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5 Powerful Actions You Can Take to Reduce the Gender Gap in Your Workplace

Biology, upbringing and culture have all been pointed out throughout the years as being the reason behind why career trajectories of women and men still look very different. Despite all the debate, we have not reached a consensus as a society on the perfect formula to extinguish the workplace gender gap. Contrary, we can agree the more a woman succeeds, the more she risks being disliked or labelled, opposite to what happens with her male counterparts.

According to different investigations, these are the most frequent ways gender bias emerges in everyday workplace interactions:

- Women have to provide more evidence of competence than their male counterparts to prove themselves.
- Women feel pressured to play stereotypically feminine roles at the workplace, which tends to be contradictory since women need to behave in masculine ways to be seen as competent. So they find themselves in the middle of being seen as too feminine to be competent and too masculine to be likeable.
- Women have the same level of education that their male counterparts, but they are still being underpaid.
- Women tend to be mistaken for either administrative or custodian workers.
- Gender discrimination is formalized into HR policy when criteria to evaluate job performance systematically favors men over women. For instance, “face time” is a key performance metric that rewards employees who spend more time at the office. Given that women are still the primary caregivers, they use flexible work arrangements more often than men and,

consequently, face career penalties because they score lower on face time in performance evaluations.

- When a woman becomes a mother, colleagues tend to suggest that she should work fewer hours. Her commitment and competence are questioned, and opportunities start reducing.
- The Queen Bee Phenomenon is a response to gender discrimination actions that women suffer in male-dominant work environments. According to research women who encountered discrimination early on in their careers tend to adopt the same discriminatory actions they suffered against junior women. Thus often distancing themselves from other women.
- Women are nearly twice as likely as men to be hired from outside the company for bigger roles. When it comes to CEO positions, women are less likely to be considered internally for these roles even if they have all the necessary qualifications.
- Women need to "fight" with their mentors to be viewed as ready for the next role. This is not the case for the men who are more likely to be recommended by their mentors and introduced into valuable business networks.

Read more: [It's 2021 Why Do We Still Judge Ambitious Women?](#)

What can we do as women to reduce gender bias in the workplace?

1. **Work on your confidence** — Stop self-doubt! Overqualified and overprepared women hold back twice as much as men when it comes to applying for a job. According to Linda Babcock, author of Women Don't Ask, "women have preconceived notions about their own abilities and confidence. This results in them not wanting to pursue future opportunities due to a lack of confidence in their abilities." Moreover, "women tend to ask 30% less money in salary negotiations than men due to a lack of confidence".
2. **Turn thoughts into actions** — Similarly to our first point, you won't know how you perform at a task unless you undertake it. Whether it goes as you expected or not, you can always learn something positive from being proactive.
3. **Empower your female colleagues** — Don't judge your female colleagues, as you wouldn't like to be judged. Practice active listening, be open-minded and friendly. Also, celebrate your colleagues' achievements publicly! This is a way to normalize women's success through recognition.
4. **Offer support** — If you notice that a colleague is struggling with something or being the target of gender discriminatory actions listen to them and publicly oppose these discriminatory actions.
5. **Speak up** — If you feel that you are performing at the same level or even better than your male colleagues but you are not equally recognized, share your thoughts with your management. Opening the conversation amicably can lead to more opportunities. If you don't verbalize your concerns, it's more likely that you won't see any changes.

The extra mile...

Hire women! — If you are in a decision-making position, be part of the change by promoting diverse and inclusive workplaces through your actions.

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