

OBSERVE

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WOMEN, DIVERSITY AND THE PATH TO GREATER INCLUSION

GUEST EDITOR

Julia Gillard,

former Prime Minister
of Australia and Chair of
the Global Institute for
Women's Leadership



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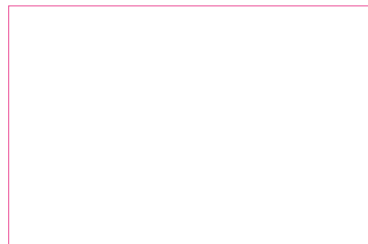
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PHOTOS OF JULIA GILLARD BY DAVID TETT

About GIWL
Chaired by the Hon Julia Gillard AC, the only woman to have served as Prime Minister of Australia, the Global Institute for Women's Leadership works to create a world in which being a woman is not a barrier to becoming a leader in any field, nor a factor contributing to negative perceptions of an individual's leadership. Based at King's College London, the institute brings together rigorous research, practice and advocacy to better understand and address the causes of women's underrepresentation in leadership positions across sectors and countries and the way gender negatively impacts the evaluation of women leaders.
kcl.ac.uk/giwl

Odgers Berndtson kindly invited me to guest-edit the latest issue of *Observe* and it is my pleasure to introduce an edition focusing on women's leadership.

While the publication is primarily about women, that does not mean it is only for women. Gender equality is something that affects everyone and, as you will read, has the potential to benefit everyone, too. We all lose out if it is dismissed as simply a "women's issue".

My commitment to furthering the cause of women's leadership is a product of the life I have lived. Yet I know more is needed to achieve equality than the telling of personal anecdotes. Businesses need hard evidence on which to base change strategies.

Generating that kind of research is the mission of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) at King's College London, which I now chair.

Launched in 2018, GIWL is already looking to actively partner with businesses. I invite you to get in touch at giwl@kcl.ac.uk.

I hope that you find in these pages material that informs, inspires and ignites new efforts in your business to achieve a world where every girl and every boy can look forward to fair and equal treatment.

Hon Julia Gillard AC
Chair of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership



Observe

To read any of the great content featured in *Observe* over the past four years, go to odgersberndtson.com and click on the 'Insights' tab

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Five stories from around the world that highlight some of the latest diversity and inclusion issues

LEGISLATION

CALIFORNIA LEADING THE WAY

To combat the still low numbers of women serving on corporate boards in the US some lawmakers have decided to take radical action. In the autumn of 2018 the California state legislature passed a bill that requires every publicly traded company with its principal offices in California to have at least one woman on its board by the end of 2019. Companies would need up to three directors by the end of 2021, depending on the overall number of board seats. On signing the bill into law Governor Jerry Brown said: "I don't minimize the potential flaws that indeed may prove fatal to its ultimate implementation. Nevertheless, recent events in Washington DC – and beyond – make it crystal clear that many are not getting the message."



California state Capitol building

WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

ASIAN MATTERS

More women are in line manager roles in Asia but the broader diversity and inclusion (D&I) agenda needs greater support in many organisations, according to Hays' latest *Diversity and Inclusion – Asia* report. A total of 58 per cent of participants said they report to a male line manager – an improvement on 2017's figures when 63 per cent of

respondents reported to a male line manager. Malaysia had the highest proportion of respondents reporting to a female line manager (46 per cent) and Japan the lowest (28 per cent).

Simon Lance, managing director of Hays Greater China, said: "Actively supporting for diversity is having a greater impact on the quality of an employer's brand amongst today's employees and job hunters."

[hays.com.sg](https://www.hays.com.sg)



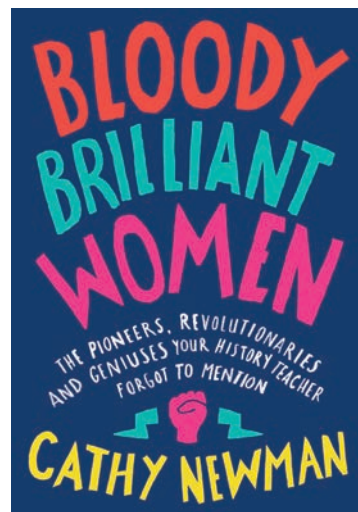
BOOKS

BLOODY BRILLIANT WOMEN: THE PIONEERS, REVOLUTIONARIES AND GENIUSES YOUR HISTORY TEACHER FORGOT TO MENTION

by Cathy Newman, published by William Collins, p/b £9.99/\$21/€12

Now out in paperback, Newman's engaging book looks at the pioneering women who defied the odds to make careers for themselves and alter the course of modern history; women who achieved what they achieved while dismantling hostile, entrenched views about their place in society. Their role in transforming Britain is fundamental, far greater than has generally been acknowledged. Who remembers engineer and motorbike racer Beatrice Shilling, whose ingenious device for the Spitfire's Rolls-Royce Merlin fixed an often-fatal flaw? Or Dorothy Lawrence, the journalist who achieved her ambition to become a WWI correspondent by pretending to be a man? And developmental biologist Anne McLaren, whose work in genetics paved the way for in vitro fertilisation? Newman's book sets the record straight.

Newman is one of the main studio presenters for the UK's *Channel 4* news programme.



CONFERENCES

A MEETING OF MINDS

The world's largest conference on gender equality and the health, rights, and wellbeing of girls and women takes place in Vancouver, Canada between 3 and 6 June 2019. The Women Deliver 2019 conference will focus on power, and how it can drive – or hinder – progress and change. The conference aims to examine power operating at three levels: the individual's power, structural power, and the power of movements.

[wd2019.org](https://www.wd2019.org)



FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

AFRICA RISING

The number of women-owned businesses in Africa has seen a noticeable rise in recent years across sectors such as IT, oil, mining and aviation. One of the most high profile female entrepreneurs is Kenyan businesswoman Njeri Rionge. She began modestly, selling yoghurt at schools in Nairobi, moving on to a succession of small businesses. Today Rionge is one of the leading investors in the IT sector in Africa. She co-founded Wananchi Online, East Africa's first mass market Internet service provider. Today it is the region's leading Internet business, valued at \$173 million. Rionge hasn't stopped there. She has set up business and health care consultancies, one of Kenya's largest startup incubators and a booming digital marketing agency. Importantly for Rionge she ensures she passes on the knowledge and skills she has acquired in her business career to young entrepreneurs in her country, helping them grow their own businesses.

