

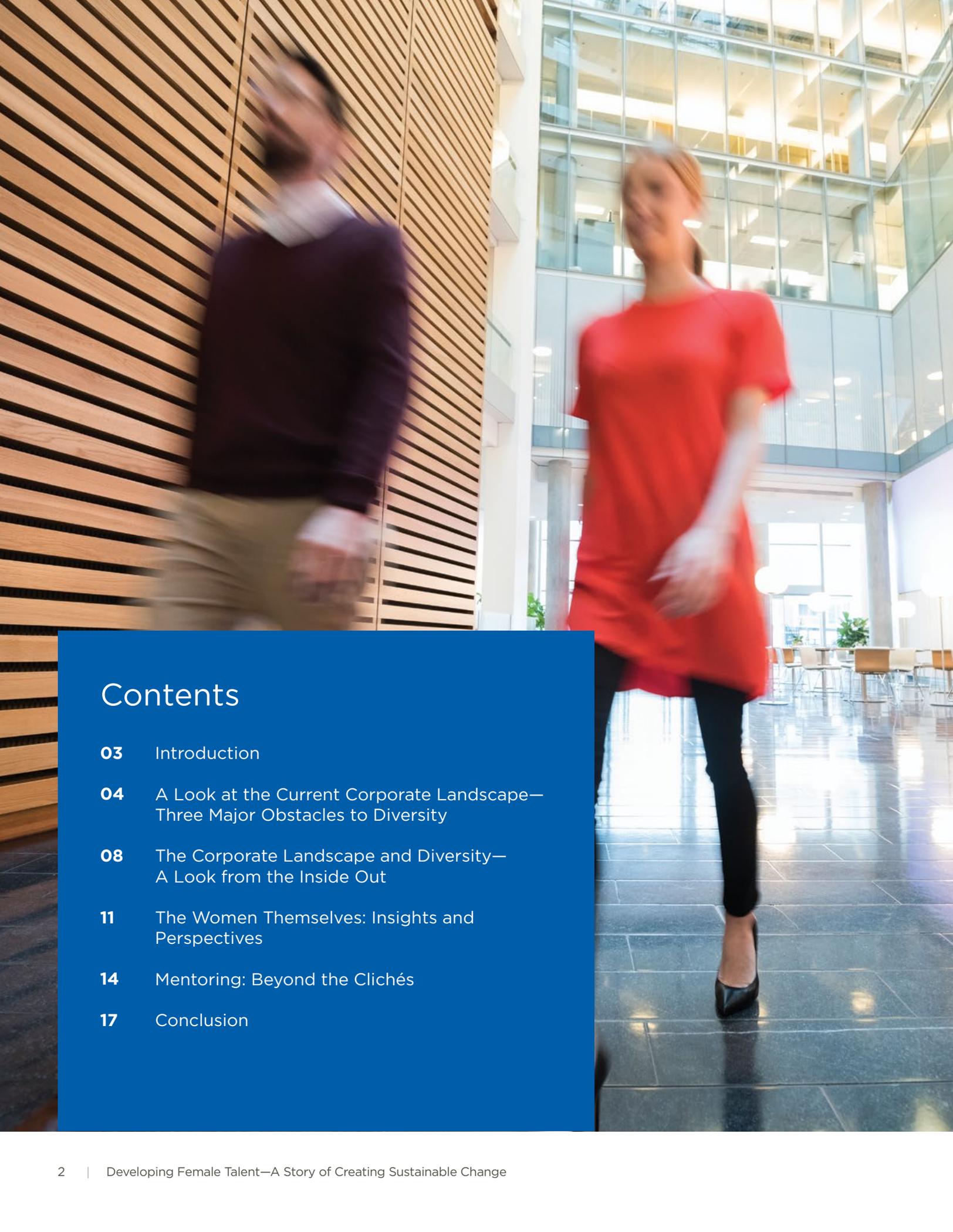


# DEVELOPING FEMALE TALENT

A Story of Positive Change—  
A Story of Creating Sustainable Change

**WOMEN**  
UNLIMITED, INC.

MENTORING  
EDUCATION  
NETWORKING



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# DEVELOPING LEADERS WHO DELIVER RESULTS: An Organization-Wide Challenge. An Organization-Wide Solution.

