

This is much more than a great wardrobe (although looking sharp and put together is important!). How do you "show up" in your daily interactions? Do you respond confidently...concise and to the point? Do you carry yourself with great posture and an appropriate demeanor? Do you keep your cool in demanding situations? Do you use a firm handshake? Executive presence is vital and requires focused attention!

3. Create your career scaffolding

No one can go it alone these days. Do you have mentors to teach and guide you? Do you have sponsors to help you navigate leadership and look out for career opportunities? Do you have a personal network to rely on when times get tough? Do you have a truth teller who will "give it to straight?" Be strategic and think about your career as building a skyscraper. You need a solid foundation to get you started, but then you need champions, advocates, friends, and family to build a successful, long term career. Relationships are as critical (if not more) than just being smart and working hard! Work smart!

4. Seek feedback

Research tells us the higher you go the less feedback you receive. Seek feedback early and often in your career. You don't know what you don't know and we all have "blind spots." On a related note, be sure you ask for strengths. Most of us focus on what is wrong and try to fix it! Do it, but also use your strengths and leverage these more effectively to overcome development areas. For example, one woman we coached was super task-oriented and terrible at developing her network. We created a task list of who she needed to meet and set targeted deadlines. Her network grew exponentially and quickly. She always thought "getting the work done" was more important than creating
connections. Soon, her work became easier (and more rewarding) as she leveraged her newfound network!

5. Develop or refine your professional brand

We all think we know our brand; but often this is our resume, or "what we do every day!" Brand needs to focus on who you are; how you differentiate yourself; and most important, how do you add value to your team, your practice and your clients. You have strengths. You have a personality. You have accomplishments. You have passions. Reflect, again! What do others say about you (colleagues, clients AND friends?) Why do people choose you? Create brand bites or themes that describe you and then share stories. For example, say "I love to try new things" or said differently, "I take calculated risks!"

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8 strategies that will make you more influential at work, regardless of your rank

Connie Wedel, Elevate  Aug 25, 2016, 11:54 AM
Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook. Getty / Scott Olson

Whether you are at the top of the corporate ladder or just want to be heard in a meeting, influencing skills are vital for anyone to be successful.

Moreover, those skills are vital for a leader, whose job it is to move people forward.

What is influence? At work, it is the capacity or power someone has to be a persuasive or compelling force to produce effects on the actions, behavior, or opinions of others.

Or, put simply, it is getting someone to go from Point A to Point B. Influence can come with a position and title but it is not guaranteed. In fact, people can be influential in any role, whatever their station.

Women, however, continue to struggle while they search for ways to become more influential at work. Sometimes they toil just to have their ideas heard or valued. (Stories abound about men and women who independently present the same material and are often treated differently.)

Read more: Did Being a Woman in Business Help Or Hurt Me? Yes
Here then are eight strategies women can do to raise their level of influence at work:

1. **Develop your drive to become more influential**

First, you have to want to improve. Becoming more influential takes desire and effort. If it doesn't matter to you, then figure out why it doesn't matter!
Be careful not to get caught up in the notion that if you work hard, you will be justly and fairly rewarded. Real competition exists in the workplace. Yes, competence and results are essential for your growth. But you still must learn how to promote yourself and bring attention to your excellent work.

3. Keep your skills and knowledge up to date

It is so easy nowadays to keep your skills current and continue to learn. Online courses, MOOCs, blogs, books, podcasts, seminars and even YouTube all provide easily accessible learning resources. If you’re not learning and keeping yourself up to date, know that your coworker or competitor is.
4. Believe in yourself or what you know

When you’ve done #3, you have laid a strong foundation to be credible with coworkers and bosses. The next step is to have the courage to show what you know and to be as smart as anyone on the team.

Women repeatedly underestimate their competence. An HBR article notes that a woman will apply for a job when she meets 100% of the job requirements, whereas a man will apply even if he has met only 60% of the requirements.

5. Solve "important" problems

Women sometimes pride themselves at being good multitaskers, getting things done, and
While you may not be in a position to say no when given these requests, you should also look for "important" problems to solve. Do all you can to understand the pain points of the business or your boss, and then help solve them. When you start to solve your business’ real problems, your level of influence will skyrocket.

Read more: Quotes About Overcoming Obstacles

6. Know when to show your agentic (masculine) and communal (feminine) communication styles

This balancing act is also called the Goldilocks Dilemma. A woman’s communication style is constantly being judged. Your style may be seen as too aggressive, demanding, competitive, or maybe too warm, caring, and soft — but never just right.

In the work world, it is detrimental for a woman to outwardly show anger. On the other hand, men are given a greater pass when they show aggression, disgust or anger. So the communication playing field is uneven. What then do you do?

You take incremental steps to bring your authentic communication style in line with what
and which communication style to show in a particular context will increase your influence.

Next, heighten your self-awareness around your nonverbal communication. Your brand of it sends many messages about you that your audience is implicitly deciphering. Nonverbal qualities for you to consider are the following: your appearance, demeanor, posture, language and speaking style, room positioning, body language, voice and diction. (This list can go on and on!)

Seek to understand how your own components of it are affecting your credibility; the right nonverbal communication can positively affect your influencing ability when you are able to project confidence, approachability, professionalism and yes, the right amount of power.


7. Prep and practice makes perfect

Like an athlete, prep and practice of a newly learned skill are important to change habits and outcomes. Self-awareness will uncover areas you want to adjust.

Practice will allow you to test your new behaviors. When you experience small wins along the way, your confidence and influence will grow.
8. Hold up others

Make every effort to recognize and acknowledge others at work. Research indicates that greater benefit is gained when a woman receives accolades or is promoted by others, than when she self-promotes.

This does not mean that you should not learn more effective ways to (professionally and prudently) self-promote, but it does mean that you should also find cohorts and champions who are willing to tout how great you are.

With certainty, if you start to employ these strategies you will enhance and improve your influencing capabilities. No matter what role you have in your organization, your ability to influence is key to your continued growth and success.

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Key Steps Women Can Take to Be Strong Leaders

Female leaders are slowly but surely closing the gender gap. Follow these tips to carve out your path.

- Gender equality in the workplace has made strides, but women in leadership roles still encounter more scrutiny than their male counterparts.
- If a position resonates with their capabilities and experience, women should throw their hats in the ring even if they don’t meet the job criteria 100%.
- Women should embrace their natural leadership styles to bring about positive workplace culture shifts.
- This article is for women who want to strengthen their leadership skills and advance in the workplace.

In the past, many women have struggled to find acceptance in the workplace because of societal expectations and stereotypes. However, women have made enormous strides in several formerly male-dominated industries and are excelling in leadership roles.
While gender equality has made notable strides, female entrepreneurs still face challenges, and women in leadership roles often encounter more scrutiny, and are judged more harshly, than their male counterparts. In fact, women leaders often say they must work twice as hard to earn the same respect as men.

If these challenges sound familiar to you, read on for tips to help you prove your leadership merit in the workplace while inspiring other women to follow in your footsteps.

Did you know?: The human resources, education, social services, healthcare and hospitality industries have the highest rates of women in leadership positions.

Why women leaders should leave their comfort zones

A commonly cited Hewlett-Packard study on internal hiring practices found that men often apply for a job when they meet 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them. This finding implies that women subconsciously believe that if they don’t meet the job criteria exactly, they’re not suitable for the position and they won't be considered. Because of this self-doubt, they don’t throw their hat into the ring.

Changing this belief takes conscious effort. If a position resonates with their capabilities and experience, women should focus on the mindset that they’re entirely capable of doing the work and then prove their merit during the interview process. [Need an interview refresher? Check out our complete guide to a successful job interview.]

Here’s what some experts have to say about the importance of women aiming high:

- **Women are socialized to be perfect.** Reshma Saujani, founder and CEO of Girls Who Code, said that while girls are taught to play it safe, smile pretty and get all A's, boys are taught to play rough and swing high. “In
other words, we’re raising our girls to be perfect, and we’re raising our boys to be brave,” she said in a TED talk. Even when women are ambitious, the socialization of perfection often leads them to risk aversion, Sujani said.

- **Recognize the fear, and do the hard thing anyway.** Devoreaux Walton, owner of Distinct Personal Branding, believes success is found outside our comfort zone but is often hindered by the fear of the unknown. “Every successful entrepreneur and business leader did what they were afraid to do instead of just letting the fear rule in their personal and professional lives,” she said. According to Walton, the best way to overcome fear is to acknowledge that the fear is there but to do the thing that scares you anyway. If you’re too rigid, you could miss one of those serendipitous “aha” moments that could inspire a creative solution or force a different approach.

- **Don’t miss out on opportunities that come your way.** Angie Hicks, co-founder and chief marketing officer of Angi (formerly Angie’s List), had to face her fears when she was approached about starting the national customer review service as an introverted college graduate. “My biggest challenge was combating the fact that I was really shy and quiet,” Hicks said at the inaugural American Express OPEN CEO BootCamp. “In starting a business, you have to get out and talk to people. I was doing door-to-door [subscription] sales, which was the last thing I ever thought I would do.” Leaving her comfort levels paved the way for Hicks to take advantage of opportunities that never would have arisen otherwise. “Don’t miss out on opportunities that come your way,” she said. “Put yourself in a position to have those opportunities; know when one is facing you, and take it.”

Tip: When you’re trying to get out of your comfort zone, consciously develop a positive mindset in the workplace by asking questions instead of assuming and carefully choosing the people around you.

**Fight for a mindset of equality as reality**

A study conducted by the Pew Research Center found that in 2020, women earned 84% of what men earned based on an analysis of the median hourly wage for both part-time and full-time work. Similarly, a 2020 U.S. Census
Bureau study that analyzed full-time wage data found that women earned 83% of what men earned.

Many women have felt the effects of the gender gap during their careers, whether through a pay dispute, a lost promotion or snide comments from coworkers. Even if your work environment champions equality, it's not uncommon to encounter people who have faced some kind of discrimination, subtle or not, because of their gender. [Make sure you know how to recognize and report workplace harassment if it does occur.]

Even though we’re faced with the reality of gender inequality on the news, on social media and through personal experience, one expert says women should remain steadfast and optimistic. Paula Stephenson, director of marketing at Smoke's Poutinerie, says if women want to be viewed as equal in the workplace, they must stand their ground and demand the respect they deserve – and it starts by behaving as if the gap has been closed. “I have noticed that if you act like there’s equality in the workplace, then there will be,” Stephenson said.

That’s not to say people should pretend inequality doesn’t exist. Acknowledging the need for change is essential, but our actions and attitudes in the workplace are critical. Encourage yourself and others, and don’t let perceived detriments rule the day.

“Being a working mom in the corporate world is a daily challenge,” said Mayra Attuy, a marketing executive. Despite the struggle to find a positive work-life balance, she considers her proudest professional moment to be when she returned from maternity leave. She believes her simultaneous personal and career success has made her a stronger marketer.

Women should embrace their natural leadership styles

For women entering the workforce, Attuy recommended leading by example while being open, supportive and collaborative. Look for, bond with, and become a mentor and role model for other women. Advancements such as
the #MeToo movement have ignited discussions, but there are still many barriers to overcome.

While every individual is different, attributes typically assigned to women can be significant differentiators as leadership qualities in the workplace. Women can help others set goals and attain them, emphasize teamwork, and invest time in training, mentoring and personal development.

Emily He, former chief marketing officer at Saba Software and now corporate vice president of business applications marketing at Microsoft, discovered that women are driven more by intrinsic motivations about work than by what their jobs or employers demand from them.

“In contrast to men, who tend to be career-centric and want to maximize their financial return from work, women view work more holistically, as a component of their overall life plan,” He said. “Therefore, they’re more likely to approach their careers in a self-reflective way and value factors such as meaning, purpose, connection with co-workers and work-life integration.”

Positive workplace culture shifts, including improved employee retention and better cooperation, can occur when women bring these intrinsic strengths to their teams and businesses. Most important, the next generation of leaders of all genders can move forward with enlightened perspectives.

As people work toward gender equality in their workplaces, the gender gap will close over time. Companies have a better chance of thriving when they incorporate various leadership styles, including what’s seen as traditionally feminine or masculine.

“The big challenge is to keep our perspectives top of mind in conversations at the corporate level, and also among family and friends, so the mindset shift can happen,” Attuy said. “Be resilient that change will come.”

