

**TOOL 1.14****Checklist for Senior Leadership to Demonstrate Commitment**

- » **GOAL:** Demonstrate commitment to creating a gender-equitable work environment across the company and to shareholders
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources, Senior Management, Training

Effectively supporting and developing gender diversity requires buy-in throughout an organization. Leadership at the executive level is a must for organizational change. A large-scale McKinsey study found that companies with leaders who demonstrated the behavior and commitments they were asking of their staff were five times more successful in making the change. In addition, as commitment to gender diversity becomes more important to shareholders, senior managers have an important role to play in communicating to them about the ways in which the company is advancing gender equity goals.

Senior managers can demonstrate their commitment and support in a number of ways, from how they communicate their buy in and the incentives they develop to the internal and external programs in which they participate. This demonstrated commitment also includes putting in place accountability systems to ensure that staff throughout the organization are held responsible for organizational change. The checklist that follows provides a range of ways in which senior managers can use their own participation to demonstrate and encourage gender diversification throughout their organizations.

*“Leadership support and endorsement are critical to fostering gender diversity and equality in an organization, which impacts the bottom line. Leaders have the power to influence key decisions, ensure that gender-smart policies are implemented throughout the organization, hold staff accountable, and pave the way for addressing corporate gender gaps in attracting and retaining the best talent. Leaders can also lead by example internally and externally and build partnerships.”*

—AmCham France and BIAC, *Putting All Our Minds to Work: Harnessing the Gender Dividend*

## Senior Manager Checklist for Demonstrating Commitment to Gender Diversity

### Internal Commitment and Communication

- **Communication and culture change**

- In person and in writing, make a statement to all staff about the importance of gender diversity. Explain the business case and alignment with corporate priorities. The gender equity champion or gender equity task force could take the lead in this effort.
- Explain all measures to be taken to support gender equity in the workplace. Ensure that staff understand the reasons that gender equity is a corporate priority. Be clear that the efforts are part of a plan for a stronger, more effective business model, rather than a plan to prioritize women over men.
- Use corporate reporting materials to communicate the corporate position on gender diversity and the measures in place to all stakeholders.
- Lead the push for organizational cultural change by taking a prominent and visible role in addressing gender diversity complaints or concerns and supporting transparency in handling all complaints.
- Spearhead the development of gender equity policies and publicly encourage uptake of these policies. CEOs can take the lead in driving the development and adoption of equal pay for equal work, flexible work policies, and maternity and paternity care, for instance. Most important, managers must foster a work environment that encourages staff to access such policies without jeopardizing their advancement.

- **Incentives**

- Develop and support incentive programs for gender diversity, including financial incentives for managers and departmental awards for teams that meet gender diversity and work-life balance goals.<sup>99</sup>
- Personally present awards and highlight winners at company-wide events to demonstrate commitment and support.

- **Accountability**

- Appoint a senior executive point person for gender diversity, for example at the senior vice president level who is accountable to the CEO. The senior point person can be male or female, but should have time allocated specifically for this role. Too often, this is confused with simply adding these responsibilities to the duties of to the company's highest-ranking female executive.

<sup>99</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *Women in Male-Dominated Industries: A Toolkit of Strategies*, 2013 52.

- Appoint a gender diversity task force that includes heads of business units and other representatives of those units. The taskforce should work with the senior executive point person to identify challenges and opportunities, develop a common, organization-wide approach to supporting gender diversity along with goals and targets, and ensure monitoring and accountability for achievement of goals and targets.<sup>100</sup>
- Work with HR and senior management teams to set targets for increasing gender diversity in each business unit.
- Develop KPIs that include advancing gender diversity and establish accountability mechanisms to hold managers accountable for meeting targets.
- **Leadership development**
  - Work with HR to set up women’s leadership development programs, including mentorship, networking, and skills-building programs.
  - Play an active role in these programs to demonstrate commitment.
  - Create mentorship programs for junior staff, particularly female staff, with senior female staff where possible.

### BOX 1G | The Value of Mentoring

A 2006 study of Sun Microsystems by Gartner and Capital Analytics used statistical analysis to quantify the financial impact of mentoring. The study examined the progress of more than 1,000 employees. Among the findings:

- 25 percent of those who were provided with mentors had a salary grade change over a given period
- 5 percent of those without mentors had a salary grade change over the same time period
- 28 percent of mentors had a salary grade change compared to 5 percent in a non-mentor control group
- 72 percent of mentorship participants were retained compared to 49 percent in a non-mentorship control group
- Mentees were promoted five times more often than a non-mentorship control group
- Mentors were promoted six times more often than non-mentor control group

Source: Knowledge @Wharton, [“Workplace Loyalties Change, but the Value of Mentoring Doesn’t,”](#) University of Pennsylvania, May 16, 2007.