We are often asked to share our unique WOMEN Unlimited perspective gained through our relationships with corporations seeking to develop, advance and retain their female talent. It is our pleasure to do that in this report, especially in light of the growing sense of urgency to create strategies that build inclusive corporate environments.

A few examples:

- A 2013 Gallup study of more than 800 business units from two different industries—retail and hospitality—found that gender-diverse business units have better financial outcomes than those dominated by one gender
- A study of French companies found that those with more women in their management withstood the 2008 market downturn better than those with fewer women
- A 2012 Credit Suisse Research Institute report reviewing 2,360 global companies found that companies with women directors outperformed those without women directors in return on equity and average growth

While it is clear that there is no one right approach, no one size fits all for creating a diverse pipeline of talented women; it is our hope that organizations will benefit from the insights WOMEN Unlimited has to offer.

Our unique contribution to success through inclusiveness comes from thousands of interactions with C-suite executives, senior HR/talent officers, women program participants, their managers and mentors. Since 1994 our story has evolved as we have worked with leaders at all organizational levels who are committed to developing an inclusive corporate culture that creates impact. Our

story is about both the journey and the destination. It's a different take, a take based on continual firsthand observations and learnings.

Most importantly, our 20+ years of experience have proven that programmatic solutions alone don't create organizational shift. They don't create the much-needed diverse pipeline of female talent. These shifts take root when there is ongoing commitment and participation by three major constituencies:

- CEOs who are committed to an inclusive corporate culture, understand their roles and responsibilities to impact change and convey that commitment throughout the organization
- Managers, mentors and networks that all support female talent from the earliest stages of their careers
- Women themselves who are provided development opportunities that help them become intentional about what they need to do and change to achieve their career goals

I look forward to sharing our insights with you in the pages that follow, which recount our research, our field-based experiences and the comments and perspectives of managers, mentors, top management and the women themselves. We are confident you will find this information helpful as you evolve your own strategies to create a more inclusive organization.



Dr. Rosina L. Racioppi  
President & CEO  
**WOMEN Unlimited, Inc.**

# A LOOK AT THE CURRENT CORPORATE LANDSCAPE—THREE MAJOR OBSTACLES TO DIVERSITY

We have the pleasure of partnering with more than 200 leading organizations across many industries. We see that their top management, middle management and talented women are continually impacted by three forces widely at play:



**1** The Corporate Culture Itself



**2** Fatigue and Frustration



**3** Second-Generation Gender Bias

## 1. CORPORATE CULTURE

Corporate America was created by male founders, is still run predominantly by men and has at its core hundreds of years of male imprinting. Evolving a culture so heavily imbedded in male attitudes and accomplishments is clearly not easy—for anyone.

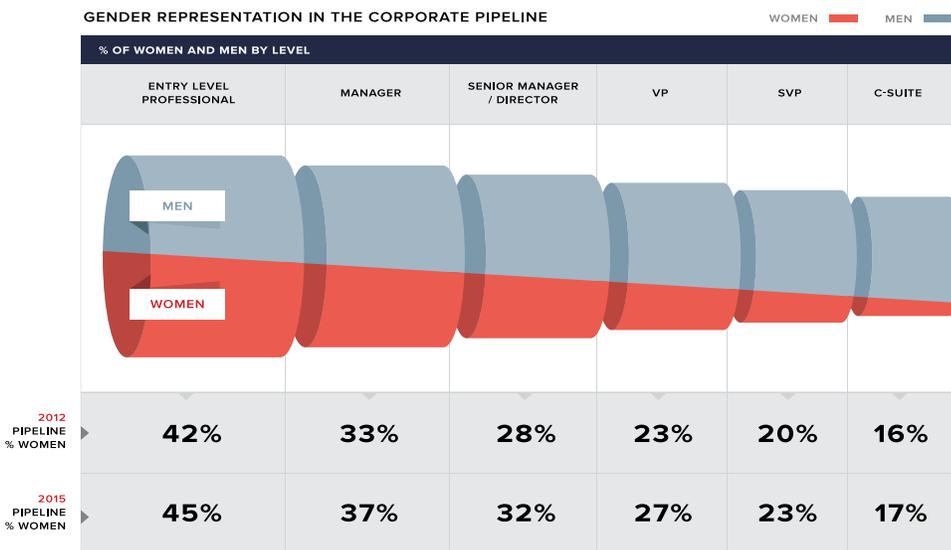
Certainly, statistics substantiate the great divide between women at the top and women at lower and middle management levels as seen in the chart.