[africa.com](https://www.africa.com)



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GENDER EQUALITY IS GOOD FOR EVERYONE

PROFESSOR ROSIE CAMPBELL, Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership and Professor of Politics at King's College London, asserts that women *and* men stand to gain



PHOTOS: DAVID TETT

At the Global Institute for Women's Leadership we understand that transformational change in the pursuit of gender equality in the workplace will bring benefits to men as well as women. Efforts to promote women that fail to take account of employees' multiple identities can only take us so far.¹ Many organisations have seen the progress

of women into leadership positions flatline or even fall back after initial improvements. The research base suggests that the failure to eradicate barriers to women's progress, despite decades of investment and innovation, are at least in part explained by the unintended consequences of some diversity initiatives. An emphasis on diversity instead of inclusion can create an environment where members of

majority groups in organisations can feel that their opportunities to progress are being narrowed and can lead to a backlash and a negative working culture.²

The promotion of flexible working is one of the most important tools an organisation can employ to improve the recruitment, retention and promotion of women, but to be effective it must be extended as an option for everyone. →



¹ hbr.org/2017/08/deloittes-radical-attempt-to-reframe-diversity

² Cundiff, J. L., Ryuk, S., & Cech, K. (2018). 'Identity-safe or threatening? Perceptions of women-targeted diversity initiatives'. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 21(5), pp745-766



DAVID TETT

“

We rarely hear the term work/family balance ... and instead work/life reconciliation is the common parlance

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Where flexible working is framed as an option only for parents, usually women, it can have the effect of creating a two-tier culture or a 'mummy track' where more women remain in employment after having children, but fail to progress to senior positions.³ The alternative inclusive approach of offering flexible working to all brings multiple benefits to organisations in the form of greater loyalty and retention of staff and a healthier⁴, happier and more productive workforce, alongside an increased supply of talent and a more cooperative organisational culture.

The language we use to discuss flexibility has changed to acknowledge that a happy and productive workforce must balance the demands of employment with the other business, of being alive. We rarely hear the term work/family balance in contemporary debate and instead work/life reconciliation is the common parlance. This is progress, but of course work is still life, in fact the majority of our adult waking lives, and all employees perform better in the workplace if they are not suffering from disabling work stress or work/life balance conflict. This is true

of all human beings, no matter where they are situated in the organisational hierarchy. A recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* emphasised the benefits to organisations of CEOs carving out time for family, hobbies and sleep.⁵

Family is of course a significant part of the balancing act for many of us at different stages of our lives, whether we have caring demands for young children or older relatives. Professional men are increasingly more involved in caring for loved ones, as norms about what a good father looks like change⁶

3 Doris Ruth Eikhof, (2012) 'A double-edged sword: twenty-first century workplace trends and gender equality', *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 27 Issue: 1, pp7-22

4 Ropponen, A., Käsälä, M., Rantanen, J., & Toppinen-Tanner, S. (2016). 'Organizational Initiatives for Promoting Employee Work-Life Reconciliation Over the Life Course. A Systematic Review of Intervention Studies'. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 6(3), pp79-100

5 hbr.org/2018/07/the-leaders-calendar

6 workplaceinsight.net/over-half-of-men-want-to-be-more-involved-in-childcare-major-new-report-claims/

7 insidehr.com.au/hobbies-stimulate-more-creativity-better-performance/

8 Wagner, U., Gais, S., Haider, H., Verleger, R. and Born, J. 'Sleep inspires insight'. *Nature*, 2004, 427: pp352-355

9 wafproject.org



CHARISSE KENON ON UNSPLASH

and family structures shift to include more single parents, blended families and same-sex parents. But, beyond the demands of family, finding time for other interests and pursuits⁷ and of course sleep⁸ are essential to enhancing creativity and wellbeing. As our economies change in response to the fourth industrial revolution, creativity will continue to be of increasing importance. Acknowledging and supporting the physical and mental health needs of 21st century workforces requires us all to think about how the blending of work and private life can be managed in a way that is not damaging to our health and productivity. Recognising, respecting and accommodating employees' commitments outside of the workplace will go a long way to addressing these issues.⁹ Responding to the desire of many employers for flexibility, with responsibility, will allow organisations to recruit and retain not just more talented women but millennial men.

An inspiring example of an inclusion approach with the potential to radically improve the working environment, job satisfaction and productivity is 'Be You at BUPA'. ■

BE YOU AT BUPA

NAOMI ATTWOOD, PEOPLE DIRECTOR CENTRE, TALENT & LEADERSHIP BUPA

Instead of focusing on diversity or the differences between employees, Bupa's People Team puts the emphasis on inclusion as a means to foster a culture of openness, support and treating all people well. Bupa encourages avenues of communication for people with common needs who may want to share and learn from each other. These are organic networks supported by the People Team. In 2018 Bupa launched 'Be You At Bupa,' pledging Bupa's commitment to promoting and celebrating diversity and inclusion, encouraging everyone to bring their true selves to work.

Flexibility is something we believe is critical to the initiative; flexibility has a direct impact on attracting a broader range of people to Bupa. Many environments that are considered

inherently inflexible can be made to flex with a little creativity. Naomi has prior experience leading call centres, which can be notoriously inflexible working environments but she believes changes can be made whilst meeting business and customer needs. As an example, in one centre Naomi managed, shift management was handed over to the employees, all the various shifts were available on the wall of the call centre and colleagues could swap shifts amongst themselves. As long as the hours were adequately covered, and people were adequately trained, it didn't matter who was on each shift.

A key element of Bupa's employee health and wellbeing programme is Performance Energy, a resilience-building initiative to help people manage everyday pressures. Understanding and respecting colleagues' non-negotiables is essential for performance energy at Bupa. The practice of openly sharing non-negotiables within our teams, understanding who

has to be where, when and why, so people can manage their time 'guilt-free' to fit everything in gives colleagues energy so they can be at their best at work. One of my non-negotiables is having breakfast and dinner with my family daily with flexibility to swap for an extra school pick-up when there are essential early or late meetings. Another colleague coaches a basketball team, and his non-negotiable is coaching nights, nothing can get in the way, we all know it, and we know where to get help if he is at coaching. Other examples are yoga classes, running at lunch time, school drops etc ... the beauty is in sharing them, and participating guilt-free instead of feeling you have to skulk out the door to attend. We all have them for all sorts of reasons and we all check in to make sure we are achieving our non-negotiables ... and we all work hard around them so our customers and stakeholders aren't impacted. It's one of my favourite things about working at Bupa.