**Tip:** Business leaders of all genders can help promote equality in the workplace. If you're interested in bringing change, follow these tips to close the gender gap in the workplace and create an inclusive workplace culture.
Women in leadership statistics

Despite small gains in recent years, statistics on women in leadership roles show that the gender gap remains. As of 2022, only 8.2% of Fortune 500 CEOs (41 CEOs) were women, although that’s a significant improvement from the zero female Fortune 500 CEOs in 1995, according to Zippia. As of December 2021, women accounted for 35% of U.S. senior management positions in the United States – a 4% increase from 2016, but still far from 50%.

Educational statistics, too, point to a considerable gap. Between 2020 and 2021 in the United States, 505,000 women earned master’s degrees, compared with 327,000 men. Moreover, women with master’s degrees earned, on average, 38% less than men with the same qualifications – $72,568 for women, compared with $117,617 for men.

Did you know?: 2020 was the 12th year in a row in which women earned more doctorates than men. Women accounted for 53.1% of doctorates awarded that year.

Barriers to women in leadership

Despite progress toward gender equality within the workplace, women still face pushback. Many barriers to women in leadership remain, including the following obstacles:

- **Stereotypes.** Most industries have been dominated by male leadership for so long that the traits of a good leader are often seen as masculine. Women are often perceived negatively when they exhibit these traits. To add insult to injury, women may be seen as unfit for the role when they do not demonstrate these typical leadership qualities. Additionally, some people may think of specific roles and industries as traditionally female and others as traditionally male.

- **Discrimination.** Work environments dominated by biases favoring men can be hostile toward women. Women may be passed over for promotions and experience sexual harassment, workplace harassment and other unprofessional behavior.
• **Lack of networking opportunities.** While bias is becoming less prevalent in the working world, its impact can still pose challenges for women looking to network. As a result, there may be fewer opportunities for mentorship or arrangements to help women move into leadership positions.

• **No work-life balance.** Old ideas about the domestic roles of men and women can limit the support women may need to balance work and everything else properly. As a result, some people may unfairly believe women can’t put in the time and effort required to lead. But every day, women continue to defy that myth – and plenty of others.

*Carlyann Edwards, Isaiah Atkins and Nicole Fallon contributed to the writing and reporting in this article. Source interviews were conducted for a previous version of this article.*

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**Marci Martin**

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With an associate’s degree in business management and nearly 20 years in senior management positions, Marci brings a real-life perspective to her articles about business and leadership. She began freelancing in 2012 and became a contributing writer for Business News Daily and business.com in 2015.

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Women in Leadership: Growing Your Influence at Work

by Shabnam Banerjee-McFarland

September 12, 2018

Globally, 74 percent of women want to advance to executive leadership, according to Egon Zehnder’s *Leaders & Daughters Global Survey 2017*. However, the same survey found that 49 percent of respondents think women face a bigger challenge than men in being promoted into senior leadership. The drive is there, but unfortunately, so is the glass ceiling.

Although the preexisting obstacles women face when striving for leadership roles are eroding slowly, albeit too slowly, the path still feels incredibly daunting to many. The power of influence offers a way for women to gain allies, advance ideas, and earn respect from coworkers, superiors, and industry peers. Influence provides the chance to contribute, deliver expertise, and earn recognition—and helps clear a path to leadership.

Kathryn Heath, Jill Flynn, Mary Davis Holt, and Diana Faison, authors of *The Influence Effect: A New Path to Power for Women Leaders*, write, “… Understanding influence is mandatory for anyone who wants to sell his or her ideas and aspirations to others. Influence—the capacity to impact agendas and outcomes and bring other people on board—is ultimately the tool people use to get things done. All of us know influencers: we see them in action every day and we take note. … The truly influential individuals among us demonstrate enviable talents that fuel and sustain their success.”
Be Known for Reliability

Influence doesn’t just manifest itself in your words, but also in your actions. Completing projects on time, in a quality way, and with enthusiasm and innovation shows reliability, which in turn builds your influence. Your commitment speaks volumes about you and can be just as influential as your opinions. Being known for unquestionable reliability means others can count on you for your input and to deliver in a crunch.

That said, being reliable doesn’t mean you take on every project offered. Though it might feel counterintuitive to say “no,” it actually allows you to treat your projects with care and give them the attention they need. Oftentimes, women in the workplace can feel as though taking on more work or offering help every time someone asks for it will increase their influence and make them known as someone who can handle immense responsibility. However, saying “no” when you know you can’t possibly commit to something and do it well is essential to not overextending yourself and building your credibility. Shoddy or late work because you are maxed out is simply unreliable. Be selective with the projects you take on, and don’t be afraid to say “no” in other discussions as well. Influence will be tough to exert if you are always agreeing, never offering alternative or enhanced viewpoints, or never setting yourself apart.

Be Confident as an Introvert

Here’s something that may surprise you: Quiet leaders can be just as influential as their boisterous colleagues. Jennifer Kahnweiler, author of *The Introverted Leader*, writes, “The power of silence is another characteristic that can serve as a strength. Many people are not comfortable with silence and try to fill the gaps with comments that are off the cuff, whereas the comments made by the introvert can be more thoughtful.” And thoughtful can definitely turn into influential.

Whether you are introverted or the outspoken type, the key is being comfortable with yourself and your communication and leadership styles. A situation may call for you to be open, vulnerable, reserved, direct, or any number of other traits—all of which can fit into your own influence style. So being quiet isn’t a game-changer; knowing when to open up, and thereby building confidence and trust, is.
Teams are powerful mechanisms for getting things done, but can be their own worst enemy. which is why being assertive and growing influence is so crucial for women in leadership. In Faster Together: Accelerating Your Team’s Productivity, Laura Stack writes, “Ironically, teamwork is both the glue binding our teams together and the oil that keeps production running smoothly (now there’s a mixed metaphor). In the best teams, everyone has a different job that contributes to the same outcome. We’re all individuals with unique experiences and skill sets, who use our capabilities, viewpoints, and opinions to keep the Team Car running at top speed. But our actions always influence our fellow team members.”

Advocating for your ideas and building a consensus within teams are essential ways to assert your influence and produce results that, in turn, increase your influence even more. But influence isn’t just about you—hearing what others have to say and building a bridge between ideas also strengthens your leadership, even while working in a team setting. Employees and colleagues who know they can come to you already are trusting your influence, and you ultimately benefit from their mutually constituted support.

The Benefits of Influence

Undoubtedly, women in leadership or seeking a move up to a managerial or executive position face unique challenges. Growing your influence offers a way to prevail over those challenges and be ready to take on the new ones that will inevitably arise.

The authors of The Influence Effect write, “Influence gets us in the game without asking us to sacrifice our values. Unlike politics, influence is not a zero-sum activity. We can be influential without taking influence away from someone else. Influence also fosters a sense of intellectual excitement. As we’ve seen throughout the book, the active pursuit of influence is a lifelong journey and it creates a path for career progress.” Growing influence furthers your career, and advancing your career grows your influence—a definite long-term win-win.
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Meeting Management

Women, Find Your Voice
by Kathryn Heath, Jill Flynn and Mary Davis Holt

From the Magazine (June 2014)

Summary. Reprint: R1406K Even at the highest levels of organizations, many otherwise dynamic women struggle in meetings. Some say their voices are drowned out; others can’t find a way into the conversation at all. Their male counterparts perceive a problem, but they... more

A senior manager is asked to give up an executive committee seat because the CEO wants to shrink the group’s size and plans to retain only “the most engaged” members.

The leader of a $50 million division is passed over for promotion to the C-suite after failing to fully participate in strategic discussions in which “you have to shout to be heard.”

A marketing executive is surprised when a colleague drops by after a meeting with this advice: “Stop acting like a facilitator. Start saying what you stand for.”

The people described above have several things in common. They are all successful and ambitious. They are all admired by colleagues and superiors. Yet they have all failed to assert themselves in high-level meetings. And they are all women.
Our research reveals that such stories are typical. During decades of leadership coaching, we have consistently heard women say that they feel less effective in meetings than they do in other business situations. Some say that their voices are ignored or drowned out. Others tell us that they can’t find a way into the conversation. Their male colleagues and managers have witnessed the phenomenon. In fact, several men reported seeing a female colleague get rattled or remain silent even when she was the expert at the table.

In 2012 we decided to take a systematic look at the issue. We began by examining 360-degree feedback we’d collected on 1,100 female executives at or above the vice president level—more than 7,000 surveys in all. We found widespread evidence in the executives’ comments and in those of their colleagues and managers that meetings were a big stumbling block. To corroborate and update what we saw in the 360s, we surveyed 270 female managers in Fortune 500 organizations. More than half reported that meetings were a significant issue or a “work in progress.” Finally, to get a picture of how the gender divide plays out in the highest-level meetings, we interviewed 65 top executives, including both male and female CEOs, from companies such as JPMorgan Chase, McDonald’s, PepsiCo, Lowe’s, Time Warner, and eBay. In all our investigations, we found that men and women generally agreed on the problems but often disagreed on their causes.

Although we have focused exclusively on women, we believe that many of our findings apply to others as well—members of racial and ethnic minorities and men with more-reserved personalities. We also realize that some women don’t fit the mold we describe. However, we believe that our research and advice will be useful to the many female managers who do struggle in critical meetings. We think it can also help bosses keen to encourage all team members, male and female, to contribute to their full potential.
What Men See

The male managers we interviewed were well aware that women often have a hard time making their otherwise strong voices heard in meetings, either because they’re not speaking loudly enough or because they can’t find a way to break into the conversation at all. More than a third indicated that when their female peers do speak up, they fail to articulate a strong point of view. Half said that women allow themselves to be interrupted, apologize repeatedly, and fail to back up opinions with evidence. One male executive offered this description of two “highly successful and powerful” female colleagues in a meeting he attended: “One went off on tangents, bringing in disparate points with few facts. It was like a snowball going down a hill and picking up stuff in its path. The other got wrapped up in the passion she feels for the topic, and she said the same thing three different ways.”

Men frequently described women as being defensive when challenged and apt to panic or freeze if they lose the attention of the room. “These are high-octane meetings that are filled with domineering personalities,” one CEO told us. “Women are often either quiet and tentative, or they pipe up at the wrong moment, and it sounds more like noise to some of us.”

Women could go a long way toward addressing their feelings of isolation by getting in on the “meetings before the meetings.”
What Women Feel

If men perceive that women lack confidence at meetings, it’s because in many cases they do. Female executives, vastly outnumbered in boardrooms and C-suites and with few role models and sponsors, report feeling alone, unsupported, outside their comfort zones, and unable to advocate forcefully for their perspectives in many high-level meetings. As one said, “It is harder to read the room if there are no other women around the table.”

Many women admitted that they do get rattled when they’re challenged. In fact, they’re uncomfortable with conflict in general. They find it unsettling when anyone receives a sharp public rebuke, and they often brood and second-guess themselves long after meetings are over. They don’t see themselves as defensive on their own account, though they report feeling empathy for others, and perhaps an occasional touch of anger. “When men dismiss women,” said a female vice president, “women may interpret it as being ‘put in their place.’”

Most say that the trouble they have articulating their views has more to do with timing than with their ability to marshal facts, stick to a point, or control their feelings. In coaching sessions, women have told us that they sometimes get lukewarm responses when they raise an opposing view after the group has started to cohere around an idea. But they are strongly opposed to simply repeating others’ ideas in different words, something they feel many of their male colleagues do.

“Men have a way to neatly repackage ideas,” says Lynne Ford, executive vice president and head of distribution at Calvert Investments. “They restate and amplify what you just said.” Even as she acknowledges that she has seen this tactic used very effectively, she adds, “It’s gamesmanship.”

What Women Can Do
In the future, when more women are leading organizations, they can approach meetings in a way that feels perfectly natural to them. In the meantime, several practical steps can help them become more effective and more comfortable.

**Master the “pre-meeting.”**

Our research shows that female executives are very efficient. They come to meetings on time. They leave as soon as the last agenda item has been completed, rushing off to the next meeting or heading back to their offices to put out fires. We’ve found that men are more likely to spend time connecting with one another to test their ideas and garner support. They arrive at meetings early in order to get a good seat and chat with colleagues, and they stay afterward to close off the discussion and talk about other issues on their minds.