How do we see this ingrained culture impeding the progress of potential female leaders?

In overwhelmingly large numbers, CEOs believe inclusiveness should be part of an organization-wide business strategy. However, they are often frustrated to discover that it isn't happening. The message isn't filtering down, often because line managers are unclear on how to support and implement the strategy. Our findings at WOMEN Unlimited very much mesh with studies such as McKinsey's that show only 37 percent of women

and 49 percent of men believe gender diversity is a top priority for their CEO.

There is no fast, easy solution. However, our experiences at WOMEN Unlimited show that when CEOs focus their commitment and engage top management in developing initiatives that link business metrics and performance reviews to their inclusion strategy, the culture starts to shift.



Source: Women in the Workplace 2015; LeanIn.org and McKinsey & Company  
[http://womenintheworkplace.com/ui/pdfs/Women\\_in\\_the\\_Workplace\\_2015.pdf?v=5](http://womenintheworkplace.com/ui/pdfs/Women_in_the_Workplace_2015.pdf?v=5)

For women, the corporate culture can be a practical and attitudinal impediment. Our program participants frequently tell us that it is hard to believe you'll make it to the top when you don't see anyone like you at the top.

Additionally, recent research by KPMG and McKinsey indicates women tend to lag behind men in confidence. Women often manifest this lack of confidence when they enter our programs. They are risk averse, unwilling to speak up for themselves, fail to ask for raises and promotions and, in general, tend to hide their talents under a bushel. For example, a KPMG survey of 3,000 women revealed that 85% lacked the confidence to ask for mentors.

This “confidence crisis” becomes especially detrimental at mid-career level, as pointed out by a Harvard University study that surveyed men and women graduates of their MBA program. Upon graduation, men and women had equal levels of ambition to make it to senior leadership roles. At mid-career, a significant gap occurred, in which women “lose” their ambition. Both confidence and ambition ebb because women are uncertain about how to manage the multi-responsibilities of their personal and professional lives, and so back away from taking the steps they need for advancing.

We see this often with our mid-career program participants; however, through the WOMEN Unlimited development process, women gain that clarity of focus that allows them to understand how their skills and abilities can positively impact their organization. The end result is increased confidence.

From a corporate perspective, companies that fail to create an inclusive corporate culture that supports women's development and provide resources to address their confidence issues stand at higher risk of losing female talent, even when they have invested substantially in their development.

## 2. FATIGUE AND FRUSTRATION

Across the corporate landscape, from top down, individually and collectively, there is a sense of “been there, done that.” Organization leaders feel they've tried a wide spectrum of approaches to hire and retain female talent. And they have. Yet, they're still losing mid-career women at an alarming rate. Women themselves are frustrated as they try to achieve their career goals but do not receive needed career-advancement support.

There are many understandable reasons for this fatigue and frustration. Corporations and their female talent often ARE spinning their wheels, without really getting to the heart of why. One underlying cause often goes unaddressed. As a recent *Harvard Business Review* article put it, corporate leaders need to “fall in love with the problem, instead of the solution.”

When leaders fall in love with their own solutions rather than the underlying problems, they look for evidence to support those solutions, whether or not they're the best solutions or even good ones. On the other hand, by focusing on the problem—by “falling in love with it”—every solution becomes subject to a reality check. By keeping the emphasis entirely on the problem, leaders can objectively assess the solutions they come up with to make sure they are truly addressing the issue at hand. It is a sure antidote to force-fit remedies that don't work.

The exodus of mid-career female talent and the resulting absence of women at higher corporate levels is a pervasive and complex problem and requires equally holistic strategies. By “loving the problem,” organizations are better poised to address the underlying causes of too few women at the top, to abandon simplistic solutions and to embrace strategies that get them and their female talent unstuck.



