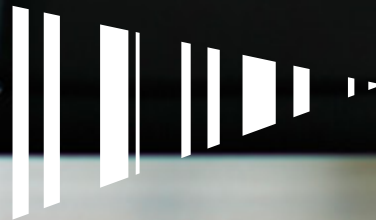


Shaping the future together

Male champions for gender equity:
experiences, drivers and
lessons learned



EY

Building a better
working world



05 Introduction

06 **Executive summary**

08 **Championing gender equity**

- 08 Establishing flexibility
- 09 Providing sponsorship
- 12 Mastering barriers
- 14 Drivers for male engagement towards gender equity
- 15 Internal factors
- 16 External factors

18 **Recommendations**

21 References



Dear Reader

Women have made great progress towards achieving equality of opportunity and representation, in both the social and economic spheres, in recent decades. However, to correct their continuing under-representation in positions of power and leadership, decisive action is required. As organizations strive to establish equality in the workplace, one thing is clear: creating gender equity needs more than structural alterations – it requires a change in mindset, attitude and culture.

Each of the significant steps on the road to female advancement and parity in business – from the first appointment of women to listed company boards to quotas for female directors on Norwegian boards – have one thing in common: they had male supporters and advocates. Irrespective of whether men championed efforts on the frontline, worked behind the scenes as sponsors and mentors, or lobbied for support among peer groups and networks – male participation in gender equity efforts has made a critical difference. Progress has always come where women and men worked side by side.

This fact spurred us to assess the factors that motivate male leaders to champion gender equity. We hope our paper will provide interesting insights to diversity managers and HR professionals, to leaders seeking practical advice on advancing the gender agenda and becoming a role model for others, and to everyone else intent on establishing gender equity in their organization.

Ana-Cristina Grohnert,
Managing Partner, People Leader GSA

*“Culture trumps strategy every time.
A distinctive culture doesn’t happen by
accident. It starts with great people.”*

Ana-Cristina Grohnert, People Leader GSA



Shaping the future together

Introduction

Demographic shifts and changing talent pools are recasting the composition of the global workforce. Consequently, many organizations are strengthening their strategies, competencies and processes to attract, manage and retain a more diverse group of talent.

Gender is a key part of the diversity management agenda. In developed economies, most women are highly educated, financially independent and career-oriented and yet, across both emerging and mature economies, female talent remains an untapped and undervalued resource.

Multiple factors – including research that suggests mixed teams are more productive, government efforts to get women back to work, and changing gender roles – are driving organizations to seek more gender equity.

Many companies understand that harnessing female potential is key to winning the talent war, staying competitive and countering demographic pressures. However, despite significant corporate efforts to enable equal female participation, at all levels, progress is slow. Statistics show that the ratio of female managers¹ continues to dwindle as they rise through the ranks. While women account for around 15% of middle management

positions, they represent just 3% of executive managers. In comparison to other European countries, Germany, Switzerland and Austria are consistently at the bottom of rankings and significantly below the global average of 20% when looking at upper management positions.²

The argument that inequalities at executive level stem from a shortage of high-caliber women entering the workforce no longer holds true. In the last decade, the number of female graduates has equaled – or even exceeded – that of men (51% vs. 49%).³ An increasingly strong pipeline of highly-educated women are entering the world of work, but they are still not progressing to the top corporate positions.⁴

Extensive research and discussion has considered what holds women back. The “glass ceiling”, or the informal barriers that exclude women from upper management, has received particular attention. It argues that corporate culture – underpinned by personal values, beliefs, stereotypes, and the unconscious biases of both sexes – can reinforce invisible obstacles for women.⁵ Our research suggests that, exploiting our understanding of this glass ceiling provides an effective means of breaking through it.

Historically, corporate organizations and cultures were shaped by male networks and male thinking and, today, men remain dominant in corporate organizations.⁶ As holders of most top management positions, they have the visibility, authority and power to change cultures and tackle the barriers that hinder female advancement. Men’s advocacy, support and participation are crucial when it comes to turning “mixed leadership” from concept

to reality. Men and women must, therefore, work together to create an environment that delivers equal opportunities and gender equity.

Reflecting this belief, in 2012, we published *Shaping the future together*, with a view to changing corporate culture. In this publication, we argued that achieving mixed leadership was a cultural change process, requiring buy-in, support and participation from all employees – male and female. It emphasized that an inclusive workplace that valued differences, offered equal opportunities and empowered its employees would be beneficial to men and women. Further analysis showed that while much research acknowledged the importance of male role models, leaders and champions in leveling the corporate playing field, there was little exploration of what motivated men to contribute to gender equity. This provided the impetus for the second part of *Shaping the future together*.

For this new study, we interviewed a number of top male managers, from different organizations and sectors, who were known for championing gender diversity. During these conversations, we identified critical incidents they had actively supported female talent. As well as capturing their experiences and lessons learned, we tried to establish what motivated them to “fight” for gender equity. The following paper summarizes our key findings, with illustrations from inspirational stories and real-life examples. It shows how male champions can change the game for women and how everyday actions can be a powerful accelerant towards gender equity.