<sup>100</sup> Calvert Group Ltd, City of San Francisco Department on the Status of Women and Verite, “Gender Equality Principles,” 2008.

## External Commitment and Communication

- **International gender equality agreements and pacts**
  - Demonstrate support and commitment by affiliating with global partnerships. Among the prominent international initiatives are the Women's Empowerment Principles, EDGE gender certification, Male Champions for Change, and HeForShe. See Box 1H for more detail on these initiatives.<sup>101</sup>
  - Use tools and resources provided by these groups to meet the company's gender goals.
- **International gender equality forums and events**
  - Participate in events to share knowledge and discuss progress on gender advancement. Participation in these events can present an opportunity to convey your company's gender equality commitments and actions, learn from others, and generate new ideas and partnerships for supporting gender equality. Among the more prominent events are those organized by the Clinton Global Initiative, ILO, the World Economic Forum, and the United Nations.
- **Gender equity awards programs**
  - Support public relations efforts to recognize employees' gender equity efforts and enable the sharing of experiences by putting in place awards programs. Such awards also help position the company as an employer of choice for future employees. Here are a few examples of awards programs:
    - WEP CEO Leadership Awards: The awards program of the Women's Empowerment Principles initiative recognizes concrete and innovative actions by CEOs to advance the Women's Empowerment Principles.<sup>102</sup>
    - Catalyst Awards: These awards recognize efforts to support the recruitment, development, and advancement of all women, including diverse women. Qualifications for the award include a thorough examination of candidates' initiatives, including an onsite evaluation, to evaluate proven, measurable results that benefit women across a range of dimensions, such as race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, generation, nationality, disability, and indigenous or aboriginal peoples.<sup>103</sup>
    - Business in the Community: This is the UK's most comprehensive workplace award for gender diversity. Participants receive customized feedback and recommendations to support improved performance, peer comparison, and a confidential score.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>101</sup> It is important to note the potential issues that can arise with male advocates/champions programs. In some instances, work with male champions has inadvertently overly highlighted differences in traditional roles between women and men and the importance of women in the community specifically because of their important domestic roles. This can have the effect of reinforcing women's reproductive and domestic roles, rather than emphasizing the importance of equitable opportunities and equal rights. Male advocate/champion programs need to be designed carefully so that they do not overemphasize the difference in roles and responsibilities, but rather focus on the benefits of equality.

<sup>102</sup> Find out more at <https://www.weeps.org/>.

<sup>103</sup> Find out more at <http://www.catalyst.org/catalyst-award>.

<sup>104</sup> Find out more at <https://www.bitc.org.uk/>.

## BOX 1H | Global Gender Equality Compacts and Resources

### UN Global Compact: Women's Empowerment Principles CEO Statement

The Women's Empowerment Principles are a partnership initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact (UNGC) to help the private sector promote gender equality in the workplace, marketplace, and community. As of 2020, over 2,700 CEOs have signed the CEO Statement of Support, committing to employing the WEPs to advance gender equality. For more see: UN Global Compact, "[Women's Empowerment Principles](#)."<sup>105</sup>

### EDGE Gender Certification

The EDGE Certification scheme is a leading gender equality certification. It helps companies demonstrate their commitment to gender equality. EDGE currently works with 200 organizations in 50 countries and 30 industries. For more see: [EDGE Certification Program](#).

### Male Champions for Change

Gender is often mistaken for a women's issue, but gender equality concerns and benefits both women and men. In male-dominated industries such as oil, gas, and mining, male participation and commitment to gender equality is essential. The Male Champions for Change (MCC) program started in Australia but has since been replicated in various countries and contexts. The program brings together influential male leaders to redefine the role of male champions for gender equality and to create a peer group of these leaders to support the work towards gender equality. The MCC Coalition now includes over 260 CEOs, board directors, and governmental, university, and military leaders, in 155 countries, representing over 1.5 million employees across more than 230 organizations. For more see: [Male Champions of Change](#).

### HeForShe Champions: Male Advocates for Gender Equality

This initiative of UN Women provides a platform for men and boys to work as partners in achieving gender equality. The first HeforShe parity report was launched at the 2016 World Economic Forum, featuring key gender-related data from ten global companies whose CEOs have signed on to HeForShe's 10x10x10 program. The program is a pilot effort to engage global leaders from across government, the private sector, and academia in a commitment to advance gender equality. Participating companies included AccorHotels, Barclays, Koch Holding, McKinsey & Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Schneider Electric, Tupperware Brands, Twitter, Unilever, and Vodafone. The report included information on percentage of female employees, percentage of women in senior leadership roles and on the board, and the percentage of new hires who are women. For more, see [heforshe.org](#).

<sup>105</sup> Aditi Mohapatra and Lauren Gula, "[Women's Empowerment Principles: Turning a Decade of Lessons into Ambitious Business Action](#)," BSR, March 2020.