**For women, there are also many reasons for frustration.**

**For example:**

- Men far more often get plum assignments with higher budgets and P&L responsibility (Catalyst, 2012)
- A McKinsey report showed that of 325,000 women at entry-level positions, only 7,000 made it to C-suite levels
- Women of child-bearing age are often still stereotyped and passed over for senior level positions or partnerships

Those frustrations are real; however, they are not the whole story. WOMEN Unlimited's experience has shown that despite these detrimental circumstances, when women leverage their strengths, identify areas of development and make the appropriate shifts, they begin to overcome the culture-based obstacles that can stand in their way. It isn't easy. It isn't fast, but the process starts and succeeds when women themselves act on the reality that their willingness to change is a required ingredient for advancement.

### **3. SECOND-GENERATION GENDER BIAS**

Unlike blatant discrimination of previous eras, second-generation bias is subtle and echoes deeply ingrained masculine values about leadership, alliances, and mentoring. It is an off-shoot of the ingrained corporate culture. Seemingly, there is no deliberate intention to discriminate which makes it especially difficult to attack and change.

**Second-generation gender bias manifests itself in a variety of ways including:**

- Describing leadership traits in masculine terms
- Giving more visible projects to men
- Failing to provide development opportunities on a par with men
- Being afraid to mentor a woman, for fear of "talk"
- Making judgments when a woman does not exhibit stereotypical female traits
- Bypassing a woman for promotion because she may have to leave to have children

"It's not that we white men are intentionally doing anything wrong, but we do have a penchant for obliviousness about the way we are beneficiaries of systematic unfairness. Maybe that's because in a race, it's easy not to notice a tailwind, and white men often go through life with a tailwind, while women and people of color must push against a headwind."

**"Straight Talk for White Men"**

—Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*

These are unconscious biases that have huge impact on women, corporations and the managers that hold them.

In a 2013 *Harvard Business Review* article, *Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers*, Ibarra, Ely and Kolb point out that women often must establish credibility in a culture that is deeply conflicted about whether, how and when women should exercise authority. They suggest that three actions will support and advance gender diversity: "greater understanding of second-generation bias, safe spaces for leadership identity development and encouraging women to anchor in their leadership purpose will get better results than the paths most organizations currently pursue."

WOMEN Unlimited strives to educate and encourage our corporate partners at all levels and our participants to recognize second-generation gender bias, to look for it at all levels of their organizations and to make changes accordingly. It can be a long, arduous process, but a process our corporate partners believe is well worth the effort.



## Needed Changes

Especially in large corporations, CEOs and managers can face a variety of obstacles as they work to implement an organization-wide strategy that evolves corporate culture, combats fatigue and frustration and addresses subtle gender bias. We've learned from discussions with our corporate partners that:

- Managers at all levels can be unsure about their roles in supporting their female talent
- Women themselves are reluctant to make changes in habits and behaviors needed to advance their careers
- Male managers are often uncomfortable with providing feedback, and female employees are equally uncomfortable about asking
- Mentoring programs can fall short in providing needed benefits to the organization, the mentors and the women mentees



# THE CORPORATE LANDSCAPE AND DIVERSITY—A LOOK FROM THE INSIDE OUT

In a 2015 guest blog on the WOMEN Unlimited website, Audrey Goodman, former Vice President of Organization Development at Medco Health Solutions Inc. and a long-time WOMEN Unlimited corporate partner, shared some lessons learned in her over 20 years involvement in fostering inclusive corporate cultures:

## **Find the new voices**

Corporations must actively seek out new voices and dig down deep to find people who might not be heard in a business-as-usual environment.

## **Make Diversity Part of Talent Management**

In order for diversity to become ingrained in an organization, it must be part of an overarching talent management strategy. Talent management ensures that the right candidate is available at the right time.

## **Include Metrics**

Measurable results are an important aspect of maintaining and expanding an inclusive talent management strategy. Metrics can be created around who got promoted—increased diversity, e.g., how many more women—or what the executive succession pool looks like six, 12 or 18 months out.