Executive summary

The study explores the factors motivating top male managers to support gender equity. It looks at two main research questions:

- (1) What can we learn from the experiences of top male managers who have supported gender equity in their organizations?
- (2) What triggers senior male managers to support gender equity?

Key enablers: Sponsorship and flexibility

Our findings reveal that sponsorship and flexibility are two of the most significant enablers of gender equity.

Strong and committed **sponsorship** plays a crucial role, as illustrated by numerous critical incidents where male champions stood up for female protégés in performance reviews and promotion rounds; ensured they were considered for career opportunities; increased their visibility within the organization; helped expand their networks by introducing them to important stakeholders; challenged biased opinions and stereotypes about them; coached them before significant career moves or assessment processes, and took personal responsibility for removing barriers. In regard to **flexibility**, we found that top managers who successfully champion gender equity enable and pro-actively implement flexible working solutions.

Barriers and possible solutions

All our male champions described barriers to gender equity that they had experienced. Interestingly, **Top management** and/or **Colleagues** were identified consistently as a barrier. Lack of understanding, different priorities and disparaging comments were some of the means these important stakeholders used to hinder champions' commitment. In addition, the withholding of their support, for example by not backing a flexible working solution, passing on critical



information, or using their authority to push a decision through, often impeded rapid progress.

Such disheartening accounts of unsupportive and obstructive behavior were offset by the positive descriptions of how our champions reacted. In general, they were strong-willed individuals, who set targets for themselves and kept their eyes on the ball. Acutely aware of their circle of influence and power, they were insistent and persistent and strove to involve others and make them part of the solution. We term this set of behaviors "persistent persuasion".

Factors triggering motivation and action

We identified various factors that prompt top male managers to engage in gender equity efforts. These can be grouped into internal and external triggers.

On the "internal" side, a champion's personal values and beliefs, shaped by his experiences, has the biggest impact. The **feeling of responsibility**, for an employee, team or organization – which



is closely related to an individual's **personal values and beliefs** – also acts as a motivator towards engagement.

In regard to “external” factors, our research suggests that a well-established business case creates a sense of urgency in top male managers to take action.

Organizational structures, manifested through processes, agreements, reward systems and rules and regulations also influence managers’ behaviors and thus play a vital role in creating an equitable workplace and culture. **Governments and external regulators**, meanwhile, influence companies and their decision-makers by implementing legal frameworks and enforcing standards.

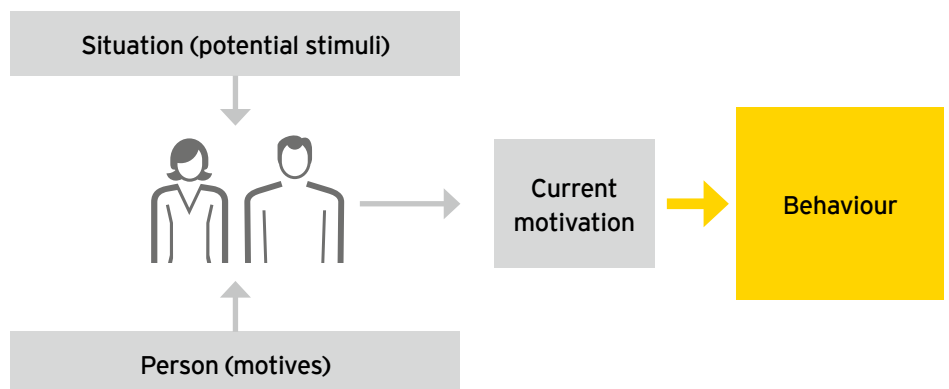
Social trends, including generational differences and shifting values, put additional pressure on organizations and their leaders and can be important triggers for action.

Defining motivation

Motivation is the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. In everyday usage, the term motivation refers to why a person does something. This study looks at why top male managers engage in activities to establish gender equity at work. To attain insight into someone’s motivation, the researcher needs an extensive understanding of the person and the factors which influence his behavior.⁷ Everyday knowledge can only become scientifically substantiated if systematically analyzed. This study uses the critical incident technique (see box on Methodology, p. 15) to achieve a holistic understanding of the champion’s individual reality in his specific engagement example.

Motivation derives from the interaction of internal and external factors. The influencing sources are varied and always person-specific. Internal factors are drivers, instincts, or learnings from experience and come from “inside” the person. External factors, on the other hand, are incentives, external stimuli, or rewards and lie “outside” the person.⁸ Figure 1 illustrates how external (situational stimuli) and internal (personal motives) interplay and lead to the current state of motivation, eventually triggering a certain behavior.

Figure 1. Interaction of personal and situational factors as origin of motivation to trigger a certain behavior.⁹



Championing gender equity

Interviews with our selected champions revealed two primary types of supportive action leading towards greater gender equity: flexibility (creating flexible working solutions by addressing the different life-phases of employees) and sponsorship (backing female talent to an extent that went beyond mentoring programs). The following chapters provide examples of how champions employ flexibility and sponsorship and show what successful action for gender equity can look like.