ANDREW NEEL ON UNSPLASH

All aboard?

SUSAN C. KEATING, CEO,
Women Corporate
Directors Foundation,
on what it *really* takes
to get more women
onto corporate boards

Every leadership team today knows that constant transformation is essential to survival. Companies are prepared to replace entire technology systems, restructure their global workforces, and throw out sacred business models as part of this transformational activity. Yet despite a willingness to make monumental – and even painful – changes in these areas, one part of the organisation has remained relatively *unchanged* compared to the world outside: the boardroom.

Globally, boards have remained significantly male-dominated, with only incremental progress being made towards a more gender-balanced boardroom. In S&P 500 company boards in the US, 24 per cent of the directors are women, while the number is just under 29 per cent in the FTSE 100. Germany has a similar story: on the supervisory boards of the 424 largest public companies there, women represent less than one third of the seats (29.7 per cent). Among companies in the Tokyo Stock Exchange's First Section, women hold just over 10 per cent of the board seats. Singapore's top 100 primary-listed companies have 13.1 per cent female representation on their boards. Across Latin and South America, the percentage of board seats held by women is 7.2 per cent. The numbers are increasing, but progress needs to move much more quickly. →

IKON



Best-practice boards are making progress. Understanding their fiduciary duty, many boards and their nominating committees have been slating women directors. Numerous pieces of research in the US and other countries – from MSCI, McKinsey, Harvard Kennedy School, and more – have shown the link between having more women on board and stronger financial performance, better oversight over underperforming CEOs, and greater employee productivity growth.

Although the business case for having more women on boards has been well documented over the past decade, progress toward more gender parity is not happening fast enough. WCD recognises that more specific actions are needed to get more women onto boards, and support them once they are there. In a number of countries, of course – including many in EMEA, but also India, Malaysia and others – the government has taken the matter into its own hands, establishing quotas for the number of women that companies must have on their board. WCD members' opinions on quotas run the gamut – from actively supporting and writing the legislation, to ardently standing for deregulation – and so WCD as an organisation does not take a firm stance on quotas per se. However, WCD supports efforts of all members focused toward increasing gender parity in the boardroom. There are in fact many tools that can be used to drive gender parity in the boardroom, and it will take executing effectively on a number of these to get to where we want to be.

Having 2,400 members – the vast majority of whom serve on large publicly-traded or private company boards, spread across six continents – means that we are aware of the common challenges that women directors everywhere face today. These are the areas essential to breaking through those challenges:

Education

A foundational aspect of WCD's mission is education – targeted not only at women board members but also board decision-makers, many of whom still believe that there is a "lack of a pipeline" of women board candidates. Thus through our conference programming – including the Asia-Pacific Institute in Tokyo in February 2019 – as well as through research papers and advisories that we publish, featuring thought leadership from women directors on topics such as cyber-risk and emerging technologies, we showcase as experts numerous women who are at the top of their industries – and who would be invaluable additions to any board. With so few female public company CEOs

available as board candidates, given limitations on the number of outside boards on which a CEO may serve, many companies are, in fact, recruiting female candidates from below the CEO level. So we seek to educate boards about this strong pipeline of women by getting their names "out there" with speaking, writing and media opportunities.

Advocacy

We are all aware of the built-in advocacy created by long-standing male networks, private clubs, all-male universities and the like. This societal reality that bleeds into the business world is a challenge to overcome. In serving as a broader voice for not only our members but for all women directors, WCD is committed to working with partners in our advocacy efforts, especially as other voices – such as BlackRock and State Street in the investor community – call for more women on boards. In 2018, WCD launched the WCD Nominating & Governance Roundtable, which brought together nominating and governance chairs, male and female, from top companies to focus on how to encourage peers to recruit diverse candidates.

Community

High-level networking has almost become indispensable to those with the highest responsibilities. As leaders ascend to the boardroom, they find that the issues they deal with and the responsibilities they bear are not understood by most. WCD provides directors an invaluable space to be able to discuss issues with peers – to share each other's experience and knowledge and wisdom, as well as share board opportunities. With chapter meetings, institutes, networking get-togethers and social media, we connect directors with others who 'get it'.

We see many more boards wanting to bring on more female directors, and they are actively seeking out qualified candidates. It's important to continue to build the next generation of board members as the demand grows. Two years ago, WCD launched BoardNext to support experienced, highly qualified, board-ready women as they are poised to step onto their first public corporate board. With these programmes, along with the increasingly strong and vibrant connections that women directors are sharing worldwide, the boardroom talent available is more powerful than ever. ■



Susan C. Keating, CEO,
Women Corporate Directors Foundation
womencorporatedirectors.org

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BREAKING



DOWN

Jude Kelly CBE, founder of the *WOW - Women of the World Festival*, tells **LOUISE HOFFMAN** about the obstacles that are still preventing women from achieving their potential – and why it will take actions, as well as words, to accelerate global change

BARRIERS



S

o important is women's potential to Jude Kelly CBE, that in early 2018 she left the prestigious role of artistic director at London's Southbank Centre to focus full time on her increasingly global initiative: the WOW – Women of the World Festival.

Launched in 2010 to celebrate women and girls, the festivals now take place in 23 countries, including Brazil, China, Pakistan, Australia, Egypt, Nigeria, the USA and the UK. With packed programmes of debates, performances, workshops and talks, the events offer the space and freedom for people of all genders to explore the obstacles that prevent women from achieving their potential. To date, approximately two million people have been involved in WOW worldwide.

"I think WOW is educating us all to understand what the global context is, in terms of women's progress," Kelly tells *Observe*. "It's also helping us to become much more active and vocal in recognising what's still to be done and in doing something about it. It's no good just being cross – you have to make change happen."

Getting down to business

In the workplace, Kelly sees similar issues facing women across the globe. "There are real structural differences in opportunity and privilege that drive women away from the chance to realise their full potential. But another key issue is the underestimation of women and women underestimating themselves – which, when you think about it, is an inevitable circular issue," says Kelly.