Women could go a long way toward addressing the problem of timing and their feelings of isolation if they sounded out colleagues and built allies in this way. They need to get in on what several men described as the “meetings before the meetings,” where much of the real work happens. Participating in these informal advance conversations can help clarify the true purpose of a meeting, making it much easier to take an active part in the conversation. Will the group be asked to make a decision? Confirm a consensus? Establish power? It’s often not apparent in the official agenda.

“Men are really good at the pre-meeting,” said a male senior vice president. “This is their preparation.”

**Prepare to speak.**

Many women we talked with prefer to pitch their ideas in formal presentations rather than in the more conversational way many men favor. Our advice to female executives, as counterintuitive as it sounds, is: *Prepare* to speak spontaneously. “You need to have
written down some things you want to talk about,” Ford says. “Even some of the casual, off-the-cuff remarks you hear have been rehearsed. If it sounds good, it was probably prepared.”

Women who do their homework and come to a meeting with an accurate sense of what it’s really about and how it will probably unfold can build on others’ remarks. Being armed with some cogent comments or questions can allow them to move the conversation forward. Anne Taylor, vice chairman and regional managing partner at Deloitte LLP, says she has the most impact in a meeting when she finds an opportunity to “turn it in a different and more productive direction with questions like Have you thought of this...? or What if we looked at it this way...?”

When the conversation advances rapidly, holding the floor requires the use of “muscular words,” as one male executive put it —active, authoritative, precise language that shows you’re taking ownership of your opinions (see the sidebar “Make Your Language More Muscular”).
### Make Your Language More Muscular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INSTEAD OF THIS</strong></th>
<th><strong>USE THIS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How about...?</td>
<td>I strongly suggest...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to agree.</td>
<td>That is absolutely right, and here’s why...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think maybe...</td>
<td>My strong advice is...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree.</td>
<td>I agree completely, because...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe we can...</td>
<td>Here is my plan...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, what if...?</td>
<td>I recommend...</td>
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</table>

Male executives we interviewed said that in order to hold the floor in meetings, they use active words and authoritative ...

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**Keep an even keel.**

“Passion is a key component of persuasion,” says eBay senior vice president Steve Boehm. “The question is, How passionate can women be?”—that is, how much feeling can they safely express?
Realistically, our research suggests, the answer is “not very much.” In our 360-degree feedback survey analysis, we learned that when women said they felt “passionate” about an idea or an opinion, their male managers and colleagues often perceived “too much emotion.”

Men acknowledge the existence of a double standard: “Women have to be mindful to stay within the guardrails; men don’t,” one male executive told us. Until that changes, women need to ensure that they are seen as composed and in command of their emotions. It is not so much what women say as how they say it. They need to keep an even tone, not shift to a higher pitch when under duress. They need to speak deliberately and avoid signaling frustration through sarcasm or curtness.
In interviews and written comments, men acknowledged that women often struggle to make themselves heard at 

Women must also learn to move past confrontation without taking it personally. Karen Dahut, executive vice president at Booz Allen Hamilton, offers this learning experience: “I put out some controversial points in an executive committee meeting a while back, which we debated for a good while. Eventually I realized we could go no further, so I closed the conversation. But I thought about the disagreement all weekend; I worried I’d harmed my work relationships. I wondered what it would take to get them back.... On Monday I saw some of my male colleagues—and there was no problem. To them, it was nothing!”
A little compartmentalization can be useful here. As one male senior executive put it, “Men can be intense and challenging, but then we go out and get a beer together.”

**What Organizations Can Do**

Women can certainly do a better job of speaking up in meetings, but bosses can also help ensure that women’s voices are heard.

First, companies should fix broken feedback mechanisms. Fully 68% of the women in our study said they seldom receive any direct feedback about their meeting behavior. One male executive admitted, “We talk about them, but not to them.” Managers need to overcome their reluctance about giving direct feedback on this area of development issues.

Next, at the risk of stating the obvious, leaders need to invite more women to the table. When a woman walks into a meeting and finds that only two of the 15 people present are women, it takes a toll. Peer support and role models make a difference.

Finally, bosses need to proactively pull women into the conversation. During our interviews, we asked 30 high-ranking women to name the one thing they would change about how men treat them in meetings. Thirty-eight percent said, “Ask us direct questions” or “Bring us into the discussion.”

These changes can have profound results. “Eighteen years ago a male colleague [who] had been in a series of meetings with me recognized that I had something to say but was uncomfortable speaking out,” a female executive vice president told us. “One day he looked at all the guys around the table. He said he knew I had a point, and he would like me to just say it and not to worry about how it might be received. He got the guys...to make it a safe environment for me to speak. I have been speaking up ever since.”

A version of this article appeared in the June 2014 issue of *Harvard Business Review.*
Kathryn Heath, Jill Flynn, and Mary Davis Holt are partners at Flynn Heath Holt, a consulting firm focused on women's leadership development. They are the authors of Break Your Own Rules: How to Change the Patterns of Thinking That Block Women's Paths to Power (Jossey-Bass, 2011).

MH

Mary Davis Holt, MBA, is a partner with Flynn Heath Holt Leadership, which specializes in leadership development programs and executive coaching for women.

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Being an influential woman: focus areas for female leaders

Fiona Elsa Dent and Viki Holton, 5 years ago

Hey there! What brings you here today?
There are many influential women in the world from all walks of life—politics, business, sports, and the arts (to name just a few). Some of these women will readily admit that luck has played a major role for them, but surely that cannot be the only answer.

We believe that there are many things women can do to be more influential and powerful. Today, we’ll look at four key areas that we believe women could focus on to help themselves: influencing approach, reputation, resilience, and planning for the career journey ahead.

**Your influencing approach**

Being influential is essentially a relationship skill. A major factor in understanding and developing your ability to be influential is to have an appreciation of your influencing style and approach.

Most of us have a preferred way of working with others—our influencing style. This will be based on habitual behaviors that develop because you have found that certain approaches, behaviors, and skills seem to work for you.

So, how would you describe your preferred influencing approach? Look at the table below and try to identify your primary approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directive:</th>
<th>Collaborative:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An expert-driven style where you assert your views and perspectives and expect others to follow.</td>
<td>A team-oriented style where your aim is to involve others in the influencing process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persuasive reasoning:</th>
<th>Inspirational:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An issue-driven style where your main aim is to get others to buy into your ideas.</td>
<td>A people-oriented style where the aim is to appeal to the emotions of others to get their buy-in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Extracted from Ashridge Psychometrics – Influencing Style Preferences Inventory – Workbook)

Understanding your own natural style is important, but the ability to use a variety of approaches to suit the situation and people you are influencing is just as important. The ability to adapt your approach and your ability to flex this appropriately will undoubtedly contribute to the next area—your

https://www.hult.edu/blog/being-an-influential-woman/
reputation.
(//www.hult.edu/)

**Reputation**
(https://www.hult.edu/blog/)

Your reputation is built up over many years and is largely based on your interactions with others. This means that you must be aware of your behavior and how people perceive you.

Take account of the language you use, how you use your voice, your body language, and the **overall visual impression you create**. But more than this, if you want to be regarded as positive and trustworthy, then you must demonstrate a range of characteristics that truly help to build this reputation.

Look at the characteristics below. How many of these words would others use to describe you? Which of these characteristics do you feel are important for you to focus on in developing your reputation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• Integrity</th>
<th>• Dependable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sincerity</td>
<td>• Distinctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Genuine</td>
<td>• Compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trustworthy</td>
<td>• Self-disclosing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Principled</td>
<td>• Demonstrates respect for self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honest</td>
<td>• Acts with goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consistent</td>
<td>• Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Morally upright</td>
<td>• Visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Speaks up and out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you wish to be regarded by others? Are there any other characteristics you would add to this list?

To become an influential woman, you must devote time and energy to this important aspect of your life.

### The importance of being resilient

Resilience is something that we often take for granted until something happens to make us realize that we need it. Whether it’s a big change at work and at home, with a little bit of stress, but then some family arguments, or illness that’s a trigger.
Sometimes, on reflection, what pushes us over the edge can seem almost trivial, but it is the extra or unexpected stress that suddenly, we feel under a huge amount of pressure, which has probably been building for months and we simply didn’t realize. **You can develop resilience.** There are many self-help books and guides available, but here are just two ideas that may be of value: ([https://www.hult.edu/blog/](https://www.hult.edu/blog/))

1. **Compartmentalise**

   This approach was taken by some of the successful women we interviewed in our book *How to Thrive and Survive as a Working Woman* ([https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/how-to-thrive-and-survive-as-a-working-woman-9781472930644/](https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/how-to-thrive-and-survive-as-a-working-woman-9781472930644/)). Essentially, it is about focus and using **mindfulness** to great effect.

   As one woman put it, “When I am at home, that’s where my focus is, totally. But when I’m in the office, that takes all of my energy and interest. I find that’s far better than trying to blend both—then I simply end up doing nothing well!” Multitasking may be much-admired, but it can create more problems than it solves.

2. **Top up on energy levels each week**

   Unfortunately, trying to do too much—achieving the impossible—is something women are all too good at. However, it can ultimately be damaging.

   Learn when to say “**No.**” You don’t have to accept everything that comes your way. Remember, “me time” and keeping healthy are key components to maintaining energy reserves and resilience. This will help you cope and bounce back in times of stress and pressure.

   “Learn when to say “No,” you don’t have to accept everything that comes your way. Look after your health, get enough sleep, eat well, and avoid too many late nights.”

**Planning your career journey**

Do you know where you are going with your career? Not everyone spends enough time considering this important question or on planning for the journey ahead.

If you do reflect on what you want in your working life and understand your own values, then you are likely to achieve more. Of course, careers are not only about money. There are many senior executives who are happy working as a chief executive—though we definitely look forward to the day when that will be a gender-neutral phrase. **Hey there😊 What brings you here today?**

[https://www.hult.edu/blog/being-an-influential-woman/](https://www.hult.edu/blog/being-an-influential-woman/)
What does make a difference though, and the advice given by many of the women we interviewed, is to be ambitious. As one woman put it: “Go for gold.”

There are many people around you who will be more than willing to help with advice, expertise, and practical support—perhaps as a mentor or coach. Think of thinking that a mentor or coach is a short-term, limited option. Think about the approach taken by top tennis players and sporting personalities who often work together with their coach season after season. It’s a key part of their success.

Find ways to develop and plan your career as this will make a difference. It’s never too late to begin to take charge of your own career journey.

**In summary: 4 simple steps for improving your career**
Understand your own style of influencing, and be sure to review how well you influence others around you. Your circle of influence will help develop your career—you need supporters. You can also coach yourself to improve your level of influence.
Make sure to ask yourself: **What do others think (and say) about me? What is my reputation?** Many of us forget to look at our image even though it follows or precedes us everywhere. Often, key decisions in organizations are made upon a “good” or “bad” reputation.

So, would people say you are a great person to have on their team? Do you demonstrate energy and expertise? Is your reputation known to many key people in the business, or is it way below the radar?
Focus on staying healthy and do not create a constant burden on yourself with stress and overwork followed by guilt for not achieving what you think you should have done.

Resilience means feeling comfortable with not being “perfect” all the time, or indeed being the “perfect leader” at work who never says no.
What do you want from your career? Once you know that, you have something to aim for. Reach out to other women around you—set up regular “lunch and learn” events to build skills, knowledge, and networking opportunities.

Finding how to thrive and survive as a working woman is important, so make sure you take the time to invest in yourself. You are worth it.
To learn more about Hult’s global programs and opportunities for career development, download a brochure (https://www.hult.edu/en/brochure/)

Fiona Elsa Dent (https://www.hult.edu/en/about-us/faculty/fiona-dent/) is an Independent Trainer, Coach, Author, and Professor of Practice. She spent 24 years on the full-time faculty at Ashridge, where she was a Client and Programme Director. She has written eleven books, the most recent of which is: How to Thrive and Survive as a Working Woman: The Coach Yourself Toolkit (co-authored with Viki Holton)
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Four Surefire Methods To Hone Your Leadership Skills

September 16, 2020 | Carter, Insights

Tammy Heermann, senior consultant at Knightsbridge Human Capital Solutions, shares her insights on how to elevate your influence as a leader.

The ability to influence others is arguably the most important leadership skill. It’s been said that leadership is influence. Whether we believe this to be true or not, we can agree that influence is an essential tool in a leader’s toolkit.

We also know that influence is often misunderstood – likened to negotiation or sales skills – the kind used to close deals.