Establishing flexibility

One champion described how he supported an employee who wanted to keep her managerial role and pursue her career, after she became a mother. He enabled his protégé to retain her position and fulfill her family commitments by working mainly from home. This anecdote demonstrates an effective sponsor-protégé relationship.

“Two years ago, one of my leading female managers had a child. Six months later, we got talking about her plans for the future and Mrs. X signaled that she wanted to get back to work. However, she wanted to work from home, so she could stay with her child.

“To be honest, I hardly know anyone in our company in a leading position who works mainly from home. After talking with my managers and colleagues,

I realized I was the only one who believed the undertaking could be successful. None of them expressed their doubts directly; their comments were more subtle. They were more along the lines of: ‘Oh... ok, if you think that you can schedule her on your projects... no problem.’ ‘Well, that’s foul play’ I thought. It meant I had to take full responsibility. No support from the company, no support from my superiors. I would be accountable if something went wrong.

“‘Well, OK,’ I said to myself, ‘I truly value Mrs. X. She has done very good work in the past and I am sure she can do it.’ So, we had an informal agreement that she could work from home whenever she wanted and would get all the necessary equipment, such as a laptop and cell phone. She came to the office for important meetings and participated in essential training.

We had regular discussions, agreeing on specific tasks and responsibilities and identifying possible obstacles and how to tackle them. I assigned her tasks which had a longer delivery timeframe. And... it worked out perfectly! I would certainly do it again. Such part-time home working is a simple, ideal option and I do not understand why my company does not offer such solutions more pro-actively. It’s a mystery to me.”

Senior manager,
global business consultancy

The female manager described above received an excellent performance rating and was promoted the following year.



Champion profiles

Our gender diversity champions are top managers from middle-sized and large companies (with between 10,000 and more than 50,000, or less than 50,000, employees respectively). The sectors with the highest representation of champions are the consumer goods and financial services industries. All interviewees are male and from German-based companies. They have an average age of 45.8 years, although they range from between 38 and 60, and have an average of 11.3 years of management experience. Three quarters are in top-level management (most with "head of department" titles), with the remainder being executive board members.

Who is a champion?

A champion accepts formal or informal responsibility for fostering gender equity. They pro-actively try to influence and reshape their organizational culture by taking action to create a workplace which fosters respect, inclusiveness, equal opportunities and acceptance of gender differences.

In practice, many people who are not in formal diversity management roles champion change in their workplaces by personal example. Such individuals, especially men, can be powerful ambassadors and role models for change.

Providing sponsorship

Another way to champion gender diversity is to focus on young female talent and support individuals during their first professional orientation phase. The lack of female role models and senior sponsors can hinder the aspirations and career prospects of young women. Male champions can play an active role in guiding them in their decision-making and encouraging them to pursue opportunities they might not have considered.

In the following interview, a manager describes how he guided a young woman in her career orientation phase. His protégé had a strong scientific background and had never experienced a corporate environment. She was unsure whether she should pursue a career in science or business or find a job where she could combine both. This story illustrates how, by sharing experience and leadership

wisdom and exploiting networks strategically, a champion can facilitate a protégé's progress.

• "I have had a mentee for more than eight months now. She is doing a PhD in political science at a university in Berlin. She had asked me to be her mentor and to support her in exploring career options. She was at a crossroads, trying to figure out whether she should pursue a career in academia, for which she had already been working long and hard, or go in a different direction towards the corporate world.

• "We have been meeting every four to six weeks for intensive sessions of three to four hours. In the beginning, conversation topics revolved around 'How does the corporate world work? What might be the suitable functional area?' Such insights were useful for her, as she had never experienced the business world. However, even more valuable were sessions with self-reflecting exercises and feedback about her personality and her effect on others. It is quite different "growing up" in a scientific environment, than in a corporate context.



"I wanted to offer her specific, real-life, hands-on experience. Unfortunately, none of my colleagues were enthusiastic about supporting her. It was almost impossible to convince them to provide work experience or an intern position. My department was no problem, but I wanted to give her a broader overview and asked other departments to participate. None of them were like: 'Yeah, of course, she can stay with us for a couple of days. Great!' I had to convince them first and say: 'See, it is my personal motivation, I want to offer and show as much as possible to this woman. I want to provide her with a solid basis for decision-making about her future.' That is how I approached my mandate."

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

After completing the mentoring program, the young woman had a clear vision of a role in which she could combine the worlds of business and science. Currently, she is applying for her dream job, using the knowledge she gained during the program.

This example illustrates how a mentoring mandate can turn into powerful sponsorship. While a mentor advises and coaches his mentee, a sponsor's support goes even further: raising his mentee's profile and acting as her advocate (see box on Mentoring vs. Sponsorship, p. 13).

Another champion reported how he hired an experienced female manager, with the understanding that she would take on a leadership position after completing her

probationary period. In the event, she was required to prove her capabilities at an internal leadership assessment center, before she could take up the promised role. The champion's continuing support helped diffuse the new manager's frustration and ensured she passed the assessments successfully. This story shows that a champion's personal dedication is a powerful means of establishing women in leadership positions: from investing time in coaching a protégé to standing up for her in front of other decision-makers.