Far from being a genetic imprint, Kelly considers this lack of self-belief to be a product of the culture women are raised in and surrounded by on a daily basis. "If you're brought up to believe that your role is being an assistant or a

support structure to something, then the idea of stepping up to be the leader has been discouraged," she explains. "Of course, this is gradually breaking down all over the world, and there are some places where women have a good deal more confidence and authority than others, but the tendency for insecurity, self-degradation, apology or lack of confidence is everywhere.

"The real frustration," Kelly continues, "is that, wherever you are in the world, you're underneath a kind of overarching sky that theologically, and therefore philosophically, tells you that girls and women are second to boys and men. You can make progress, but any rights you're given are conditional on society allowing you to have them.

"In some of the places WOW has been, such as Somaliland, Pakistan and Nepal, there are still some rigid ideas about women's appropriate place in society. But in those areas, too, there are amazing girls and women demanding change – and able to show the benefits to the whole community of giving women an equal voice."

Balancing out the boardroom

When asked what a company misses out on by having a gender imbalance at leadership level, Kelly replies: "I think women contribute to a much more 360-degree perspective about how companies operate inside societies. It still tends to be assumed that they will take on the majority of domestic and caring duties at home, so they're generally the ones dealing with the dentists, the doctors, the schools, the care homes, the bus timetables etc. Women can therefore bring the whole community into the boardroom – and, at a time when we're grasping at how to create ethical economic viability, this is invaluable.

"After all, we can't have it both ways – we can't want companies to be the major driver of both our economic policy and our way of thinking about culture, and then negate them from the responsibility of helping to make our →

PHOTOS: THE CORNER SHOP

CHANGING ATTITUDES

Greater demand for a diverse and inclusive workplace has led to a significant shift in attitude where the onus is now firmly on men to take responsibility and mentor, sponsor and become allies to women and those who are marginalised.

Some men are unnerved by the implications of #MeToo and this is leading to a silo effect in offices around the world. David Bahnsen, a former managing director at Morgan Stanley, told Bloomberg.com: "It's creating a sense of walking on eggshells." So while it might reasonably be argued

that the #MeToo movement has transformed the working environment for women, with undoubted gains in raising awareness of male attitudes to female co-workers, a second, less welcome, effect is an increasing sense of gender segregation.

What exactly is going on? What mechanisms are there for men – particularly those in leadership positions – to see and act differently than before? Events aimed at helping men become better allies are just one important step towards addressing these issues. The Better Man Conference runs one-day events in New York and San Francisco and helps engage, support and offer resources to men who want to learn about creating a more inclusive culture. It focuses on issues including healthy masculinity, collaboration and communication to help build more balanced gender dynamics, with a focus on inclusionary leadership.

One female participant at the latest Better Man Conference, held at the end of 2018, said: "Our senior leaders found it helpful in setting a context for change and 'provoking them from gender →

How can men support female colleagues, challenge negative behaviours and support gender equality? LAURA JAMES seeks some answers

ignorance' in a safe environment."

Gender ignorance is a key factor. The process for men to unlearn deeply ingrained habits and see the world very differently is crucial but not necessarily straightforward. In 2018 the UK government-backed Women's Business Council launched its 'Men as Change Agents' document and action group, with the aim of engaging CEOs of leading listed and private businesses, and their leadership teams, to help deliver gender balance in business leadership, and close the gender pay gap.

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd, MP, then Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities in the UK government, said at the launch of the 'Men as Change Agents': "Increasing the pool of women at the top of business is important for all women, for society and for UK competitiveness. Having worked in business for many years, and seen some remarkable women, I know just how much untapped talent there is in this country and how critical the business community is to unlocking that potential. Women are an increasingly important part of the UK's continuing success and we want their skills, insight and expertise to shape our future. Male leaders are still the driving force in decision-making, and they must lead the charge, driving innovation and creating the change that we need to see."

On a global scale, the UN's HeForShe campaign is described as an "invitation for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a bold, visible and united force for a gender equal world". According to the UN the men of HeForShe aren't on the sidelines, but are working with women and with each other to build businesses, raise families, and give back to their communities.

In the US Brad Johnson, professor of psychology at the United States Naval Academy, says the reason men need to be more involved is clear. Speaking to the *Harvard Business Review* online, he said: "Men tend to be the stakeholders because they are in the positions of leadership. There may be enough



John de Regt: "I think that what men can do to help women to reach their potential is to treat them like people – empower consistently, irrespective of gender"

women to mentor other women, but they may not be in the same positions of power."

The Mentttium Corporation, based in Minnesota, offers cross-company corporate mentoring and has an established programme designed to help women advance in their careers. Founded in 1991, it now operates in more than 70 countries and across more than 200 companies.

Missy Chicre, Vice-President, Client Value at Mentttium, believes it's important for men to become allies. She said: "Men need to be talking to women at all levels and seeing what barriers they face. Men should be pushing the agenda on requiring diverse candidates for key roles. It can take more time and be more difficult, but if nobody is building accountability around that it's easy to make excuses."

When Mentttium began, the vast majority of their mentors were men, but this has changed as mentees go on to become mentors and now as well as men mentoring women the opposite is often true. In an age where the landscape has shifted so fundamentally and both men and women are navigating a new normal, it is a real benefit that men are being mentored by women in many organisations. A powerful start to supporting women is to ask them what they need, how support can be shown and how the workplace feels to them.

John de Regt, founder of JDR Consulting, which recently formed a partnership with Odgers Berndtson, has more than 35 years of executive coaching and search experience. He asks: "Would organisations benefit from more women in leadership? Yes, because having more women heightens the possibility that we move from domination to collaboration. I think that what men can do to help women to reach their potential is to treat them like people – empower consistently, irrespective of gender."

James Clarry, COO of Private Banking and Head of Lending at Coutts, became involved in the Royal Bank of Scotland's (RBS) Women Network because he felt

ILLUSTRATIONS: SHUTTERSTOCK

“
Men should be pushing the agenda on requiring diverse candidates for key roles
”



passionately about gender equality. He has said: "I attended a few of the events and it was fairly typical that if you had an audience of 100 women, there would maybe be three or four men. And yet the topics they were discussing were fantastic and completely relevant to my day job, relevant to all of our day jobs."