But in today’s business environment, influence is less about “the close” and more about communicating in a compelling way to move an idea, person or project forward. As organizations become leaner, more global and more mature, many goals can only be achieved through collaboration and shared accountability.

To succeed, we must be able to present our perspectives persuasively, be open to the perspectives of others, and be skilled at finding common ground. Bottom line – the ability to influence has become a necessary skill set in achieving business results. In order to become more successful at influencing, leaders need to shift their mindset, enhance their skill set, and then take deliberate actions to become more savvy influencers.

ASSUMPTION#1: Good influencers are born

REALITY: Influence can be learned

Good influencers are made, not born. Believing this requires a mindset shift for some; we typically assume that to be a good influencer, you need to be extraverted or naturally at ease with asserting your point of view.

But influence can be an acquired skill. Like any new learning, honing the skill requires a deliberate focus, active practice and continual timely feedback.

ASSUMPTION#2: Successful influence is about building the best business case

REALITY: Influence has three levers, not just one

One of the reasons influencing feels so daunting is that often the individuals we are trying to move seem immovable.

Our usual response is to pile the data higher, and build the unassailable business case to which no one can say “no.” And yet, “status quo,” “two sides,” and “long tenure” viewpoints prevail, despite the power of our logic. Why? Because, although we love to think of ourselves as data rational decision-makers, ultimately, we all make decisions based on emotion (this includes the men in the crowd).

When we work into resistance from a key stakeholder, it is often in response to their own emotional reaction, rather than to the logic of the argument. Successful influencers know how to build arguments that access emotion, logic and credibility – three levers that make winning over stakeholders more possible. You can do the same by:

• Presenting a case that is logical not only to yourself but to those being influenced;

• Stirring emotions by understanding both the compelling opportunity and the potential limits (loss of power, control, resources, or pride) the new situation presents; and

• Understanding that your perceived credibility is infinitely tied to the success of your influence attempt and factoring that into your strategy.

ASSUMPTION#3: My preferred influence style will work with others

REALITY: Adapting is key

The single biggest factor in successful influencing is the ability to clearly understand the stakeholders we are trying to influence, and adapting our approach to meet their needs. Most of us, however, will default to our own style because it is what we know and what we are comfortable with. Understanding your stakeholder
* Knowing how they like to receive information. What do they need to hear about first – the vision, the process for arriving at your recommendation, or success stories about where this has worked in the past?
* Understanding the type of proof they need. What makes them say yes – stats of supporting data, the voice of a credible expert, or testimonials?
* Appreciating how to connect with them. What level of energy and pace is required – slow and methodical from beginning to end, jumping around to keep pace with their train of thought, or letting them drive the conversation?
* Reinforcing what compels them. What barriers do you need to overcome to move them forward – gaining commitment to an action plan, overcoming their long list of objections, or allowing them to achieve the outcome in their own way?

**ASSUMPTION #4: Men are better influencers than women**

**REALITY: Women have unique strengths**

Research suggests that women find it easier to put themselves in the shoes of others – we are more empathetic and more attuned to the emotional level. During interactions, women also tend to pick up more of the dynamics at play – very helpful in the process of influencing. The caveat is that because women process more internal signals and may take more perspectives into account, the process of influence can take longer.

As a result, women can be perceived as not having the capacity to make quick decisions or move projects through swiftly. The successful woman influencer, therefore, plays to her strength in assessing the emotional level while displaying confidence and ability to adapt her approach to whatever style is thrown at her. She also helps others recognize that sometimes slow is fast – making through the buy-in stage of an influence attempt may mean that the support you thought you had for your initiative falls apart as the project moves toward execution, and success has been sacrificed for speed.

Regardless of level, sector or gender, we know that the ability to influence is a critical differentiator in high performing leaders. The good news is that evidence suggests that women leaders are uniquely positioned to be key influencers in today’s complex organizations.

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POWERPLAY: WOMEN, LEADERSHIP AND THE GETTING OF POWER

by: Dianne Jacobs (https://iveybusinessjournal.com/author/djacob/)
Business Journal: POWERPLAY: WOMEN, LEADERSHIP AND THE GETTING OF POWER

An article from the Ivey Business Journal is being shared with you:

Women are contributing new approaches to leadership and power. Yet the question remains — will this translate into advantage for women striving to make their way higher in corporate hierarchies? This author strongly believes so, but first, as she writes women must make certain adjustments. Power is an intriguing, multifaceted concept. The reality is that:


Women are contributing new approaches to leadership and power. Yet the question remains — will this translate into advantage for women striving to make their way higher in corporate hierarchies? This author strongly believes so, but first, as she writes women must make certain adjustments.

Power is an intriguing, multifaceted concept. The reality is that when we effect change, compete for resources, forge consensus, utilise relationships, strengthen positions, further our team’s reputation, or ask for support we are engaging in acts of power and influence.

“Power-over” is implicit in making “power-to” work. Those who take up a leadership role develop some kind of power through which to attain influence over others. Power-over is the capacity to get people to do what they don’t want to do due to resources, status, expertise, reward or punishment. Power-to is the ability or potential to bring about change. Empowerment has an assumed good. Power-to recognizes that power is relational and reciprocal. Anyone at any level can exercise power and also resistance.

Power plays out in decision-making and how goals are gained. It is as much about followers as it is leaders. It is used for individual gain or to help others. It does impact group dynamics. It can empower or repress relative power. Ethical and purposeful use of power is at the core of effective leadership.

Changing the C-suite contexts

This is “the era of the inclusive leader” Booz Allen Hamilton recently declared, “where the power of today’s CEO is not as absolute.” A synergistic approach is a paradigm shift in leader identity and the practice of leadership. Think about autonomy and individual achievement versus results enabled by an intricate collaborative network of alliances. Think of command-and-control hierarchies versus participative interactions of leaders and followers. Think of a directive style versus enabling others to take up their own authority. Think of making choices versus integrating the “and.”

Within C-suites and particularly for the global executive officer (GEO) the profound complexity inevitable in working across countries, cultures and markets presents new contexts at every cross-point. GEOs constantly work on the inside, the edge or the outside of shifting global agendas. Articulating vision and strategy from a multi-country and multi-environment perspective, GEOs understand the need to unite and engage everyone. This global collegiality requires greater acceptance of difference, with absolute meritocracy, enhanced by open information flows. Collaboration is the corporate zeitgeist.
Leadership genre connects to gender. Traits typically linked with traditional 'heroic' leadership – individualism, assertiveness and doing – are regarded as masculine, while "post-heroic" traits – collaboration, emotional intelligence and adaptive approaches – are typically regarded as feminine. Does this post-heroic model give women an advantage? Will social assumptions become irrelevant? Should we posit that an inclusive leadership style will see more women in C-suite levels of the talent pipeline?

When I ask executive women: “Do you have power?” there is a moment of reflective silence followed by confidence. They tell stories about their use of influence, how they create change, build teams, develop sustainable approaches that prevent crisis; and of ‘power-to’ replacing ‘power-over.’ They talk about backing their judgement. They take up their personal authority derived from their role and task. They do not turn away from power or leadership, but altruistically, they do want it for purposes broader than personal advantage. Not very heroic!

Gender schemata are powerful. The experience and consequences of practicing leadership will be different for women. Men who exhibit post-heroic traits can claim they are embracing fresh paradigms, in tune with leading in this brave new global world. Women have a harder time differentiating what they do as unique because it looks like they are doing what women just do.

Noticeable is combining traditional heroic leadership with greater degrees of emotional intelligence and relationship building. But “The Emperor Has No Clothes.” These post-heroic leaders have learnt to tack a new set of skills onto their established leadership style. They are, as Joyce Fletcher from Simmons Graduate School of Management astutely remarks, “post-heroic heroes.”

**Dominant group dynamics**

The vast majority of companies, and the organizational architecture of those companies, reflect a distinctly male viewpoint. This is deeper than subjective heroism. It manifests in how performance, success, commitment, credit and reward is determined. Metaphors from sport, war and competitive games abound in corporate language. Face-time, long hours and “extreme-job” cultures prevail. Behaviour is frequently interpreted based on gender. This signals who is included and who is excluded.

It is human nature to make distinctions. Everyone is unconsciously biased. Majority groups normalise power to the point they no longer see their advantage and privilege. The dominant group-sense diversity takes something away from them. They are often unaware of the barriers to change this mindset creates. Difference needs to be experienced and acknowledged for it to be understood.

In any system of unequal power, those with less power are ultra-tuned and highly sensitive to conscious and unconscious actions of the more powerful. The less powerful vigilantly watch the powerful acutely. Needing to know more about this power group than that group consciously knows about itself; they try to read every signal. The power group, however, has a different priority. As the dominant group they are oblivious to their privilege or impact. The relational skills that the less powerful use to navigate this fraught environment becomes associated with a lack of power!

Behaviour is filtered through schema that determines what we see, what we expect to see and how we interpret it. Stereotyping sees all members of a group as having similar attributes – all women are the same or all men are the same. As we know, neither women are homogeneous as a group nor are men. There are
layers of diversity. Men and women who neatly fit a pure stereotype are actually quite rare.

Pervasive is stereotyping women's capacity for leadership. Women executives are thought to be better at “taking care” while men “take charge.” Catalyst research shows that a “men-as-default-leaders” mindset derails women's advancement. Examining two forms of leader power: Interpersonal Power – problem-solving, team-building and inspiring; and Position Power – rewarding, supporting and mentoring; the research surprisingly shows men stereotype women as having limited interpersonal power (a strength usually attributed to women) because men see women as less effective at problem-solving.

It becomes a no-win situation – women’s care behaviours are less valued and then their interpersonal power is limited due to the perceived need to be more effective at “identifying, analysing and acting decisively” as problem-solvers.

Soft power has some hard realities. The focus on gender differences creates the flawed view that we have to fix the women. The Henry Higgins lament “why can’t a woman be more like a man” lingers. If women do not shape their brand and identity they will be judged by prevailing stereotypical thinking.

Assimilation is an intense process of consistent integration absorbing members of one group into an established, larger community. Assimilation is also a state of change. The majority tries to change the minority into what their society expects. The minority group, wanting to succeed, attempts to be similar to everyone else. But in reality, women who try to fit in by acting like men get labeled 'alpha females' – not fully accepted by the men they work with, while alienating themselves from other women and more so, from their authentic self.

Identity makes an entity distinguishable, definable and recognizable. It makes something either the same or different. Declaring someone as ‘other’ marks them ‘not the same,’ ‘not me’ and ‘a stranger.’ This practice of comparing ourselves to others and simultaneously distancing ourselves from them re-confirms one’s normality and defines and secures one’s positive identity. But this practice comes at a price – stigmatizing ‘others.’ The ‘other’ is truly an outsider.

Leadership is personal, reflecting who you are. Executive women, as with non-dominant communities, mask their true identity making decisions about which parts of themselves to hide and which parts to reveal. Having to make this choice creates ‘schizophrenia’ where women deny aspects of their life experience. In many ways, women are not ‘at home’ in corporations, often feeling as if they are ‘in exile.’ The emotional cost is high.

**Individual-achievement dynamics**

Leadership enacts persona. It is as much about performance as it is performing. Even when collaboration is cited, the individual, their contribution and attributes are described. It is natural for people to credit their results to their personal talents. Ego and identity encourage us to perceive the action as individual.

Executives with high self-efficacy, sense of self and internal locus of control believe they can succeed, perform well in future tasks and make things happen. These 'movers and shakers' willingly try more different things for greater returns. They see opportunities where others see threats. They feel in control and rarely
victims of fate, luck, muses or chance. They believe there is a meritocracy! They regard success as a direct result of their own drive and ability – not external factors. A cliché, but true nonetheless, is that success breeds success.

These factors: self-efficacy, sense of self and locus of control, all influence how women take up their roles, and how they regard and use their power and authority.

The belief that one has the capabilities to execute on future situations is central to self-efficacy. Where self-esteem is a sense of self-worth; self-efficacy relates to perception about the ability to reach a goal. People with self-efficacy truly believe they are in control of their lives and that their actions or decisions shape their lives. It is a critical aspect of motivation, because people regulate the effort they put into a task based on expected outcomes.

Self-efficacy directs what is taken on, how much effort is put in and thoughts about task difficulty. It allows people to act as if they are more capable at what they do than they are. Typically higher for men, it lets them jump in and seize new opportunities. Men think 'can do, will do.'