"Last year, I had a management position to fill which included functional and disciplinary responsibilities for a team. Mrs. X was the perfect candidate and, from the beginning, the HR department and I agreed that, after completion of the mandatory probationary period, she would take over managerial responsibilities.

"In our company, external managers have to go through a leadership assessment center in order to lead others. HR reassured me that this would be a formality for Mrs. X, as she had extensive leadership experience from her previous job. Six months later, everything looked very different. HR insisted that Mrs. X had to go through the complete formal qualification process, which included several stages, such as a preliminary interview, a psychometric test and several rounds at the assessment center.

"Well – as you can imagine – this was very frustrating for Mrs. X. She had been promised a management position when she signed the contract and now

she had to jump through hoops. She is a very ambitious person and had worked hard to get where she is and suddenly all that was questioned. I needed to make her feel that I believed in her and was standing right behind her. I did not want her to panic. As for the HR department, as I did not want to risk any escalation, I opted for a diplomatic, yet determined approach. I made it quite clear that I disagreed with their handling of the situation, but agreed to the assessment process.

"I have gone through the qualification process myself and knew exactly what was important. Mrs. X and I had a couple of preparation sessions, which included intense discussion about how she could come across well and avoid unnecessary mistakes. After her first interview, which was rather negative, we analyzed the weak points and tried to work on them. In my opinion Mrs. X had great potential, but the HR department had doubts. So, we spent many hours preparing for the other qualification steps. I was determined to help her achieve the position – not only because I had promised it – but because I experienced, every day, what a capable and talented management executive she was."

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

The woman passed her assessments and is now a highly successful and prominent manager in her organization.



Mastering barriers

Barriers

In discussing the barriers to gender diversity they had experienced themselves, as mentioned above, our champions each cited conflicts with “Top management” and/or “Colleagues”. Research in conflict management supports these findings; identifying the interpersonal level as the main source of conflicts in otherwise well-functioning organizations.¹¹

Interpersonal conflicts involve two people holding different opinions on an issue, approach or overall target.¹² In the critical incidents described by our champions, their actions were often met by a profound lack of understanding or dismissed as unimportant. Comments ranging from “Sorry, but I have more important things to do” to “I have a business to run, but good luck to you” indicated that efforts to promote female talent were not considered a priority by direct managers or colleagues. Such messages discounted the champion’s commitment as unimportant, worthless and unnecessary.

A number of champions also described barriers at an intrapersonal level, that is, conflicts they experienced within themselves. Examples of intrapersonal barriers can be self-doubt, lack of ambition or low self-esteem.¹³ Sponsors and champions can often provide an external perspective and support their protégés in overcoming these “mental barriers” through coaching and feedback.

Our champions developed a variety of tactics for dealing with the barriers they encountered. Without exception, they displayed a dogged determination to support their female protégés and made every effort to gather more supporters along the way. Three key tactics can be identified: **persistent persuasion**, **offering alternatives** and **authority**. The following interview excerpts exemplify these approaches and can serve as good practice models when facing barriers to gender diversity.

Persistent persuasion

Persistent persuasion describes supportive action by a champion which goes beyond “giving advice”. It entails systematic coaching of the protégé and persistent “knocking on doors” of key stakeholders and decision-makers, such as other managers, to get them on board. One champion reflected on how his most powerful weapon was his personal commitment and insistence, constantly addressing the issue and keeping focused on the desired outcome:

“I do not think that it was a powerful argument that triggered support, but rather my personal insistence and determination. I kept repeating: ‘It is important to me’ and ‘I want her in this role, so please support her’. I think what made the difference was the fact that I stuck to my line. There was no impressive argument, like ‘If we promote this woman, we’ll get really good press’ or ‘It’s a good PR story’.

“I think it was my personal engagement which changed others’ minds. A sense of: ‘Well, if he’s making such an effort, there must be something to it. He is not doing it for nothing, so maybe it is worthwhile co-operating’.”

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

Offering alternatives

When trying to break down resistance from other stakeholders, some champions described how they consciously provided alternative solutions. In doing so, they acknowledged many different interests and demonstrated sensitivity and diplomatic skill. One champion suggested an alternative and flexible working model to suit the needs of both his protégé and his executive board:

“We [the champion, executive board and protégé, Mrs. X] had numerous discussions about what Mrs. X could accomplish and what was necessary for her new position. I suggested a couple of alternative options and in the end succeeded in finding a solution that was acceptable to both parties. Mrs. X could assume new responsibilities as head of the board’s secretariat and, at the same time, remain semi-retired and care for her sick husband.”

Team leader and specialist,
pharmaceutical company

Authority

Cutting through resistance, showing commitment, making decisions and achieving gender equity will always be a question of power and authority. Many champions reflected on how they used their authority to achieve their goal. One, an executive board member, described how he used his status and power to establish an exclusively female mentoring program, to give women greater exposure to senior male managers. This illustrates that managers have to be willing to “play the power card” for gender equity.