As a result, the RBS 'Male Allies' group was set up with the intention of getting men involved in the fight for gender equality and, within a short time, more than 1,500 men had taken the pledge.

John McKay, of McKay Coaching in Calgary, Canada, believes male-to-female mentoring allows men to understand better what motivates female co-workers. "If empathy can come to play in the broadest terms," he says, "it helps everyone understand what's driving individuals to do what they do. Men need to lean into this whole gender issue in industry."

There is empirical evidence that sponsorship and mentoring can help level the gender playing field.



John McKay: "If empathy can come to play in the broadest terms, it helps everyone understand what's driving individuals to do what they do. Men need to lean into this whole gender issue in industry and it's happening"

Research highlighted by the *Harvard Business Review* has shown that men who champion female colleagues take a different view on where the credit lies for women succeeding at a senior level. It also showed organisations with female board representation tended to outperform those with no women at the highest level. In addition, those in the top quartile for gender diversity were found to be 15 per cent more likely to outperform those in the bottom quartile.

Tara O'Sullivan, Chief Creative Officer at Skillsoft, based in New Hampshire, says many organisations are moving away from women-only training and moving toward inclusion councils and other programmes that include people in majority groups and those in less represented groups. But, she argues, the "tone at the top and the mood at the middle" must be supportive of diversity and inclusion, and that "no amount of training in the world" will address gender inequality without company-wide backing. ■

LEADING *by* EXAMPLE

Once the highest-ranked African American woman at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and now heading up JPMorgan Chase's Advancing Black Leaders strategy, **Valerie Rainford** is a force for change in workplace equality. LOUISE HOFFMAN finds out more

PHOTOS FROM THE YOUTUBE VIDEO 'WOMEN WHO BELIEVE: VALERIE RAINFORD'

A few years ago, the CEO of JPMorgan Chase went on record to admit that his company had a black talent problem. In a radical step for the financial sector, Jamie Dimon turned the spotlight not only on his own company, but the entire industry. "While we think our effort to attract and retain black talent is as good as at most other companies," he said, "it simply is not good enough."

Indeed, with 2017 statistics showing just 3 per cent of JPMorgan Chase's US-based executive or senior-level managers to be African American, 7.5 per cent Asian and 4.3 per cent Hispanic/Latino – compared to 84.3 per cent white – the launch of the company's Advancing Black Leaders (ABL) strategy

couldn't have come soon enough. At the end of 2018, it celebrated its third anniversary.

The person entrusted with the delivery of this strategy was, and is, one of America's leading financial executives, Valerie Rainford, whose diversity efforts – both inside and outside the workplace – have inspired would-be leaders across the world.

When ABL was introduced in February 2016, Rainford had already been with JPMorgan Chase for eight years. Before that, she had become the first African American woman to hold the position of Senior Vice President in the US, during a 21-year career with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. There, she also launched a diversity council and employee networking group.

Now, as Head of Advancing Black Leaders and Diversity Advancement

Strategies at JPMorgan Chase, Rainford's role involves developing strategies and programmes to attract, hire, retain and advance black people at every level of the organisation. These include increasing the junior talent pipeline, making more scholarships available, recognising performance excellence, identifying development opportunities, and providing bias-awareness training for all executive directors and managing directors.

While the name of the strategy shows a clear focus on the black community, Rainford is keen to point out that there's more to come from the company's diversity drive. "When we see an opportunity where we want to do better, we're bold enough to make the change. ABL is that kind of strategy, and we're not stopping there. We'll continually look at ways to help other communities

“

When we see an opportunity where we want to do better, we're bold enough to make the change

”

within the company," she insists.

With, it would seem, a bottomless supply of motivation, Rainford has become a key figure in the fight for workplace equality – both for the black community and for women. Outside of her main role at JPMorgan Chase, she has found time to serve on numerous diversity councils and speak at events to →

Profile

inspire leadership success in audiences of all ages. Quite rightly, this hard work is being recognised by a growing list of accolades.

She has even published her memoir through Elloree Press – a boutique publishing company that she launched specially, having grown frustrated with the commercially minded publishing giants. Now sold internationally, *Until the Brighter Tomorrow: One Woman's Courageous Climb from the Projects to the Podium* tells the story of Rainford's life, growing up in the projects as the daughter of southern sharecroppers; achieving educational success thanks to the support and work-ethic of her mother; and rising through the ranks of corporate America to achieve a catalogue of career firsts.

"For years I didn't share my story, not because I was ashamed of it but because I didn't think anyone would be interested in hearing it. I didn't want to be pitied. I didn't want anyone to feel sorry for me," she explains. "But at some point, I realised that it wasn't enough for just me to be successful, I wanted to inspire others to achieve unimaginable success as well.

"It was in telling the story that I realised its power to spark hope in others experiencing similar challenges. Every time I told it, at least one person approached me to say that the story helped them draw courage and strength to keep pushing through difficult times. So I thought to myself, if I can change one life by telling the story to small audiences, how many lives can I change if I write the story, so that people all over the world would be inspired?"

The book has since been awarded a silver medal in the Independent Book Publishers Association's Benjamin Franklin Awards for 'Best New Voice: Non-Fiction'. It also inspired the creation of an 'Until the Brighter Tomorrow' Girl Scouts badge, which is a source of particular pride for Rainford – not least because of her work in championing the advancement of women and girls.

At around the same time that she joined JPMorgan Chase, Rainford co-founded the Black Women of Influence

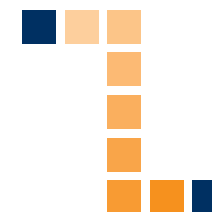


Rainford's memoir published through her own boutique publishing company

(BWOI) network, along with fellow businesswomen Marsha Haygood and Michelle Taylor-Jones, to provide peer support for professional women of colour. As well as offering a range of workshops and events to help them build successful lives and careers, each year BWOI honours trailblazers who work to open doors for women and underserved communities.

But Rainford recognises that empowerment, as well as a sense of sisterhood, needs to grow from the ground up. Through the New York-based Black Women for Black Girls Giving Circle, of which she is again a founding member, she reminds us of the duty women have to younger generations, in demonstrating positive leadership and supporting their future success. The organisation's campaign slogan 'Believe in a Black Girl' has become a pledge adopted by women around the globe.