In 2014, WOMEN Unlimited conducted two surveys: one of our corporate partners, including CEOs, HR professionals, managers and mentors, and one of our alumnae. Our goal was to learn more about policies and attitudes, across functionalities, regarding the development of female talent.

## **First, let's look at what HR leaders had to say:**

As an organization committed to the development of female talent, WOMEN Unlimited continually engages senior HR professionals. We have worked with them to overcome a variety of challenges, including budgeting, selection of the appropriate female talent at the right time in their careers, interaction with managers and garnering manager support. They often have their finger on the organizational pulse, and their responses to our survey echo that connection.

## **More than half the HR leaders shared that:**

- Women face unique challenges in the corporate environment
- The representation of women at senior levels in their organizations is too low
- However, only 25% of the respondents said their company has a specific talent strategy for women

## **More than 75% of the HR leaders surveyed use the following metrics to measure the impact of talent development:**

- Retention
- Advancement or promotions
- Employee engagement (or other measures of employee satisfaction)
- Only 15% of the respondents use financial results as a metric

## WOMEN Unlimited Corporate Partners Survey: Manager Perspectives

We asked managers to look at challenges to inclusiveness in two ways:

1. The challenges they face as managers of talented women
2. The key challenges they see their female talent facing

**Key strategies to support the development of high-potential women:**

- Helping them take accountability for managing their careers
- Delivering and receiving feedback with high-potential women
- Understanding the perspectives and experiences of high-potential women

**In terms of the challenges managers see their female talent facing:**

- Navigating the corporate landscape to drive business results
- Navigating the corporate landscape to manage their careers
- Communicating effectively with people across the organization
- Being seen as strong leaders
- Understanding how to shift behaviors to become more successful
- Speaking up for themselves
- Stepping forward for opportunities
- Demonstrating strategic thinking
- Cultivating a broad network of colleagues and mentors
- Understanding how to establish relationships with key individuals

The survey capsulized the key areas that managers need to address in order for their high-potential female talent to succeed. It provides important guidance for managers in a number of key areas including helping women to establish productive relationships—to speak up and step forward—and to perceive themselves as leaders.

## Handling Challenges: Advice from the Field

In *WOMEN Unlimited Manager's Playbook for Developing Female Talent*, seven top executives were interviewed. Here are a few of their thoughts on handling the challenges involved in managing female talent:

- **Marc Buzzelli, Prudential International Insurance:** “Show genuine interest in a woman’s career development. Give continuous, honest, constructive feedback.”
- **Jeffrey Fischer, Chubb:** “Be genuine. It’s OK to show emotion. Let them see you sweat. If you are guarded and standoffish, people won’t be comfortable with you.”
- **James McClure, Prudential Financial:** “Be willing to give constructive criticism. Make that criticism a positive experience, which she can use to move forward.”
- **Laura Mezey, Bayer Corporation:** “The job of managers is to help the women who work for them get there. Managers can stymie a woman’s advancement by wanting to keep her where she is or by failing to give needed feedback.”
- **George Odegi, Colgate-Palmolive Company:** “Understand that a woman’s responsibilities both in and out of the job are relevant. There could be both possibilities and limits in play.”
- **Palani Palaniappan, Global Biologics CMC:** “Empower women—make them feel good and also feel accountable. Give them what they need to own their job.”
- **Bill Weber, DuPont (recently retired):** “Make women who work for you less risk averse and more willing to try new things. Keep them from getting too comfortable in their current role.”



## Issues Women Say Are Most Important to Them

WOMEN Unlimited continually monitors the issues and challenges women who attend our programs face in their organizations. Here is what we hear from women at various career points: entry level, mid-career and senior levels.

**For early and mid-career women, the following issues are most frequently mentioned:**

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of visibility
- Confident communication
- Work/life balance

**Women at senior management levels most often mention:**

- Recognition
- Developing effective executive communication
- Understanding the path to the top



# THE WOMEN THEMSELVES: INSIGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES

WOMEN Unlimited has over 11,000 alumnae across 200 major corporations, mostly Fortune 1000 companies. In addition to the survey of Corporate Partners in 2014, we also tapped our alumnae to learn more about how their ability to navigate the corporate landscape was impacted by program participation.