“There was a lot of discussion about whether we should establish a mentoring program for both sexes, or just for women. In the end, I decided to place the focus on women only. Some colleagues accepted it, but one board member did not.

“I did this because I realized that, although our aim was to create equal opportunities, an imbalance on one side of the scales, a deficit, if you will, currently exists. Chances are not the same for women as for men. So, I felt it was important to introduce a program that would take women’s careers forward. I did so, with full awareness and with the intention to create equity.”

Board member,
national broadcasting organization

Such examples prove that, whatever the context, progress towards gender equity requires great personal commitment and persistence.

Methodology

Qualitative interviews and critical incident technique

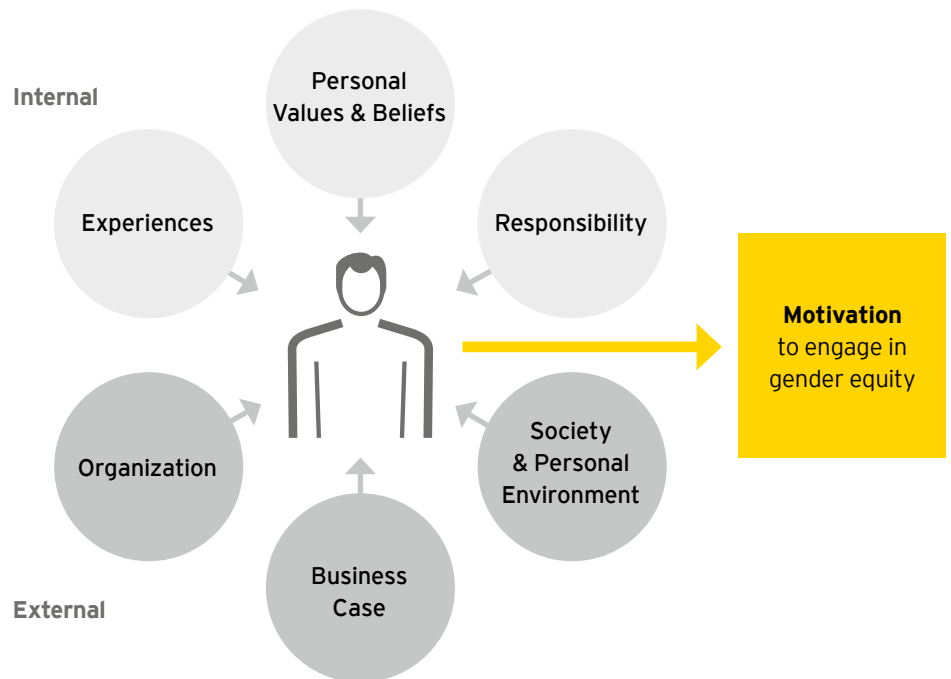
John C. Flanagan’s Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was integrated into our open question interviews to capture the champions’ knowledge effectively. Originally developed for industry in 1954, the CIT is used in various disciplines today, including human resources and marketing, as a basis for management decision-making. It is a means of capturing and analyzing specific moments of contact between a respondent and the context being analyzed. These moments, or memories, are framed as identifiable and complete “incidents” relating to the particular service or environment.¹⁴

“By an *incident* is meant any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To be *critical*, an incident must occur in a situation, where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects.”¹⁵



Drivers for male engagement towards gender equity

This chapter summarizes our findings about what motivated our champions to engage in gender equity and to actively support female advancement. The mix and weight of drivers differed from person-to-person but we identified three internal – and three external – factors which seemed particularly powerful.



Internal factors

Internal factors come from within an individual and push him or her towards a certain action.¹⁶ One of the most significant internal factors is our **personal values and beliefs**. These can be defined as “an individual’s assumptions about what is right or what is wrong, what will work or not”. Each champion said this driver played a crucial role in motivating them to take action and promote gender equity. This is to be expected as our values and beliefs impact our behavior.¹⁷ In every case, the core value of “fairness” played a decisive role.

“As for internal factors, it is clearly my personal values and beliefs. It is mostly because gender inequity does not correspond with my sense of fairness.”

Board member,
global tourism company

It is important to bear in mind that each individual’s values and beliefs are shaped differently, reflecting the home and educational environment of their early childhood, and their subsequent private and professional experiences. The following insights from our champions’ critical incidents capture key factors which motivate people to support gender equity.

Further findings suggest that the **feeling of responsibility**, for an employee, team, or organization - which relates closely to an individual’s personal values and beliefs - contributes to the gender equity impulse. In considering this driver, one champion said:

“The feeling of responsibility touches several areas. On the one hand, it is the responsibility for the organization to reach its optimum performance and to exploit all its resources. On the other, it involves responsibility for employees, including making their work environment as attractive as possible and providing opportunities for their development.”

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

Champions consistently reported that past **experiences** - both in their private and professional lives - helped shape their personal values and beliefs and feeling of responsibility. Experiences are considered internal because, back in time, they were internalized and became part of the personal value set.¹⁸ Many referred to key experiences that involved good working relationships with female colleagues or managers.