"Little black girls that we reach out to today are our future successors – they will follow in our footsteps," says Rainford. "They need us to be role models of strength, courage and resilience – and above all, they need for us to show them that we can be sisters, that we can be successful, and that there's more than enough room for all of us to win." ■



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FUTURE PERFECT?

THE FORESIGHT FACTORY investigates what the future of work will look like for women in a world of flux

Women's lives are less hamstrung by taboos and stigmas than they have ever been, not least because they are facing less pressure to conform to traditional expectations. In China in 1990 for example, 58 per cent of women were married by the time they had reached 24, but that figure has now fallen to 35 per cent. Women have more freedom to enter and excel in the workforce than ever before: in OECD member countries, women were 41 per cent of the labour force in 1990, against 44 per cent today.

Yet many of the challenges women have always faced in work are still with us. Overwhelmingly, they still shoulder caring responsibilities, are paid less, are

less likely to reach upper echelons, face hostile attitudes from some quarters... the list goes on. Meanwhile, the world of work is in flux. Side hustles and gig work herald a future of more piecemeal and less linear career progression. An army of algorithms is rapidly advancing on the global labour market. AI and automation may well enhance many existing roles but will create work orphans, too.

What does the future of work hold for women – and what are the key trends that employers need to grasp to attract and retain future female talent?

Employers with flex appeal

Women's position as primary caregivers inevitably has a knock-on effect on their careers, and the redistribution of →

MANY OF THE CHALLENGES WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS FACED IN WORK ARE STILL WITH US

Women still shoulder caring responsibilities

Women are still paid less

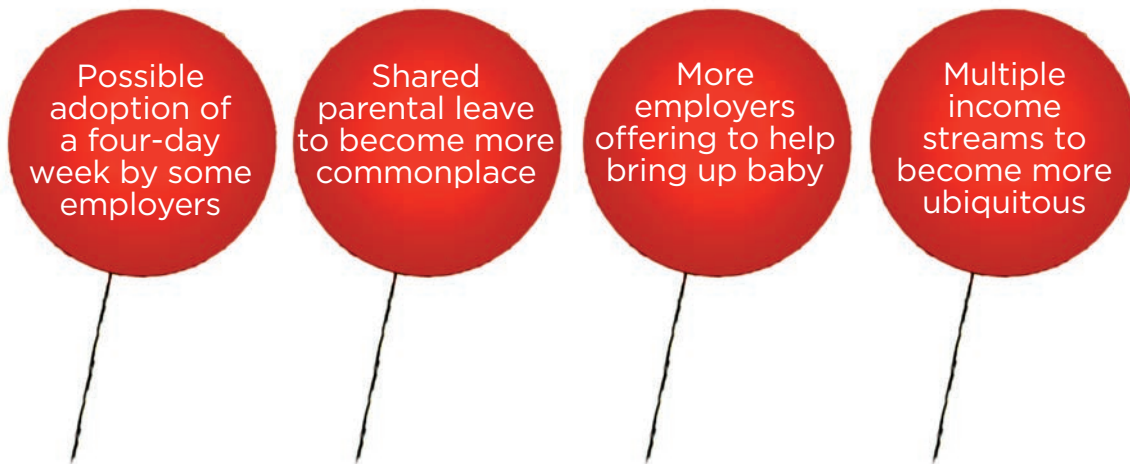
Women are still less likely to reach the upper echelons

Women still face hostile attitudes from some quarters

ILLUSTRATION: IKON

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

FUTURE PREDICTIONS: MORE FLEXIBILITY AND A LESS LINEAR CAREER PROGRESSION



domestic and family duties remains a work in process. In the UK for example, women spend an average of 25.5 hours a week on chores, compared to just 16 hours for men. Flexible working arrangements, whether that's a move away from the traditional working week, or enabling greater ability to work remotely, are needed. Some employers are experimenting with novel approaches, including the adoption of a four-day week, to improve work-life balance as well as worker productivity. The New Zealand trustee company Perpetual Guardian, for example, has adopted a four-day working week as standard policy.

We expect shared parental leave to become more commonplace, as society recognises the benefits of co-parenting. With working families becoming increasingly the norm,

we expect to see more employers offering to help bring up baby, too. In November 2018 Goldman Sachs began offering its London employees emergency nannies to look after unwell children, and elderly care for those looking to balance home and work – and to keep employees on-task, of course.

We also expect the culture of side hustles, where workers manage multiple streams of income alongside a primary role, to become more ubiquitous, and for people to develop an altogether more entrepreneurial mindset something we have been tracking for some time in our trend Enterprise Nation. In 2018, 47 per cent of American women aged 16-29 made money outside of their regular source of income. Employers will come to accept that staff – men and women alike – will have casual outside work



For women who take time off to raise a family...

...there is the danger of a skills gap building up



interests and want the flexibility to pursue them.

There is also a growing acceptance that there is no set route to success, embodied in Sheryl Sandberg's idea of the 'jungle gym' replacing the 'career ladder'. Will the pressure to 'have it all' be replaced by a more honest portrayal of the challenges faced by women in work? This is something we track in our trend Fine to be Fallible, examining where failure is being repositioned as an opportunity for personal growth.

The challenges posed by swiftly moving IT advances are another factor to be considered. Our trend Liquid Skills looks at how reskilling will be an important part of future careers, with employees needing to respond to rapid changes across all sectors. In 2017, 71 per cent of American women agreed that people

who are unskilled in technology will find it harder to get a job in the future. For those women who may choose to take time away from work to raise a family this poses more of a serious challenge. Re-entering work is made more complicated by the skills gap that can open up after time spent outside an industry.

A culture fit for all

The often overwhelmingly male composition of the C-suite can make the higher echelons of companies feel remote and unfriendly to women. Formalised mentorship schemes can be a powerful tool for career development, and reducing the influence of the 'old boy's club'.