Here are the major findings:

## **Areas of growth and development women experienced as a result of program participation:**

- Navigate the corporate landscape to successfully drive business results
- Navigate my organization to successfully manage my career
- Communicate effectively with people across my organization
- Be seen as a strong leader in my organization
- Understand how to shift my behavior to be more successful
- Challenge myself to speak up or step forward for opportunities
- Think strategically about business challenges and opportunities
- Cultivate a broad network of colleagues and mentors
- Understand how to establish relationships with key individuals to support my development

Additionally, over 70% of the women surveyed enjoyed an expansion of their roles within one year of their participation in a WOMEN Unlimited program.

A sampling of alumnae comments on how they became more in synch with corporate goals and objectives:

“I foster a team environment where opposing points of view are welcome, calculated risk taking is encouraged and brave conversations are mandatory!”

“I am more focused on high ROI projects.”

“Thinking more strategically and with a ‘bigger picture’ mentality.”

“Implemented what I’ve learned from each workshop in my job. As a result, my team had a phenomenal year exceeding budget (revenues) and contributing the most to the overall profit to the organization.”

“I have become aware of the leadership attributes that I already possessed and gained the confidence to leverage these qualities to move the business forward.”

## BEFORE AND AFTER: LESSONS LEARNED

The areas of development pinpointed by survey and program participants are exactly the areas that women need for advancing their careers and their contribution to corporate success:

- Strategic rather than tactical thinking
- Improved confidence
- Establishing career-boosting relationships
- Driving business results by understanding the big picture
- Cultivating mentors and networks

The findings reconfirm the importance of creating strategies for the development of female talent early in a woman's career so she can continue and evolve as she advances to mid-career levels of responsibility.

## EARLY CAREER WOMEN

Based on extensive research of the changing corporate environment and of the new generation of female talent, WOMEN Unlimited totally revamped its program in 2015 for early career women, creating: IMpower: Grow the Talent That Will Grow Your Company. Our research identified six

key areas that are the cornerstones of long-term career success: Career Ownership—Building Savvy Relationships—Developing Brand “You,” Bolstering Business Impact, Looking Beyond “Your Department” and Change and Innovation.

**According to feedback from our corporate partners, the benefits of starting development early are many and include:**

- Organizations retain more of their female talent when they commit to their early development
- Organization-wide commitment to inclusiveness among managers, mentors and top management digs deeper into the organization
- The women themselves build confidence and interpersonal skills that help them define “who they are” and “where they want to go”
- Women learn early how to manage their career and understand that being good at what they do will keep them in place, but not get them ahead
- The tools, techniques and strategies mastered early pay dividends for the women and their organizations throughout the women's careers

## Gender and Feedback

According to a survey of 28 companies conducted by Kieran Snyder and reported in *Fortune*, the feedback women receive in performance reviews is different from the feedback men receive. First, it is more often critical: 58.9% of men had reviews with critical feedback, compared to 87.9% of women.

Additionally, women are far more likely to receive negative personality criticisms such as “abrasive,” “judgmental,” “watch your tone.” In the critical reviews of men, personality criticisms showed up just 2.4% of the time. For the women, 75.6% of the time.

## MID-CAREER WOMEN

Mid-career women are in a tricky place in today's corporate environment. They have forged successes, but may feel they are stuck in place. What's more, companies need to retain and advance their high-potential women to build their talent pipeline and prevent them from migrating to competitors.

WOMEN Unlimited's experience shows that mid-career women have the talent needed to advance. However, what they often lack is an understanding of how to navigate their organizations and better manage themselves and their relationships. In addition, women have not formed the relationships or developed networks that provide the feedback or insights necessary to understand how they need to evolve their skills as they prepare for more senior roles. They are frequently the ones trapped by both the environment in which they work and self-limiting behaviors.

At this mid-career level, lack of feedback from woman to manager and manager to woman is a key stumbling block, with strengths and weaknesses often going unaddressed. It is important for both managers and high-potential women to understand that feedback is a two-way street. Managers need to provide feedback that supports the development of the female talent on their team. Women must learn how to actively seek out that feedback.