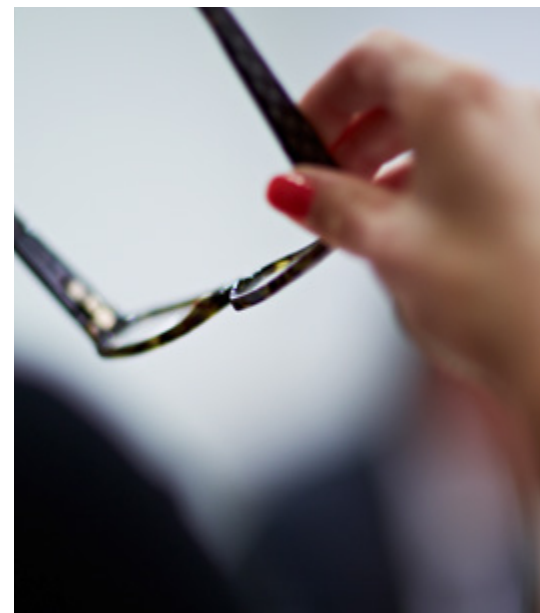
“I did my doctorate with a female professor. So, for about five years, I was her employee and she was my boss. It was a very interesting and positive experience. My working environment also had more female than male colleagues. Working with them made me understand that both sexes include very intelligent, diligent and hard-working human beings.”

Team leader and specialist,
pharmaceutical company

As for external factors, our research suggests that a well-established business case created a sense of urgency in top

male managers to take action.

Organizational structures, manifested through processes, agreements, reward systems, rules and regulations also influence managers’ behaviors and thus also play a vital role in creating an equitable and inclusive workplace and culture. In addition, **governments and external regulators** influence companies and their decision-makers by implementing legal frameworks and enforcing standards. **Social trends**, including generational differences and shifting values, can also be important triggers for action.



External factors

External influencing factors involve impulses from outside. They are considered pull factors since they influence our behavior from external sources, such as other people, societal norms or trends.¹⁹

The **business case** for gender equity was deemed an important trigger by interviewees. Three particular arguments were singled out:

- ▶ Treating employees equally leads to work motivation and satisfaction, which in turn has a positive impact on employee effectiveness.
- ▶ Companies need to engage in gender equity because it is a major competitive advantage in attracting high-potential candidates and winning the war for talents, which can alleviate the negative impacts of demographic change.
- ▶ Mixed-gender teams outperform homogeneous teams and deliver economic advantage.

“Supporting an employee who identifies with his or her task, and even excels at it, is the best thing that an organization can do. Identification, dedication and motivation are what you want in an employee because such qualities have a positive impact on organizational performance.”

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

“The key phrase here is “war for talents” – we need to acknowledge the entire talent pool and women account for half of it.”

Board member,
national broadcasting organization

“If handled correctly, the gender mix is the key to success for an organization. Companies which neglect it deprive themselves of economic advantage.”

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

Society and personal environment

Most champions cited political action, regulations or consequences from federal law as motivating factors. One manager described how the introduction of the AGG [German Act for Equal Treatment] in 2006 made him more likely to stand up for equal opportunities.

“When the AGG was introduced, we were trained on it very extensively, with an e-learning module on the new regulations. Considering this, standing up for equal opportunities is, to some extent, simply conformity to the law.”

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

Many male champions mentioned the personal barriers they had themselves experienced. For example, balancing work and family commitments in a dual-career household with children: the sort of challenges that women face every day. The following champion talked about how

his own family situation motivated him to help a female employee return to the workplace after she became a mother:

“Because I have a family myself, I could fully understand my employee’s situation. When my wife and I had another child a couple of years ago, we also had a hard time managing both our private and career lives. And, as one of my female managers wanted to get back to work after having her child, I thought to myself: ‘If I was in her position, completely dependent on my manager’s support, I would be happy to receive help’. That was my prime motivator to find a way for my employee to return to work while having enough time to care for her child.”

Senior manager,
global business consultancy

„Gender“

The **organization** and corporate structure itself also has an impact on managers' support. The interviewee below expressed how his organization's culture, assumptions, values and norms contributed strongly to his engagement in gender equity:

„Our organizational culture formally conveys the importance of treating everyone equally. It has a positive view of human beings in general and thus supports and fosters, quite naturally, a culture that promotes diversity. Behaving responsibly and caring for other people is an integral part of our values.“

Head of department,
global e-commerce company

The influencing factors identified above are interrelated: they should not be considered in isolation. According to classical motivation theory, an interaction of personal (internal) and situational (external) factors fosters motivation towards a certain behavior.²⁰ The same is true for our findings. A specific mix of factors need to be in place to trigger top male managers' motivation towards gender equity.

Talk about it! Think about it! Care about it!