Women often perceive the need to prove themselves, be better and work harder before being promoted or taking opportunities. Thinking they are not as good as they actually are they hold themselves back, even if qualified. Women rely on past experience rather than believing in their capability to execute future situations. Women think “have done, can do.”

Locus of control is significant in achievement motivation. People attribute their performance and destiny to internal or external reinforcers. An internal locus attributes success or failure to personal ability or effort, assuming individual responsibility. An external locus attributes performance to factors over which there is no responsibility, citing the ease of the task or luck. When a man gets promoted he thinks ‘I deserve this,’ while a woman thinks ‘I am lucky.’

Voice and visibility

Identity is reinforced in dialogue and interactions. It is a shifting construct. While “majority males” often do not see the privilege that comes from being male or white; women often feel invisible as individuals and hyper-visible as a group.

Research shows there are gender differences in competitiveness and risk-taking. This does not mean women lack ambition. Less important aspects of power for women are: competing for key assignments, increasing direct reports or working long hours. Women pursue power by producing results, forming collaborative relationships and building alliance networks. The benefits from this approach are significant, but often less visible, take longer and less valued.

C-suite decision-making relies strongly on power, political savvy, conflict management and trust. Women do have a different decision-making style. There is a pragmatic argument for women's participation in C-suite decision-making. It starts from recognizing that women and men have different needs, perspectives and priorities. Discussing different perspectives does produce more creative solutions.
'Womenomics' builds on the rationale that revenue-generation is power. Astute companies are creating marketing programs targeted at the mega-niche of the female market. In corporate hierarchies, power goes to those who generate the most business or run profit-centers – which depend on face-to-face client relationships, ‘rainmaking’ and business development from a referral network. ‘Pink-collar’ roles lack this commercial force.

Masculine jargon and symbols, that are such a large part of communal corporate life, create community. They also raise the hurdle for women being heard and included. There are conversational rituals. Men are more sensitive to power in conversations. Women are more concerned with rapport, speaking in ways that 'saves face' for others. Women use a relationship style peppered with tentative words. Men hear doubt. Women use an upward inflection. Men hear uncertainty. Using language of competence, 'linking and labelling' actions to organisational goals, can assist women avoid confusion about their confidence and capability.

Positive is the increasing number of men wanting to be included and actively involved in developing the wide range of initiatives needed to bring more women into executive and board roles. Their presence and determination – engaging jointly with women – is fundamental for the diversity agenda to shift to the next level.

Taking up power

People do not “have” power implicitly; rather, it is an applied modus operandi. Power is both strategic and situational. It depends on context – who relates to whom, under what circumstances, relying on influence and compliance of others. It also depends on timing – reading the dynamics in the moment and understanding that power has a lifecycle.

Situational diagnosis gives insight into available options and the prevailing landscape. In adopting Andy Grove's view that “only the paranoid survive,” you anticipate “strategic inflection points.” We see things as we are, so it is important to reframe. Gathering good intelligence on opportunities and challenges can then show the way for a mutual outcome.

It is critical to have buy-in, resources and backing for effective problem-solving! Negotiating and asking pays. Women's 'softer' negotiating style with lower expectations of what is possible takes its toll. Effective negotiating narrows the gender pay-equity gap. Women executives with the appetite to negotiate have higher performance ratings, motivation and greater control. They are viewed as having leadership potential and ability.

Power is conditional and executive-role tenure is becoming shorter. There is a normal life cycle of nurture, growth, peak and decline. Look for new currencies of power before existing ones become a liability. It is also important to read the 'moment' to decide whether to act, hold or fold.

Charting centres of power against your networks-map is revealing. Essential is to know who is an ally, who is neutral and who is a resister. Analysis identifies strategies, frames agendas and anticipates derailment. Trusted advisors offer: new perspectives, pinpoint key issues, build confidence and give alternate dilemma resolution. Self-efficacy and internal locus of control are affected by learning from strategically selected role-models and mentors.
Exchange and reciprocity are critical for relationships, influencing, exercising power and negotiating. Know your worth, identify your assets, consider trade-offs and assess what others truly need. You have more choices to offer than you think. You are not without power. You just need to assert it.

Imperative for women rising into senior levels in corporations is to recognize roadblocks that detour the journey. Women must not only understand corporate context and the attached power dynamics, but also explore the webs of power existing around roles. They need to know when and how to use power and what makes them powerless. More so, they must effectively position themselves within the power domain – believing in their power – if they are to achieve their goals in the world of business. Women can own their power, influence and authority.

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The profile of an effective female leadership in multicultural context

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Abstract

Organizations are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and nationality. Management of such multicultural company can be challenging for each leader: different work and cultural norms, language barriers, required time for accomplishing tasks enforces to apply new decisions and management methods. Female leaders distinguish for empathy, flexibility and their role is growing constantly in business processes in different organizational levels. Thus, the goal of the research is to identify how should a female leader act in multicultural context in order to be effective? The qualitative survey of this study was conducted on 6 managers with experience in the range between 10-20 years in Lithuania, in 2014. The research results have revealed the main characteristics and let to construct the profile of an effective female leadership in a multicultural context.

Keywords: Leadership, female, effectiveness, multicultural context

1. Introduction

Globalization of business, the increased application of teamwork, and changing workforce demographics have all made managing workforce diversity as a critical competency for today's organizations. Having a workforce that is diverse is a key competitive advantage. Hence, organizations are challenged to begin creating effective strategies for a more positive approach to managing diversity. But for many companies, efforts to manage diversity have produced disappointing results (Pedersen and Connerley, 2005). Pedersen and Connerley (2005) state that learning to become an effective leader is like learning to play music. Leading in multicultural environment is like playing several instruments. A leader is required to have different attitudes and behavior. They suggest that any intercultural effectiveness starts primarily with cultural awareness. A leader’s job requires more than a character, knowledge and action; it also demands results. Results based leaders have to always know what is wanted. They assess their

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effectiveness by measuring achievements against goals. In this approach leaders focus what is to be accomplished. Leader who get results but lack attributes often find their successes short-lived. Hence result focus should help leaders turn attributes into outcomes (cited by Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood, 1999). Orey (2011) highlights that result can be obtained once the right environment is being created by the leader that “positively impacts the attitude and spirit of everyone on your team”. Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) claim that there is very little researched on the results of the leadership rather than its attributes. Since the results is the only goal teams work towards it is very important to focus on how to achieve them.

According to Heffernan (2002) the future of business depends on women (cited by Eagly and Carli, 2003). They also point out the fact that the leadership has historically been perceived as “masculine enterprise” with stereotypically masculine qualities in leaders. But stereotypically feminine qualities as cooperation, mentoring and collaboration are important to leadership as well, especially now in contemporary organizations. Russel, Rush and Herd (1988) highlight the difference of male and female leadership in their leadership behavior. In their study they hypothesized that an effective female leader would be expected to exhibit higher level of consideration behavior than an effective male leader.

We may find various sources on effective female leadership or effective leadership in multicultural context separately, but there has very little been researched on a female leadership in multicultural context as an independent topic. Furthermore, the increasing level of globalization and women percentage taking leadership positions urges us to pay a closer look to the problem. Hence, the scientific problem can be formulated as such: How should a female leader act in multicultural context in order to be effective?

Theoretical analysis of multiculturalism, national culture and leadership are analyzed in the first part. Prepared methodology and qualitative research based on the theoretical analysis is conducted and presented in the second part, and conclusions are proposed in the final third part.

1.1. Multiculturalism and Cultural orientation

According to Foulkes (1995), multiculturalism reflects "the existence within one society of diverse groups who maintain their unique cultural identity while accepting and participating in the larger society's legal and political system". Similar definitions by various authors have been developed to identify multiculturalism at organizational level. Cox (1991) defines a multicultural organization as one that values cultural diversity and refers to the degree to which it is willing to utilize and encourage it.

Cox (1994) argues that cultural diversity affects organizational performance. The author writes about the impact of some organizational processes in culturally diverse groups such as communication, creativity and problem solving, which are closely related to performance. According to Workman (2008) „the extent to which domestic multiculturalism exists and is promoted within a nation has a strong effect on employee behavior and attitudes, specifically, employee ability (and willingness) to work well with individuals from other cultures” (cited by Kwantes and Chung-Yan, 2012). Aghazadeh (2004) mentions that diversity at workplace helps to increase attraction of the most qualified candidates. Other benefits such as higher creativity and innovation, flexibility, better decision making are named by Aghazadeh (2004), Cox (1991). The latter describes multicultural ideology as a source of strength. Disadvantages of diversity appear along with benefits which are increased of costs through higher turnover rates, interpersonal conflicts and communication breakdowns, costs of trainings, etc. (cited by Cox 1991, Aghazadeh, 2004).

The multicultural environment at workplace can only exist if civility and tolerance are present. According to King (2011) they are “central social values as well as important interpersonal values in the workplace, are also meaningful predictors of organizational effectiveness with research showing that firms can improve performance by creating and maintaining norms of civility and tolerance” (cited by
Von Bergen (2013). Stevens, Plaut and Sanchez-Burks (2008) state that “organizations employ a variety of strategies to emphasize diversity”. For example, arranging “diversity days” when employees’ backgrounds are celebrated. Along with it the nonminority groups are strongly encouraged to attend those kind events in order to avoid cultural bias and develop multicultural awareness”.

Darby (1995) describes the cultural awareness as a key factor for a managerial success in the expatriate model. Without such awareness all the work related knowledge can turn obsolete, ineffective and useless. Pedersen (1988) unlike other multicultural theorists, focuses on three main areas that need to be developed in an individual: awareness, knowledge, skills (cited by Komives and Woodard, 2002). Six arguments were selected to create an overall image of challenges working in multicultural environment. The authors argue that the perception of „on-time „ versus „late „of individuals of different cultural background varies. The acceptable workplace behavior also includes the etiquette norms in different cultures such as no eating during meetings, norms on not interrupting others with questions, etc. Non-work related pre-existing hatred, anger to a certain group of people at the workplace. The prejudices, for instance, the sexual harassment at workplace still remains one of the actual challenges for women. “The most serious violation of respect and hierarchy was not respecting the chain of command — usually involving inappropriate contact by junior managers from a low power-distance culture with senior management from a high power-distance culture” (Hofstede, 1980). Language barriers cause challenges at workplace. The numerous studies report that members using their native language have more success than the ones using second or third language. The aim of a multicultural group is to set „a good communication”. Although the perception of „a good communication” varies in different cultures: Hall (1976) differentiates the Japanese, Latin Americans, and Arabs having high context communication what is more indirect and subtle. In low context the message is delivered directly and clearly that is more typical way of communication in Scandinavia, Germany and the United States. Misunderstanding of either party can lead to the breakdown of communication (cited by Proehl, 1996).

As well as multiculturalism, national and organizational culture plays the significant role as well. Hofstede (1984) defines national culture as a “collective mental programming”. The people of any particular nationality are exposed to particular patterns of socialization, education and life experiences. His developed four dimensions of cultural values model defines social structures-high/low power distance (PDI), individualism/collectivism (IDV), weak/strong uncertainty avoidance (UAI), masculinity/femininity (MAS)” (cited by Brain and Lewis 2003). Alves et.al (2006) mention the fifth dimension “future orientation” (long-term versus short-term, LTO) which also will be included in our model as well as Hofstede’s.

The understanding of a multicultural organization is essential for the further research that will later be linked with leadership. The cultural diversity through organizational processes such as communication, creativity and problem solving makes a significant impact on organizational performance, the benefits of cultural diversity (creativity and innovation, flexibility, better decision making, attraction/retention of employees) and its disadvantages (increase of costs through higher turnover rates, interpersonal conflicts and communication breakdowns, costs of trainings, etc.). The main difficulties of multicultural environment such as the perception of time urgency, differences of work ethics, intergroup differences, violation of respect and hierarchy, lack of common ground and explicit versus implicit communication were identified. Since national culture formulates every individual’s way of behaviour and set of mind it is worth adding Hofstede’s five dimension to the model of a profile of an effective female leader in multicultural context.

1.2. Leadership

The demographic orientation is another orientation of multiculturalism that is important for our research. It includes gender, sex, ethnicity, etc. differences within an organization. The Hopkins (1998)
argues that diversity in a racial/gender/ethnicity sense is not supposed to be perceived as a problem. On the contrary, is to be treated as an opportunity provided by the diverse groups waiting for a “diversity leader” to bring out their talents. The authors point out that employers should assume “strong leadership” which within diversity context means a diversity-friendly leadership.