The findings from our manager and alumnae surveys and the issues pinpointed by program participants are critical. They underline that when managers and mentors are actively involved in supporting development of their female talent from early career stages, more and more mid-level women can reach leadership roles—roles that provide them with career satisfaction and their companies with a diverse talent pool.

We are confident the information will serve as a resource to strengthen talent development strategies across organizations and industries.

## Retention Strategies Pinpointed by Corporate Partners

- Provide more opportunities for women to develop leadership skills on the job
- Offer development opportunities early in a woman's career
- Create formalized mentoring programs
- Have a well-defined succession planning process
- Invest in external development that complements organizational practices and goals



# MENTORING: BEYOND THE CLICHÉS

“You have to have a mentor.”

For years, research has shown that mentors play a crucial role for women looking to advance their careers—and of course, it’s true. Bokeno and Gantt (2000) describe mentoring as a learning process mediated through dialogue. However, WOMEN Unlimited has found it’s not just about having a mentor, but how the relationship is used.

Through our interactions with women participants and our corporate partners, we have made a number of critical discoveries that are significantly advancing the effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship.



## SUCCESS FOR MENTEES

Dr. Rosina L. Racioppi, President and CEO of Women Unlimited, completed her doctoral dissertation on *Women’s Mentoring Wisdom*. Her research was based on interviews with alumnae of WOMEN Unlimited’s LEAD programs and their approach to handling the mentoring component of their development.

Dr. Racioppi focused her research on mid-career women for two main reasons:

1. Over the years, WOMEN Unlimited’s corporate partners have shared their frustration with their lack of progress in advancing women into senior leadership. While many strategies are successful for recruiting early career women, companies continue to experience women exiting at the mid-career stage.
2. WOMEN Unlimited has worked with highly talented women whose careers are stalled because they fail to recognize that knowledge and skills alone are insufficient for advancement to senior management. It is important for women to understand they cannot continue growing their careers on their own. They need to learn how to build key relationships and evolve new skills that positively impact their companies.

The focus of Dr. Racioppi’s research was twofold: to understand in what way women formed mentoring relationships that supported their leadership and career development, and to understand how they created mentor relationships following completion of WOMEN Unlimited’s LEAD Program.

## CREATING STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

Catalyst (2012) reported that 44% of high-potential employees indicate that forming critical relationships with influential decision makers is most impactful to their advancement, particularly in gaining access to key roles. Dr. Racioppi sought to understand what impact mentoring experiences had on women’s views of the importance of relationship building for career advancement.

While all research participants understood that these relationships were critical for their continued development, they felt challenged making them a priority. The primary barrier to forming these relationships appears to be finding the time to systematically build them. As one research participant shared, “my relationships with others are more focused on transactions (of business) versus my personal development.”

Women in this study who were more intentional in building relationships were busy as well. Yet they still were able to identify opportunities for relationships with key individuals. Dr. Racioppi’s research revealed that mentoring relationships worked best when they were “intentional,” meaning deliberate actions taken by the mentee to positively affect a desired outcome. The women mentees were most successful when they were “intentional” in three specific areas:

### 1. Preparing for their mentoring relationship

The most effective preparations were multi-faceted and involved the mentee’s clarifying her own goals so that the mentoring could be focused on her aims and ambitions. Developing, in advance, a strategy to ensure the relationship was open and productive enhanced the mentoring experience.

### 2. Leveraging their mentor’s insights

Applying their mentor’s insights and perspectives to their organizational behavior allowed mentees to “show up” in new ways that advanced their growth and development. Among the many benefits, they enhanced their visibility, better navigated the corporate landscape, pinpointed the right time to take the right risks and developed an effective style that was true to themselves.

### 3. Building relationships

Mentees who transferred what they learned from their mentor relationships to building organizational relationships enjoyed increased success in their careers. They better understood how to develop relationships with key people. They were less reluctant to approach those who could be of help to their advancement.

Overall, the women who experienced mentoring success were primarily focused on gaining a broader perspective of their organization necessary for leadership and career

development. They realized hard work and dedication alone were insufficient to advance their careers and that key relationships were critical.