Our champions' experiences show that getting involved in gender equity discussions kick-starts an awareness process. Scientific research supports these findings, suggesting that talking about issues and sharing personal stories gets people thinking and triggers a higher awareness of the core problems. This, in turn, encourages people to become engaged in solving a particular challenge. Talking about and reflecting what equity means for men and women, getting to the core of gender diversity, is what eventually makes individuals realize that it is necessary to care and act accordingly. Top managers hold the key to accelerating change towards gender equity. If they, as role models in an organization, care about treating all employees fairly, the spark may ignite others' commitment and create a momentum for change. Every advocate can become a multiplier towards an environment which works to establish, foster and value gender equity.

Internal	Personal examples
Personal values and beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Belief in fair treatment of all employees ▶ Personal values, beliefs and attitudes, shaped by socialization process ▶ Belief that men and women are equally capable to fill leading positions ▶ Altruism ▶ Religious beliefs shaped values
Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Own boss engages in gender initiatives ▶ Good experience with female boss ▶ Female colleagues work as hard as male colleagues
Feeling of responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Helping employees' career advancement ▶ Creating equal opportunities for both men and women

External	Personal examples
Business case (Economic factors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Supporting motivated employees has positive impact on company's performance ▶ War for talents – half of the talent pool is female ▶ Mixed-gender teams are an economic advantage
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Company introduces AGG e-learning tool ▶ Female top managers serve as role models ▶ Organization strategically pursues gender equity ▶ Organization-wide campaign (to assume responsibility)
Society and personal environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Introduction of AGG ▶ Quota discussion ▶ Growing-up in GDR (socialist environment) ▶ Own mother worked ▶ Wife is a working mother

German Act for Equal Treatment (AGG)

Recommendations



Our champions' stories illustrate what types of actions and support can create greater gender equity. While companies may have clear strategic objectives, a robust business case and a long-term plan to achieve gender equity, our champions illustrate how real change can only occur when these are actually put into practice. In reality, it is everyday actions – personal commitment from champions, active advocacy for female talent, committed and dedicated communication – that make the difference.

How to accelerate progress to gender equity in your organization

1. Win commitment from management.

As holders of power and privilege, managers shape the strategy and determine the organization's development. Increasing their buy-in and commitment towards gender equity is a critical success factor

- a. Establish and communicate a shared corporate standard that articulates the organization's value of diversity and inclusiveness. Make gender equity goals part of the organization's strategic KPIs.
- b. Create a company-specific business case for gender equity, which clearly outlines the benefits for the organization, such as greater innovation, better performance, improved retention and a stronger employer brand.
- c. Establish a link between achievements in gender equity and overall performance standards, for example, a connection with reward and recognition.
- d. Develop processes that benchmark your organization against other companies.
- e. Create specific and tangible opportunities for male managers to participate actively in diversity initiatives. For instance, by becoming a mentor, hosting discussion groups, sponsoring training, shaping communications and chairing or sponsoring employee resource groups.

2. Establish a culture of sponsorship.

Organizations which foster sponsorship achieve greater gender equity

- a. Establish sponsorship programs by facilitating and fostering sponsor-protégé pairings. (Provide infrastructure by supplying tools and guidelines, articulating expectations of the sponsor role and establishing forums to follow up and share sponsorship experiences.)
- b. Highlight good sponsorship examples via management and employee communications channels, such as newsletters and the corporate intranet.
- c. Illustrate the importance of committed leaders and the impact of role models for organizational change, for instance, by referring to, and discussing, research on leadership commitment and male champions.



3. Establish flexible work solutions.

Meet the needs of employees' different life-phases

- a. Identify employees' needs at different stages of their lives, for example, via surveys or interviews, employee networks and resource groups.
- b. Create and establish opportunities for flexibility, e.g. by providing guidance on how to effectively manage parental leave or other breaks from work; offering advice for employees and introducing a systematic reintegration approach after career breaks, for example by providing work-time/ workplace flexibility or job-sharing.
- c. Encourage top management to both act as role models for flexible working and pro-actively offer flexible working solutions to employees.

4. Foster leadership development.

- a. Audit your leader selection and promotion process: look for specific examples where leaders have previously demonstrated inclusive behaviors, built diverse teams or championed diversity efforts. Past behavior is a primary indicator of future behavior.
- b. Enrich leadership training with relevant real-life examples of support for gender equity (this will contribute to creating awareness, attracting attention and eventually fostering commitment of managers).
- c. Include elements in leadership development that focus on creating self-awareness, such as competencies in unconscious bias, gender-neutral language and argumentation.
- d. In the leadership development curriculum, cover the legal aspects of gender equity, such as anti-discrimination.