There are also more insidious ways in which the internal culture of a company can be hostile for women, as #MeToo has shown. The question →

“

Women will justifiably expect ... a culture, that gives them a space to excel. They can and should 'have all they want'

”

FUTURE PREDICTIONS: CHANGES IN THE WORKPLACE FOR WOMEN

Formalised mentorship schemes for career development

Networks to fight sexism in the workplace

Workplaces will become more hospitable for women

Robust and transparent HR policies

Future work will increasingly be defined by flexibility

is: what action will come from this cultural moment? Women have begun to organise themselves into industry-specific networks to fight against sexism in the workplace, and review sites like InHerSight place pressure on employers to be female-friendly. We expect that workplaces will take more action internally to become more hospitable places for women. Robust and transparent HR policies and ensuring that young women's voices are heard at the highest levels will help.

Although pay discrepancy is increasingly publicised, more pro-active initiatives are needed, including radical action to change pay disparity at senior levels in companies. Will there be a willingness from men to 'check their privilege' and actively work to address

gender disparity in pay and position, even if it comes at personal cost? Ultimately, we anticipate that future work

will increasingly be defined by flexibility. Where, when and how people work will be untethered from the office 9-5, and this should enable women (and men too) to have greater balance in their lives. However, this won't mean employers can or should take a hands-off approach. Women will justifiably expect the support of childcare solutions, as well as plans to re-skill and re-enter the workplace post-childbirth, the mentoring, and a culture that gives them a space to excel. They can and should 'have it all'. ■

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Reshmi Rajendran
Entrepreneur, Classical Dancer,
Mother of Two, PhD in Physics
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#MeToo: Casting light on a global movement

**WENDY BRISTOW ON
the *New York Times*
reporters who sparked
a social revolution
that's resounding in
workplaces everywhere**

Megan Twohey and Jodi Kantor are the two *New York Times* reporters who broke the Harvey Weinstein story in late 2017, which sparked an unprecedented wave of women's voices speaking out on sexual harassment. Today they say: "The 'MeToo' movement has surged past every forecast that it would burn out, settle down or be erased by backlash. Instead the reckoning deepens and widens. Perhaps it is time to start thinking of this less as a news story than as a permanent new element of our lives."

Weinstein was charged with rape and other offences; a Pulitzer prize went to Twohey and Kantor; and #MeToo founder Tarana Burke and 16 other 'Silence Breakers' became *Time* magazine's 'person of the year'. But #MeToo reached further, highlighting sexual harassment, misogyny and discriminatory practices in the workplace on an unprecedented scale.

It has inspired a flurry of company-wide anti-sexual harassment training courses and seen several women replace ousted male counterparts in high-level jobs. Such as CNN's chief international anchor Christiane Amanpour, who filled the PBS slot vacated by Charlie Rose, now facing reports of sexual misconduct.

Other consequences include the establishment of the 'Time's Up' legal defence fund, which launched in January 2018 with \$13 million available for harassment victims. Perhaps more significantly, several US states have introduced laws expanding sexual harassment protections. Women in various fields have created alternative networking organisations such as the media's 'The Second Source', created by a group of female journalists to tackle harassment and create an alternative network for women in the media.

Appropriately for a movement enabled by the Internet and turbocharged by social media, #MeToo has inspired a wave of technological innovations and new start-ups. Based in the US, tEQuitable – an 'independent confidential platform to address issues of bias, discrimination and harassment in the workplace' – is one such. As a black woman working in the tech sector, CEO and Co-founder Lisa Gelobter says #MeToo inspired "a moment of clarity" whereby her experience of discrimination prompted her to create →

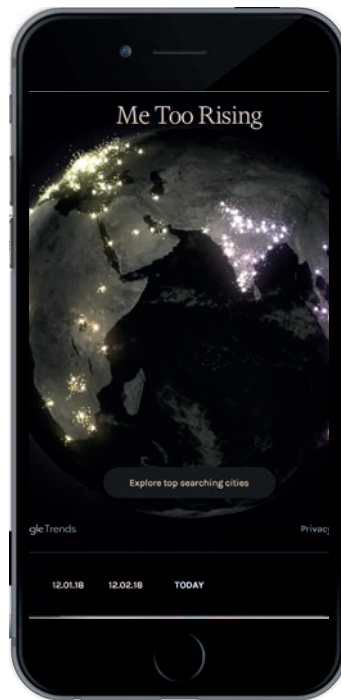
a confidential digital ombudsman for employees and companies to access advice.

A similar UK initiative is the SafelySpoken platform offering “anonymous advice for difficult moments at work” and which also gathers data on problems like bullying. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has praised the tool’s work with the UK’s Ministry of Justice in seeking solutions to workplace harassment. Other post-MeToo start-ups such as AllVoices, or Bravely, are led by women to help eradicate the silence and isolation that has historically fostered the problem.

The ‘Weinstein effect’ has also led to global Internet giants reviewing their policies and practices. In November 2018 Google was forced to revise its policy of handling employee sexual-harassment claims via private arbitration, rather than taking them through the courts, after workers staged a worldwide protest walk-out. Facebook, operating a similar policy, swiftly followed suit, while Microsoft and Uber Technologies also scrapped the controversial practice.

But it’s not just in the West that the movement has taken off. The hashtag is now being used in 85 countries – most are #MeToo translations but variations include Italy’s #TheTimeThat and France’s blunt #ExposeYourPig. A vivid tool for grasping the movement’s effect worldwide is metoorising. withgoogle.com from Google Trends – a live interactive visualisation of #MeToo as it hits search engines worldwide. Represented as a slowly rotating globe, areas where the movement is trending appear as small starbursts. Click on any, and it links straight to what’s being said. At the time of writing, metoorising shows India lit up like a Christmas tree due to an explosion of allegations there. #MeToo Bollywood took off a year after its Hollywood namesake and is following a remarkably similar trajectory.

China has its own #MeToo in #WoYeShi, speaking out against domestic violence and workplace discrimination as well as sexual assault. But whereas Hong Kong, Taiwan and



Google Trends’ dynamic Me Too Rising website



Jodi Kantor (right) and Megan Twohey



#MeToo founder Tarana Burke

PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

even Hanoi have jumped at #MeToo, China’s greater level of social control means the movement is limited there. Leta Hong Fincher, an expert in China’s feminist movement, says that in a country where it’s estimated that 80 per cent of women have experienced sexual harassment, “some women have come out ... what’s really striking is how few.”