### A sampling of comments from mentees on why the “intentional” approach worked:

*Through the mentoring relationship, I understood that I do have something to bring to the table and that I could call and ask questions and would get a positive response.*

*Helped me understand what top talent was, and I was able to craft a plan to be viewed as “top talent.”*

*It’s okay to open up, to expose yourself. If you don’t, you are not going to get enough out of it (the relationship).*

*Through these relationships, I understood that if I wanted to be the GM (general manager) of this business, I needed to act like the GM of this business.*

*I shared that I was struggling with embracing the commercial mindset. My mentor helped shift my mindset when he shared his experiences and perspective.*

Dr. Racioppi’s research highlights a critical strategy for women who seek to advance their careers into senior leadership roles and is supported by additional research. Women who possess a mindset for engagement understand that individuals are willing to help others and are more comfortable asking for help and advice (Chandler, 2009) and are more self-aware and willing to be vulnerable (Boyatzis and McKee, 1998).

Tannen (1990) argues that most men seek out mentors to help them understand how to successfully navigate the organization and advance through the ranks. Chandler, Hall & Kram (2010) strongly suggest that individuals who are savvy in building organizational relationships to support their development create opportunities by asking people for advice, feedback, information or support.

## FAR-REACHING RESULTS

Dr. Racioppi's research also found that the effect of participation in WOMEN Unlimited's LEAD program, with its focus on intentional mentoring, had a positive impact on the women's overall relationship building skills.

The women became more adept at identifying individuals of power and influence with whom to forge relationships. They continued to grow and develop intentional mentoring relationships, and they became increasingly more comfortable and confident in establishing career-boosting organizational contacts and relationships.

In short, while there are many approaches to creating effective mentoring relationships, the research is clear that when a mentee learns to take charge of this relationship with clear goals and objectives in mind, the benefits are both immediate and long term and extend well beyond interactions with the mentor.

## SUCCESS FOR MENTORS

While the mentoring experience is primarily about providing women a safe relationship in which to discuss their career, both male and female mentors tell us that it has been a transformational learning experience for them as well.

A few examples:

- Both male and female mentors gained new insights into the challenges women are facing today
- They applied the insight gained as mentors to other organizational relationships
- They continued to hone their mentoring and coaching skills for their team members at work
- They had a clearer understanding on how they can be stronger advocates of organization-wide diversity
- They gained a greater understanding of the impact of corporate culture on the advancement of women
- Because of their seniority in the organization, their new insights and commitment influenced their management and their teams



## Where Do Sponsors Fit In?

### Dr. Racioppi's Perspective

I am often asked how sponsors fit into a woman's career-building strategy. My answer is a simple one. They are vital; and that's why a woman needs a mentor first. The mentor is a form of insurance that the sponsor relationship won't be blown.

Sponsors are internal power people, and it's never easy to capture their attention.

However, it gets a lot easier when a career-conscious woman has been successfully mentored—when she has learned, from and through her mentor, the skills and strategies that will get her noticed by a needed corporate sponsor. Once a high-potential woman, with the help of her mentor, has changed and adapted her behaviors to align with corporate goals, her chances for connecting with an appropriate sponsor skyrocket.

Far from being at odds, mentors and sponsors are the one-two punch on a woman's journey to the C-suite.

# CONCLUSION

Much has been written about the business case for an inclusive corporate culture: To shortchange female talent is to shortchange long-term corporate growth and profitability.

WOMEN Unlimited values our corporate partner relationships, and we are pleased to share our insights with you to ensure the continued success of YOUR inclusion strategies. We are proud to partner with companies that are committed to evolving their organization by creating an environment for women to grow their careers.

We are confident you will see the information shared in this report, which has been gained through our work with leading corporations, senior leaders and their high-potential women, as one of many important resources for creating a corporate landscape with the essential ingredients to attract, develop and retain female talent.

We look forward to being an ongoing source of organizational solutions for your company. To that end, we will continue to apprise you of our latest findings and observations based on both our surveys and our involvement with female talent and corporate managers at all levels.





For more details on WOMEN Unlimited strategies for developing high-potential women, contact us at (212) 572-6211 or please see:

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# DEVELOPING LEADERS WHO DELIVER RESULTS

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