Individuals conform to gender stereotypes. In order to create a profile of an effective female leader we have to understand which set of stereotypes cause/hinders career success of female leaders. Bakan (1966); Broverman, Vogel, et.al. (1972); Deaux and Lewis (1984); Eagly (2000); Heilman (2001) identify male stereotype as agentic (i.e., independent, assertive, decisive), whereas female stereotypes are thought to be communal (i.e., unselfish, friendly, concerned with others).

According to Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) “leadership occurs when the organization builds a cadre of future leaders who have the capacity to shape an organization’s culture and create patterns of success...”. Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) in his research paper investigates female and male way of leadership and empowerment:

- Women are more likely than men to use “transformational leadership” – motivating others by transforming their individual self-interest into the goals of the group.
- Women use “interactive leadership” styles by encouraging participation, sharing power and information, enhancing peoples’ self-worth.
- Women are much more likely than men to ascribe their power to interpersonal skills or personal contacts rather than to organizational stature.
- Women as leaders believe that people perform best when they feel good about themselves and their work, and they try to create situations that contribute to that feeling.

Conger and Kanungo (1998) state that transformational leadership involves establishing oneself as a role model by gaining followers’ trust and confidence (cited by Eagly 2007). According to Klenke (1993) “feminine model of leadership is built around cooperation, collaboration, lower control for the leader and problem solving based on intuition and rationality” which is closely aligned to transformational leadership. Yammarino and Dubinsky (1994) highlight four components of transformational leaders that specifically female managers display (cited by Kelloway et.al., 2003).

- idealized influence;
- inspirational motivation;
- individual consideration; and
- intellectual stimulation.

Stanford, Oates and Flores (1995) developed the heuristic model of female leadership where characterize a female leader as one who possesses high level of employee involvement, having entrepreneurial vision. She sets effective communication with employees based on mutual respect and trust. Additionally, she is motivating and inspiring that brings better results. The whole approach is reward power basis.

Leadership effectiveness is measured using numerous indicators such as followers’ attitudes, level of commitment given to the organization, and motivation towards the job (Howell and Costley, 2006). The authors also suggest other indicators of effectiveness of leadership that are the outcomes of the organization or of group productivity (cited by Jogulu and Wood, 2006). Additionally, Howell and Costley (2006) point out that lower employee turnover and absenteeism are also considered to be indicators of leadership effectiveness in an organization (cited by Jogulu and Wood, 2006). The transformational leadership was chosen deliberately because of the common traits with female “communal” nature. On the other hand, the review of the attributes of an effective leadership will be later used to create a profile of an effective leader. The heuristic model of a female leadership by Stanford, Oates and Flores (1995) is going to be the last element of the model that will be constructed next. We may also conclude that no leadership can be named as effective without a focus on results. In other words,
an effective leader has to possess personal managerial attributes in order to be able to work towards results.

1.3. The profile of an effective female leader in multicultural context

After the theoretical review of three major phenomenon that are multiculturalism, leadership and its effectiveness from gender perspective we may now proceed to developing a model of an effective female leadership in multicultural context. The conceptual framework of the model is illustrated in Table 1. Two major factors were chosen that creates a profile of the effective female leadership in multicultural context: macro and micro factors. Macro factors include both national and multicultural environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro factors</th>
<th>Multicultural environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Power distance</td>
<td>1. Time urgency and pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>2. Work norms and behaviour differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Individualism/collectivism</td>
<td>3. Intergroup prejudices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Femininity/masculinity</td>
<td>4. Respect and hierarchy violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Future orientation</td>
<td>5. Lack of common ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Explicit vs. implicit communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro factors</th>
<th>Effective female leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Communication facilitation</td>
<td>1. Idealized influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Team building</td>
<td>2. Inspirational motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reward power basis</td>
<td>3. Individual consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inspires and motivates</td>
<td>4. Intellectual stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mutual trust and respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. 1. The profile of an effective female leader in a multicultural context

They both are external sources of an influence on the effectiveness of a female leadership in multicultural environment. Micro factors in return describe what is to be done at individual and organizational level to be an effective female leader in multicultural context. For further empirical part national culture is going to be taken constant due to irrelevance to the topic.
2. Methodology

2.1. Research Goal

The research purpose is to determine key behavior of female leader in a multicultural environment. In order to conduct the research, a questionnaire based on theoretical analysis was constructed.

2.2. Sample and Data Collection

The research was conducted in the academic Lithuanian organization, in 2014. The organization can be determined as a large company with more that 3500 employees. Six respondents were chosen for in-depth interviewing who are engaged in academic/administrative work with experience in the range between 10-20 years. The main criteria for selection respondents were following:
- gender,
- managerial experience, and
- multicultural teamwork experience.

Due to their long experience and successful career in occupied field in respect to multiculturalism the data provided was sufficient to analyze the problem. For the sake of confidentiality each respondent was labeled alphabetically.

The qualitative research as a research method was selected due it possibility to gain detailed responses to each question, reveal respondents feelings and understand reasons of the phenomenon. The instrument for the in-depth interview is an interview guide that includes questions covering three main dimensions from the model: individual level, organizational level and multicultural environment.

2.3. Analyses and Results

The conducted research let to purify the key behavior of female leader in different levels. The results are presented below in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Results of effective female leadership at individual level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The respondents' input in idealized influence varied from one to another. As we may respondent A offered the largest portfolio of different actions to set this idea influence of hers onto her team members. Almost all respondents except respondent F perceived idealized influence of a leader in a team as very important “because your team members see you as someone superior so you have to be a role model a priori”. Inspirational motivation was also noted as very essential to implement as a leader “by showing, for example, her human side and not only being a boss”. In contrast, respondent B argument for no need of inspirational motivation was long time working in the same team, where “everyone is self-motivated and focused on the things that should be done”. Individual consideration was absolutely identical with each respondent. The reason might be coming from their gender background. As it was argued that female leaders have “nurturing nature” and are concerned with others. The responses regarding intellectual stimulation was definitely in favor of “giving an idea boost from time to time and space for expressing themselves especially for new team members”. We may now conclude that four criteria from individual level have been implemented by the majority of respondents and therefore approves the reliability of those criteria suggested in the model.

Table 3. Results of effective female leadership at organizational level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Communication facilitation</th>
<th>Team orientation</th>
<th>Reward power basis</th>
<th>Mutual trust and respect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Non formal meetings</td>
<td>Clear guidance</td>
<td>Non-financial</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personnel shift in conflicts</td>
<td>Work recognition</td>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td>Action taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Leader’s involvement</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Non formal meetings</td>
<td>Non formal</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediation in conflicts</td>
<td>relationship</td>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of emotional intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Non formal meetings</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Financial/</td>
<td>Self-confidence boost by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk separately to each in conflicts</td>
<td>hard work (not only supervision)</td>
<td>Non-financial</td>
<td>various rewarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Low distance</td>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Non formal meetings</td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>High qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personnel shift in conflicts</td>
<td>Non formal</td>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High emotional intelligence</td>
<td>discussions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Non formal meetings</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Financial/</td>
<td>Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliance on member’s competence in conflicts</td>
<td>High feedback</td>
<td>Non-financial</td>
<td>High qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Clear tasking</td>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clear deadline setup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Non formal meetings</td>
<td>Good atmosphere</td>
<td>Financial/</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third person’s involvement into conflict</td>
<td>Each is an asset</td>
<td>Non-financial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High emotional intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The communication facilitation was enhanced in view of all respondents by having non-formal meetings. Another interesting fact was that for a conflict solution the response rate of firing/excluding one from the team was not even an option. Respondent F said that “it could only happen if I noted that one member is demotivating the whole team”.

Emotional intelligence was also rated as very useful in terms having small non-work related talks. Team orientation is another important issue to be known by a leader. The respondent A said that
“boosting a team spirit is about showing that I as a leader care about what you do. It does not mean monitoring every single step but showing your presence and involvement helps a lot”.

Reward power basis was also seen by respondents as important to do. Respondent F said that “the financial incentives do work depending on your current financial situation”. While respondent A argues that “non-financial remuneration (trainings, seminars, etc.) will enhance team member’s knowledge which is most important”. The mutual trust and respect was the most difficult to get an answer to since majority was replying that “that person would not be in my team if I did not trust him/her”. Nevertheless, the frequent answers were that in order to show your respect towards one of your team member was to challenge with a difficult task. Another trust setting relationship is “to distribute the tasks according to their competences and observe if he/she manages it well”.

The four criteria of effective female leadership at organizational level were tested by respondents’ answers which made it clear that all are practiced in real working environment by a female leader and is certainly an key to the efficiency.

The unstructured time management and slow performance have been roughly the only answers given by respondents regarding the impact of time urgency and pace in multicultural environment. As to work norms communication, professionalism, no multi-tasking were named by respondent A. Different perception of jokes or anything said or different way of reporting in different cultures are the results of multicultural environment. Lack of common ground for a female leader was either the language or the same gender that caused it. Implicit communication was named as a very “difficult to understand” by respondent C.

Respect and hierarchy to the respondents was sufficient having “normal professional respect to each other no matter any status”. This varies in many cultures and certainly has an influence of an effective female leadership. Respondent E said that “with cultures where the status had highest value I tried to adapt by using all of my titles or making my superior position clear”. As a matter of fact every criteria named is valid except intergroup prejudice. Citing on the majority of the respondents “personal qualifications and competencies stand ahead of national belonging”. Hence, based on the gained data the intergroup prejudice seems to be not valid.

| Table 4. Results of multicultural environment on effective female leadership |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Criteria/Respondent**     | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  | F  |
| Time urgency and pace       | Structured time management |
| Work norms and behaviour differences | Trust Communication Professionalism Low Multi-tasking | Punctuality Follow rules | Low use of social networks during meetings, etc. | Over-working | Different joke perception, Time management | Different rules of reporting |
| Intergroup prejudices       | Low national prejudice toward other cultures |
| Respect and hierarchy violation | Respect relevance Status irrelevant Professional relationships |
| Lack of common ground       | Open-minded thinking Gender (females) | Language | Open-minded thinking | Language |
| Explicit vs. Implicit communication | Explicit communication |

Based upon the results from empirical research the profile of an effective female leadership in multicultural context was constructed below, Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Multicultural environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different time</td>
<td>Implicit communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perception</td>
<td>High level of prejudices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical structure</td>
<td>Lack of common ground with female followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empirical</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured time</td>
<td>Explicit communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management</td>
<td>Low level of prejudice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat organizational</td>
<td>Mutual understanding with female followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual level** | **Organizational level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In theoretical model</th>
<th>Empirical result</th>
<th>In theoretical model</th>
<th>Empirical result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized influence</td>
<td>Protector role</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Excellent command of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>facilitation</td>
<td>Conflict solver without ethno/religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Team orientation</td>
<td>Same gender tolerant, Demanding,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>Result oriented</td>
<td></td>
<td>Open-minded, Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Considerate, Flexible,</td>
<td>Reward power basis</td>
<td>Financial/non-financial remuneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consideration</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>Idea follower</td>
<td>Mutual trust and</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stimulation</td>
<td></td>
<td>respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The six criteria that were relevant and followed the logic in theory lacks work norms and behaviour column in empirical result. The table 5 shows that only time perception, hierarchal structure, and implicit communication, high prejudice level toward other cultures, narrow world vision and poor may affect an effective female leadership in multicultural environment. The criteria at organizational and individual behaviour level of an effective female leadership in multicultural environment remain valid in empirical result as well due to the high level of professionalism of the respondents and their absolute match with theoretical model at micro (behavioural) level.

3. Conclusion

Having conducted the research and analysed gained results, conclusions can be drawn based on initial research tasks. The multiculturalism was introduced as a fast growing phenomena globally. The six (time urgency and pace, work norms and behaviour, intergroup prejudices, respect and hierarchy violation, lack of common ground and explicit/implicit communication) macro level factors of multicultural environment chosen for the theoretical model of an effective female leadership provided us with information of what to expect and be aware of once being a female leader in multicultural environment.

The individual (consisting of idealized influence, inspirational influence, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation) and organizational (consisting of communication facilitation, team orientation, reward power basis and mutual trust and respect) levels that were titled as micro factors (behavioural) in the theoretical model made it clear how a female leader as an individual has to approach the leadership herself and her followers.
Thus, the theoretical model of an effective female leadership in multicultural context was created by combining both micro (behavioral) consisting of individual and organizational behavior level and macro (environmental) consisting of national culture and multicultural environment factors.