5. Connect male champions.

Strengthen their network

- a. Put male champions in touch with each other and provide infrastructure and logistical support to strengthen their networks, for example, by facilitating formal or informal gatherings and the sharing of stories, experiences and best practice through virtual channels.
- b. Get ideas and inspiration from the outside, by connecting champions across organizations and industries. Introduce male managers to male champions who actively support gender equity.
- c. Provide platforms and opportunities to address perceived barriers and how they can be overcome, for example, through workshops and focus groups.
- d. Provide support for male champions through HR/diversity professionals.



dual career network
sponsorship
different life-phases
flexibility
mentoring
social trends
top management
jobsharing
defining motivation
personal values
persistent persuasion

References

- 1 Wippermann, C., Frauen in Führungspositionen – Barrieren und Brücken. A project of the Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth, 2010.
- 2 Schilling Report 2012, www.schillingreport.ch, retrieved January 2013. Grant Thornton, Frauenanteil im oberen Management, 2011, <http://www.grant-thornton.ch>, retrieved January 2013. Austrian Chamber of Labour, Frauen in Geschäftsführung und Aufsichtsrat – Report 2011, 2011. McKinsey & Company, Women Matter 5: Making the breakthrough, 2012.
- 3 Wippermann, C., Frauen in Führungspositionen – Barrieren und Brücken. A project of the Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth, 2010.
- 4 Eagly, A. H., and Carli, L. L. (2007), "Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 85, Issue 9, 63-71.
- 5 Ibidem. Stroh, L. K., Langlands, C. L., and Simpson, P. A., Shattering the Glass Ceiling in the New Millennium, In: Stockdale, M. S. and Crosby, F. J. (Eds.), *The Psychology and Management of Workplace Diversity* (pp. 147-167), Blackwell Publishing, 2010. Hewlett, S. (2002). Executive Women and the Myth of Having it All. *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 80, Issue 4, 66-73.
- 6 Schein, E. H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3rd edition, Wiley, 2004. Wippermann, C., Frauen in Führungspositionen – Barrieren und Brücken. A project of the Federal Ministry for Family, the Elderly, Women and Youth, 2010.
- 7 Rothermund, K. and Eder, A., *Allgemeine Psychologie: Motivation und Emotion*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011.
- 8 Ibidem. Zimbardo, P. G., and Gerrig, R. J. (Eds.), *Psychologie*, 16th edition, Pearson-Studium, 2006.
- 9 Figure adopted from "Allgemeine Psychologie: Motivation und Emotion" by K. Rothermund A. Eder, 2011, pp. 91-94.
- 10 Herminia Ibarra, H., Carter, N. M., and Silva, C. (2010), "Why Men Still Get More Promotions than Women: Your high-potential females need more than just well-meaning mentors", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 88, Issue 9, 79-86.
- 11 Harss, C., Liebich, D. and Michalka, M. (Eds.), *Konfliktmanagement für Führungskräfte. Lösungsstrategien, Mediation und Arbeitsrecht*, Verlag Vahlen, 2011.
- 12 Ibidem.
- 13 Ibidem.
- 14 Flanagan, J. C. (1954), The Critical Incident Technique, *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 51, Issue 4, 327-358. White, F. M. and Locke, E. A. (1981), "Perceived Determinants of High and Low Productivity in Three Occupational Groups: A Critical Incident Study", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 18, Issue 4, 375-87. Bitner, M. J. (1990), Evaluating service encounters: the effects of physical surroundings and employee responses, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54, Issue 2, 69-82.
- 15 Flanagan, J. C. (1954), The Critical Incident Technique, *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 51, Issue 4, 327-358.
- 16 Kirkwood, J. (2009), Motivational factors in a push-pull theory of entrepreneurship, *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 24. Issue 5, 346-364.
- 17 Zimbardo, P. G., and Gerrig, R. J. (Eds.), *Psychologie*, 16th edition, Pearson-Studium, 2006.
- 18 Ibidem.
- 19 Kirkwood, J. (2009), Motivational factors in a push-pull theory of entrepreneurship, *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 24. Issue 5, 346-364.
- 20 Rothermund, K. and Eder, A., *Allgemeine Psychologie: Motivation und Emotion*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011.

Impress

Ernst & Young GmbH
Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft
Mittlerer Pfad 15
70499 Stuttgart

Phone +49 711 9881 0
Fax +49 711 9881 550

www.ey.com





About the global EY organization

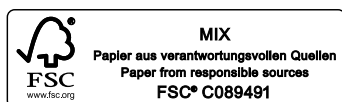
The global EY organization is a leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. We leverage our experience, knowledge and services to help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We are ideally equipped for this task - with well trained employees, strong teams, excellent services and outstanding client relations. Our global purpose is to drive progress and make a difference by building a better working world - for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

The global EY organization refers to all member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited (EYG). Each EYG member firm is a separate legal entity and has no liability for another such entity's acts or omissions. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. For more information, please visit www.ey.com.

In Germany, EY has 22 locations. In this publication, "EY" and "we" refer to all German member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited.

© 2014 Ernst & Young GmbH
Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft
All Rights Reserved.

BKL 1410-066
ED None



In line with EY's commitment to minimize its impact on the environment, this document has been printed on FSC®-certified paper that consists of 60% recycled fibers.

This publication contains information in summary form and is therefore intended for general guidance only. Although prepared with utmost care this publication is not intended to be a substitute for detailed research or the exercise of professional judgment. Therefore no liability for correctness, completeness and/or currentness will be assumed. It is solely the responsibility of the readers to decide whether and in what form the information made available is relevant for their purposes. Neither Ernst & Young GmbH Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft nor any other member of the global EY organization can accept any responsibility. On any specific matter, reference should be made to the appropriate advisor.

www.de.ey.com