The qualitative research showed that being a protector, result-oriented while still showing consideration, care and remaining professional in multicultural perspective is the key to an effective leadership for females. The criteria at micro (behavioral) level of an effective female leadership in multicultural environment remain valid in empirical result as well due to the high level of professionalism of the respondents and their absolute match with theoretical model at micro (behavioral) level. Hence, neither additions to the theoretical model nor withdrawal of any criteria of micro (behavioral) level were needed. Nevertheless, the work norms and behavior is the matter to differ not only in multicultural context but also within one nation. Therefore, suggestions would be to show more understanding, be open-minded, to show more of those stereotypical “mentoring” characteristics in order to give the follower time to adapt. Thereby, the second criteria (work norms and behavior) of environmental factors shaping the effective female leadership should be eliminated from the model.

Future investigations should focus on identification and evaluation of impact and interaction of each determinant of a model.

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Orey, M. (2011), Results based leadership, pp. 149.
Stevens, G.F., Plaut, C.V., Sanchez-Burks, J. (2008), Unlocking the benefits of diversity: All inclusive Multiculturalism and Positive Organizational Change, pp. 120-125.
Von Bergen, C.W., (2013), Misconstrued tolerance: issues for multicultural and diversity training, pp. 11.
According to a recent LinkedIn survey, we are starting to see gender parity across many of the top 15 rising job categories. However, some of the hottest new tech roles are not on that list. How we, as women in tech, lead over the next few years will be crucial in bridging the gender gap in these technology fields. To help answer how we can make these changes on both a personal and industry level, I've talked to some of my colleagues at Capital One, to create a five-blog series on how to lead as women in tech.

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Why does increasing your sphere of influence matter for women in tech?
Would you want to encourage and motivate someone to take on or complete work? Would you like to take a collaborative approach including your team and various stakeholders in decision making? Would you like to leverage feedback systems where everyone involved has an opportunity to send their suggestions? If you answered yes to any of these questions - you are essentially thinking about the Influence competency.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines Influence as the power or capacity of causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways. Influencing the people around you in the right way boosts associate morale, creates highly engaged team members and increases employee retention - all the more reason for women to consider broadening their sphere of influence.

How to increase your sphere of influence as women in tech

1. Target your conversation to your audience

Communication is key at all levels and in all roles, but particularly so while influencing others. Do you tend to go into every detail of decision making in conversations - be it about architecture, code reviews, strategy or resource discussions? If so, you're not alone. But as a leader, you may have to back that up and explain the why, the how, and the tradeoffs to your decision making. Sometimes deep details matter. But you don’t necessarily need to go over all of them all the time.

Gauge your audience and the situation. Are you looking to address a group of engineers, product owners or a combination of both? Does the discussion entail long term strategy or short term implementation? Start with explaining the aspect(s) best suited to the audience and situation, going over the other details as needed. For example, if you are seeing a spike in your cloud costs for a couple of months in a row - your VP may be interested in the root cause and a path to bring
the costs down whereas your peer may be interested in the infrastructure details to check if their team was impacted as well.

Having targeted conversations helps reduce confusion and increases your chances of influencing your team, peers, leaders or partners. An important piece of feedback I got very early on in my career was around my written communication. The feedback provider indicated I had too much detail in my email that made my request unclear. I’ve since then learnt (and am still learning) to be very explicit with my asks, craft an executive summary for status emails and include a bulleted list for additional details or action items. Here are eight communication strategies to be an Influential Leader.

“We live in a highly matrixed organization and the number one skill you need here is ‘collaborative problem solving.’ The real currency in negotiations is trust. Build trust with your peers and others, by listening to them, understanding their goals and finding that intersection between your goals and theirs where all the win-wins and successes live.”

-Lakshmi Seetharaman, Senior Director, Software Engineering

2. Understand the deeper meaning, and impact, of confidence
Nailing your communication style can help you confidently voice your opinion. Confidence vs. competence is like the chicken and egg situation. It's hard to find your confidence when you are not competent, but you'll never be able to build up competence without confidence. The good news is that being confident doesn't mean you always make the right choice. Instead, confidence is demonstrated by how firmly you believe you can make the right choice.

In other words, it's not about having all the answers, but it's about knowing that you can find the right answers by leveraging your resources and network. There's also an element of knowing when to ask for help. Competent people have a good understanding of when they are out of their depth and need to tap in for help. Per the famous African Proverb - “If you want to go fast, go alone; but if you want to go far, go together” giving others a vision of the destination gets their buy-in for the journey.

Let's say you are tasked with migrating an app to AWS, but your understanding of batch jobs that are required to perform the migration is limited. A confident person isn't going to let their relatively low level of competence with batch jobs come in the way of a successful migration. Instead they are going to lean on the subject matter experts in that space to collaborate over a successful migration strategy. Collaboration techniques might include joint design sessions, transparency in the ownership of tasks and shared recognition and appreciation for meeting the set milestones.
Here are 8 things to do to look confident even when you aren’t. And here are ways you can bring out other’s self confidence as a leader.

3. Leverage your network
And that brings us to another important aspect of broadening your influence - your network. A spider’s web comes to my mind when I think of networking - I understand the benefits it can bring, but I’m also scared to kick off casual conversations just because they might serve me well over the course of the next few years. More often than not, networking events made me feel like a fly trapped in the interaction model without a way out.

At one point in time, I had resigned myself to not being good at networking. It comes so naturally to people like my brother, who can spin up a network easily wherever he goes. That just didn’t feel like me. Desperate to make progress in this space, I recruited that brother to coach me on networking. Surprisingly, the advice he gave turned out to be quite simple - *Speak to a random person everyday about a random topic*. As I started to implement this, what once scared me wasn’t a big deal anymore and I was able to start thinking about intentional networking. Now, I try to think of myself as the spider weaving a web, making connections from one on to the next.

It’s important to figure out how and why networking is important to you and what approach best fits your personality style. There are several forums that support intentional networking - be it Lean In circles, developer community meet ups or fireside chats with leaders. There are also several platforms like Lean In, MeetUp, Advent of Code to name a few, that bring engineers together in the hope of strengthening their networks and overarching goals of building better communities. And as always, there’s a wealth of information on how to influence others at your workplace regardless of your position available on the web.

“Women seem to lose their voice when they get talked over or cut-off mid sentence. That may lead to them playing a supporting role on the team rather than be a driving force. Advocate for other women within or outside of your team and find ways to help each other out.”

-Shanda Daniel, Agile Delivery Lead

4. Mentors aren’t just for junior engineers
Mentorship isn’t just a fad. It can have a long lasting career impact in terms of improved professional identity, increased career satisfaction, and of course higher promotion rates and salaries. According to a study, individuals who’ve had mentors are 90% likely to become a mentor themselves.

It turns out that we all could use five types of mentors in our lives. Here’s a quick paraphrased rundown of the five types:
• **An expert** - who you've always wanted to learn the secrets of trade

• **The advocate** - who can champion your cause and has your back at higher ranks

• **A buddy** - someone who you can talk about your projects, bounce ideas off of or even vent out over a coffee

• **A career coach** - someone who has the overall you in mind and can help ground you in situations where you feel anchorless

• **A mentee** - someone who can give you feedback on your leadership style and can help you gain a fresh perspective.

I will add that you should make sure to have at least one woman mentor, if not more. This can help you validate your thoughts and experiences as a woman in tech and get over any *“It’s probably my fault”* type feelings. This can especially help you out when you feel stuck.

I was fortunate to have amazing mentors across all these categories. Here's some things my mentors and mentees helped me with and it made all the difference when they believed in me more than I did in myself.

• Making time to help me debug an issue with the code

• Matching me up with the right opportunities to challenge my thinking

• Being my cheerleader when I needed some motivation

• Reminding me to ground my priorities

• Introducing me to the concept of hard core hacking

If you wish you had help along these lines, here are [10 ways to find and keep a mentor](https://www.capitalone.com/tech/culture/wt-increasing-your-sphere-of-influence/) to help you get started.

“Consider having multiple mentors with strengths in different skills and competencies. Make a clear request to the mentor including why they identified the mentor, what they expect to achieve, and how the mentor can help. Don't be discouraged if a mentor request is declined or if finding a good fit takes some time.”

- Janene Worthington, Director, Software Engineering

5. **Talk to your leadership to elevate your work**

Ensure you have conversations with your skip level and other organization leaders at a recurring frequency. Have an agenda for your discussion and make sure to elevate your work and your career interests. This is a way to advocate for your own work and overcome the misnomer that your manager and leadership is aware of your awesome work.
Make the best use of your one-on-one time with your manager and leaders by focusing more on the long term. This helps understand your leader’s vision and gives you a chance to ask questions, clarify assumptions and elevate risks. As you bring up the top concerns or problem areas you and your teams are currently facing, make sure to also offer potential solutions. By doing so you demonstrate your problem solving competency in the process. And if you don't end up using the solution you offered, it is still an opportunity to learn what works and what doesn’t within your org in addition to your leader’s leadership style.

**Check out these tips for having a successful one-on-one conversation** with your manager or other leaders.

“Speak out for yourself. Keep in touch with your leaders and seize any opportunity to understand their expectations and showcase your work.”

-HimaBindu Kota, Master Software Engineer

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*I want to thank Lakshmi, Shanda, Janene and HimaBindu for their help with this article. Stay tuned for the next installment in this five-part series—Supporting the Next Generation as Women in Tech.*

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**Madhuri "MJ" Jakkaraju, Sr Manager, Software Engineering, Card Inbound Payments**

Madhuri has worked at Capital One for 11 years. She now serves as a senior manager, software engineering for Card Inbound Payments.

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Women and power: overcoming barriers to leadership and influence

Around the world, women now have more power than ever before. Men still dominate decision-making -- but the number of women is on the rise in parliaments and cabinets, judiciary and police forces, formal employment and education.

Increasing the number of women in political and public positions is important, but does not mean that they real power. Women in public life are often subject to sexism and prejudice. Women are less represented in the sectors and positions with the most power.

This two-year research project on women’s voice and leadership in decision-making, funded by DFID, set out to understand the factors that help and hinder women’s access to and substantive influence in decision-making processes in politics and society in developing countries. The project also considered whether, as is often assumed, women’s leadership advances gender equality and the wellbeing of women more broadly.

Infographics

The number of women in parliament is rising, but men still dominate
The number of women in parliament is rising, but men still dominate

Economic development doesn't automatically lead to more women in power

Economic development doesn't automatically lead to more women in power

Find out more at odi.org/women-and-power

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Note: data for the EU excludes Luxembourg, as it is a major outlier in terms of GDP per capita.
More women MPs does not always mean more women in the top government jobs

Find out more at odi.org/women-and-power

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For women leaders, body language matters

Marianne Cooper
Nov 15 2010

Deborah Gruenfeld of the Stanford Graduate School of Business had some sobering news to share with a group of high-level women executives and entrepreneurs. “When it comes to leadership,” Gruenfeld told the group, “there are very few differences in what men and women actually do and how they behave. But there are major differences in perception. Men and women doing the same things are perceived and evaluated differently.”

The group took in the news during the opening session of the Silicon Valley Thought Leadership Greenhouse, an eight-week program sponsored by Stanford’s Clayman Institute and The OpEd Project that is designed to foster the public voices of innovators and leaders.

As an example of the way men and women are viewed differently, Gruenfeld noted a recent study in which business school students were given two versions of a case study about a venture capitalist. The case studies were identical in every way, except in one version the venture capitalist was a woman, and in the other man. The students were then asked to evaluate the VC.

Students found the male and female versions to be equally competent and effective. However, when the students thought the venture capitalist was a woman they found her to be less genuine, humble, and kind and more power-hungry, self-promoting, and disingenuous. And the more assertive a student found the female venture capitalist to be, the more they rejected her.

Upon hearing the results of the study, heads in the room nodded in agreement. What this kind of research illustrates, Gruenfeld said, is that people possess entrenched cultural ideas that associate men with leadership qualities like decisiveness, authoritativeness, and strength and women with nurturing qualities like warmth, friendliness, and kindness.

Consequently, when women behave in dominant ways, they are seen as unlikeable because they violate norms of female niceness. Alternatively, women displaying feminine traits are judged as less competent and capable. Women, then, face a kind of trade-off: competency vs. likeability. Men do not face this kind of trade-off.

Shift the power dynamic
So what are women to do? Gruenfeld told the women that they may be able to navigate this trade-off through non-verbal behavior.

Gruenfeld noted that research consistently shows differences in the non-verbal behaviors between those at the top and bottom of social hierarchies. Those with higher status take up more space through expansive postures like sitting with legs and arms spread apart, smile less and stare directly into another person’s eyes. Those with lower status take up less space through constrictive postures like crossing one’s legs, smile more, and glance away.

“Women give away power all the time,” Gruenfeld said, “by smiling or looking away when they are saying something authoritative.” Research shows that people unconsciously defer to those who use dominant physical postures.

Gruenfeld suggested that using dominant postures may be a subtle way for women to overcome the trade-off they face by enabling them to both assert power and remain likeable. Furthermore, using dominant postures may enable women to act more decisively since Gruenfeld found in a recent experiment she conducted that when people are asked to stare directly into someone’s eyes they reported a much greater generalized sense of power than if they are asked to glance away intermittently.

“The most important thing is to recognize that these status dynamics are happening in every situation,” Gruenfeld counseled the participants of the program. “You need to understand what is at stake and adjust. If you are saying something authoritative, stop smiling. On the other hand, if you sense someone is threatened by your competence, perhaps give them a smile.”

Gina Bianchini, founder and CEO of Mightybell and a participant in the Greenhouse program, found professor Gruenfeld’s talk to have immediate impact, saying, “her research provides useful tools to address power dynamics in the workplace. It’s definitely effective to look directly into people’s eyes when you have a serious message, but I’ve also found that it’s effective to lighten things up from time to time with humor.”

Gruenfeld hopes that as more people are exposed to women in high power positions, cultural beliefs connecting men with leadership qualities and women with nurturing qualities will change. She believes that it is this type of cultural change that will allow future generations of women leaders to avoid the kinds of trade-offs and backlashes with which today’s women leaders must contend.

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The Thought Leadership Greenhouse is the earlier version of the Clayman Institute Voice & Influence program.

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Researchers: How Women Can Succeed in the Workplace

A study shows that women who display masculine traits — and know when not to — get more promotions than men.

March 01, 2011 | by Marguerite Rigoglioso
Secretary for the Civil Service Denise Yue stands beside other officials during a news conference in Hong Kong June 23, 2007.

In the business world, women who are aggressive, assertive, and confident but who can turn these traits on and off, depending on the social circumstances, get more promotions than either men or other women, according to a recent study coming out of Stanford GSB.

The research suggests that for women to be successful they must simultaneously present themselves as self-confident and dominant while tempering these qualities with displays of communal characteristics. “Women may have a ways to go, but their ability to be flexible in how they behave is leading to some extraordinary results. Some women are starting to go very high in the managerial ranks using this strategic approach,” concludes Olivia O’Neill, PhD ‘05, assistant professor of management at George Mason University who coauthored the article with Charles O’Reilly, Frank E. Buck Professor of Human Resources Management and Organizational Behavior at Stanford GSB.

Using comprehensive interview, survey, and observational data from 132 business school graduates over 8 years, the researchers found that certain
women high in “masculine traits” — defined as aggressiveness, assertiveness, and confidence — were also able to “self-monitor” their behavior. “These women were able to be chameleons, to fit into their environment by assessing social situations and adapting their actions accordingly,” explains O'Neill.

Masculine women who were high self-monitors did quite well professionally, according to the study. They received 1.5 times more promotions than masculine men, and about two times as many promotions as feminine men, regardless of whether the men were high or low self-monitors. They also received 3 times as many promotions as masculine women who were low self-monitors, affirming that masculine behavior alone does not garner success.

“The interesting thing here is that being able to regulate one's masculine behavior does not simply put women on par with men, it gives them even more of an advantage,” notes O'Neill. “This shows that for women who do want success at the managerial level, the paths are there.”

The study also showed that self-monitoring masculine women received 1.5 times as many promotions as feminine women, regardless of whether those women were high or low self-monitors. “There is no evidence that ‘acting like a lady’ does anything except make women more well liked,” O’Neill said. “Women with ultra-feminine traits, in fact, are still seen as less competent in traditional managerial settings.”

The effect of managing “masculine” traits is significant, say the researchers, since it can have a noticeable effect on success early in women’s careers. Even small differences in success rates at the beginning of one’s career have large long-term effects. They postulate that as more and more women understand and adopt the behavior pattern they describe, the lower percentages of women currently in the upper managerial ranks could reverse out over time.

The study resolves the conundrum that has plagued women in the business arena: To be successful, you must be assertive and confident, but if you are as aggressive as a woman you are sometimes punished for behaving in ways that
are contrary to the feminine stereotype. Such negative response to assertive women has been labeled the “backlash effect.”

The paper follows upon an earlier study by O’Neill and O’Reilly, using the same data set, in which they determined that learned behavior patterns — not biological sex — may be the greatest determinant of workplace success as measured by salary and promotion.

Organizational Behavior, Leadership, Management

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Leadership
How Men and Women Use Power and Influence In the Workplace

Within cross-functional teams of people representing different departments, positions and even cultures, a leader’s success often depends on his or her ability to gain the cooperation and support of others. Research by our colleagues has shown some influencing styles vary across cultures, but we wanted to know if gender differences might also play a role in using power and influence in the workplace.

To answer this question, OnPoint Consulting used a 360 degree feedback questionnaire to gather data on the influencing styles of 223 leaders (116 men and 107 women) across organizations and industries.

While we found some significant differences, we also found some surprising similarities.

Here's a summary of what we found and how your leaders can use them to maximize their influence.

Differences Between Genders

Of the four most effective influencing tactics — reasoning, inspiring, consulting and collaborating — men and women use reasoning and collaborating to the same extent.

These findings might be somewhat surprising if you believe the stereotype that men lead with a more task-oriented focus and women with a more interpersonal approach. For those particular tactics, both men and women tend to do it the same.

There are, however, some significant differences regarding the two other core tactics — inspiring and consulting. Women tend to use inspiring more frequently than men, primarily with...
Here are some other important findings from our research:

- Women use apprising (explaining how carrying out a request or supporting a proposal will benefit the other person or advance their career) significantly more with direct reports compared to men.
- Men use apprising—helping someone understand the benefit to them personally—more than women when influencing their bosses.
- Men could benefit from using consulting more often with their direct reports, especially when they have authority to make a change but need others to help them implement it. However, women may be using this influencing style too often with their bosses.
- Women use recognizing (using praise or flattery) significantly more than men when influencing their colleagues and direct reports.
- Women use legitimizing (establishing the legitimacy of a request and verifying they have the authority to make it) significantly more than men when influencing colleagues. This may indicate they are more likely to feel their authority is being challenged.

**Tips for Maximizing Influence**

Most of the gender differences involve influence attempts with colleagues and with direct reports. Men and women seem to approach bosses in a similar manner; yet their approach to colleagues and direct reports are a bit different. Some of the gender differences were consistent with gender stereotypes. Women tend to use some of the softer, more personal tactics like inspiring, consulting, appraising and recognizing more than men.

However, some of the findings are less consistent with the stereotypes. Both men and women use collaborating to the same extent and they both use consulting to the same extent with colleagues. We also found men and women use pressure to the same degree. Overall, we found that there were more similarities than differences between male and female leaders when it comes to gaining support and gaining commitment.

Your leaders can use the following tips to maximize their influence.

- **Don’t consider gender.** The gender of the influencer and person being influenced has no effect on whether influencing attempts are successful. To be successful, the influencer must know the person he or she is trying to influence. What are his or her needs? What is he or she looking for? What does he or she see as benefits? What are his or her values?
- **Don’t rely on reasoning.** Though it’s the most popular tactic, reasoning doesn’t work in every situation. Reasoning works best when used with other influencing tactics. If you’re going to use reasoning, be sure to talk about the benefits of what you’re pitching, not just the facts.
- **Build a solid foundation.** The trust and relationship you have with the person you’re influencing play a vital role in how successful you are. However, many influencers fail to take time to build trust within teams. Having this relationship in place ahead of time helps you build credibility with the person so you don’t have to rely on a single influencing tactic.

Just like other skills and characteristics of effective leaders, the ability to influence others can be learned and improved upon with training. To help your leaders strengthen their influencing skills, start by making them more aware of the influencing styles they use most often. This interactive guide covers the 11 most common influencing styles, which ones are most effective and how and when to use them. You’ll also find tips and tricks your leaders can use to maximize their influence.

Take the first step toward developing stronger influencers—explore the guide now.
How Women Can Gain Seats At The Table Of Power

Elissa Sangster Former Contributor
*I lead Forté, a nonprofit empowering women to lead.*

Oct 15, 2018, 06:30am EDT

TWEET THIS

Pull up a chair to the table, bring your unique strengths and perspective, and through being present, alter the system.

Step one is to work toward a decision-making role, and assume your power.

Women must become comfortable with sitting in half the seats at the table, unafraid to be in power.  ALEXANDRIA OCASIO CORTEZ. PHOTO BY COREY TORRIE ON WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
One step forward, two steps back. That seems to be the way the battle for progress works. Ayanna Pressley gives voice to collective complaints and is elected the first African American woman to represent Massachusetts in Congress; Serena Williams speaks harshly to a referee at the U.S. Open and is docked a point, and then a game.

When the playing field is groomed—and the rules of the game tailor-made—by white men, the struggle to compete can feel more like a lopsided, losing battle than a fair fight.

If You Can’t Beat ‘Em, Join ‘Em?

Many women shy away from the idea of a fight—and who can blame them, considering the odds? They aren’t comfortable with the implications of a power struggle, or even the bellicose language surrounding one: to confront, to clash, to do battle. But what about changing the tactics? Can we use a different vocabulary: to immerse or to engage or to occupy? Wouldn’t it be less bruising to redefine the rules of engagement than to fight an all-out war?

Whether on a tennis court, in the halls of Congress, or in the boardrooms of America, the issue is that the rules favor those already in power, because it’s the people in power who created those rules! The best way to change the rules is to get a seat at the table in “the room where it happens,” as Lin Manuel Miranda would say. No, I take that back—the best way to change the rules is to get MANY seats at the table! According to Ruth Bader Ginsberg, there won’t be enough women on the Supreme Court until there are nine.

But gaining those seats is not likely to result from acting like men or trying to moderate your behavior to play a game in a patriarchal system. Although that tactic might win a few battles, it’s not going
to win the proverbial war. Another strategy? Pull up a chair to the table, bring your unique strengths and perspective, and through being present, alter the system. Insert more women, modify the system...rinse and repeat.

Bring Yourself to the Table

So, how do women gain seats at the table of power? First, recognize who sits in those seats now, and aim your career where they sit—businesspeople, lawyers, technology innovators. The people making the rules run companies, sit on corporate boards, and advise politicians. Step one is to work toward a decision-making role, and assume your power.

Carla Harris, Managing Director at Morgan Stanley, inspires many women with “pearls of wisdom” from her book Expect to Win. One of the tenets of success, she says, is to understand the power of authenticity. “You are your own competitive advantage,” she counsels, “Because no one else can be you better than you.” If you are consistent with who you are, you build trust, which is fundamental to all relationships, whether personal or professional.

Nilofer Merchant takes it a step further in her concept of “onlyness.” You may not have been born with a seat at the table, she believes, but now there are many ways to get there—and to successfully do so by being authentically you and leveraging social technologies to amplify your unique qualities and ideas.

Harris advises women to identify three adjectives that describe themselves and three adjectives that define success in their industry or position. Look for where those sets overlap, she says, and then consistently message the authentic self that sits in that space—not what a man might bring to the table. You might discover through this exercise that you need to subtly shift from always being the best (doing what you’re told) to knowing what is valued at
your organization and making sure you’re a fit. So if you're a soft skills person and you’re in an organization that values quants, get some quantitative skills.

Then, Pull up a Chair

Women must become comfortable with sitting in half the seats at the table, unafraid to be in power. To have meaningful influence in your profession or on societal issues that are important to you, you must take your seat at the table. We need more women asserting their influence. And if those currently in the seats are unwilling to budge, take a cue from Shirley Chisolm, the first African American woman elected to Congress, and Bring Your Own Chair (BYOC)!

Elissa Sangster

As CEO of Forté, I fight every day to achieve equity in the workforce. Opening the door to business education, professional development, and... Read More