There’s no doubt that freedom of the press and social media and the nature of a country’s religion and regime affect success. Muslim countries, for example, show little traction on metoorising – with the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah a rare exception. Even in India the conversation is not as widespread as

metoorising might suggest. Karuna Nundy, a lawyer, points out: “#MeToo conversations are limited to a swathe of English-speaking, Internet-enabled people. It’s quite a lot in absolute numbers, but small for India.” It seems the world’s most oppressed women in the worst paid jobs are still largely silent.

Will #MeToo endure? In their Pulitzer Prize acceptance speech Twohey and Kantor acknowledged uncertainty: “Years in the future, when we describe to our daughters the abuses we wrote about, they may say: ‘Oh yeah, that still happens all the time. It happens at my summer job. It happens on my campus.’ Or will they be shocked at what will seem like a bygone era, and say: ‘Did people really think that used to be OK back then? Mom, how could that have been allowed to go on?’ The answer to that question is not up to us. It belongs to the rest of the world now.”

Activist Tarana Burke, senior director at Girls for Gender Equity and who originally founded #MeToo over a decade ago, hopes the changes are permanent. “When survivors speak up together in unison the world has no choice but to listen,” she says. ■



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BEYOND THE LEAKY



PIPELINE

What can be done to radically improve the female career cycle? NATASHA D'SOUZA seeks some answers

The case for boosting the number of women in senior leadership ranks has conventionally focused either squarely on perceived individual gaps, or systemic sticking points, such as the 'leaky pipeline', i.e. more women leaving as they move higher up the organisation. Those approaches are myopic: the female career cycle is different from that of the male and therefore necessitates a transformative, nuanced and multifaceted approach.

Although significant efforts have been made to nurture, retain and accelerate female leaders, women are still falling behind. "Men's career trajectory tends to be more linear and women's tends to be winding. As she moves higher up in her career, her professional life is becoming more demanding and her personal life frequently becomes more complicated," explain Sapna Welsh and Caroline Kersten, partners at Leverage HR and authors of *Worldly Women – The New Leadership Profile: How to Expatriate with Excellence*. Even Indra Nooyi, who stepped down as CEO of Pepsi Co, famously said in 2018: "Motherhood is a full-time job – especially when your kids are babies. Being an executive is a full-time job. Being a wife is a quasi-full-time-ish job. As women, we're told we can do it all but there's only 24 hours in a day and you have to make trade-offs ... you can't have it all."

The career launch

Women's early career choices exert a major influence on their future professional trajectories. A Kellogg Insight piece co-authored by Sally Blount, Dean of the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and the only woman leading a top 10 business school, identified the post-college years as critical to women crafting a strong career trajectory, with possibly faster promotions and enviable career options that unlock major opportunities and financial rewards in their 40s, 50s and beyond.

The entry-level period, which Blount considers one of three pivot points unique to women's careers, is an important phase that organisations

must address when attracting and cultivating high-potential women into early career roles. The cost of a 'weak launch' is disproportionately higher for women than men, leaving less time and opportunity to make up for a slow start.

"Businesses should be investing in early career women because these frontline professionals are the nation's next generation of female leaders," argues Sarah Liu, Founder of The Dream Collective. Founded in 2012, the collective currently operates in five cities across Australia and Asia Pacific, where Liu and her team run an Emerging Leaders Program and various skills development and mentorship sessions to plug the gap in this programming at the enterprise level.

Investing in talent is essential in order to shift gender parity in the workplace, believes Liu. It's a position underscored by a growing body of research, such as a Korn Ferry study in 2017 commissioned by The Rockefeller Foundation, as part of their 100x25 initiative, which aims for female CEOs to lead 100 of the Fortune 500 by 2025. According to the study, promising women in the launch phase of their careers must be cultivated from the outset, helping them expand and deepen their skills and knowledge on multiple fronts – from people management, to core business functions and processes, to strategy and future growth.

Organisations cannot afford to incur the risks of talented women leaving the workplace in their first decade. As an alumnus of GE's high-potential development programme, Michelle Wu – Chief Information Officer & Vice President at GE Power Services for the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, Asia Pacific and China – is a testament to the benefits of such a programme. She says: "I went through GE's Leadership Programme, and even while in that I noticed that when women hit middle management, between year five and seven, we tend to lose women. That's the time when people ask themselves if this is the career path they want to stay with ... What kept me going was my mentor. He was ex-GE and served as a constant sounding board to help me work through my difficulties." →

The pipeline perception

Has the very notion of a leaky pipeline contributed to limiting how organisations have understood and contributed to women's careers? Its distillation of a trajectory into a set of linear ladders runs the risk of marginalising or demotivating women whose careers do not fit the perceived ideal pattern. Says Blount: "Careers unfold over a lifetime. Unexpected opportunities and obstacles arise – at work and at home – that affect how a career progresses, especially for women. The same job that may eventually lead one person into the C-suite may end in a stalled career for another. It's all part of the journey."

"Companies need to move past this notion of what an archetypal trajectory into senior leadership looks like and talent recruitment and management practices need to reflect this understanding," explains Kathryn Ullrich, a Partner at Odgers Berndtson's San Francisco office. She shares the example of a female senior Director of Marketing, who chose to work part-time given her family obligations. "Every single time, she was passed over for promotion because the internal perception was, she just works part-time, she has children and she won't want to travel, she isn't really committed. The irony is that this is the very same woman who rolled out their entire digital overhaul of product, website and marketing, increased customer results, doubled revenues and won industry awards. Yet instead of promoting her to VP or SVP she was considered part-time."

No typical path

The diverse trajectories of successful female executives – from the late Katherine Graham of The Washington Post Company, who entered the business world upon widowhood to become the first female CEO to make the Fortune 500 list in 1972, to Katrina Lake, CEO of fashion subscription service Stitch Fix, who became the youngest woman to lead an IPO in 2017 – are proof that there is no typical path towards success.

"The C-suite, for the most part, gets it. To me the big opportunity is the people in the middle," adds May Busch. Busch, an executive coach to high potential and high performance leaders, carved a 24-year global career at Morgan Stanley where she rose through the ranks to become Chief Operating Officer for Europe, Middle East and Africa, and also chaired the firm's European Diversity Council.

"The C-suite generally does a great job. But that mandate often gets lost in the middle, at the management level, simply because managers are at the receiving end of multiple mandates – from

culture to commercial results. They have to cater to multiple stakeholders, including their peers and subordinates, and amidst all this, diversity and inclusion becomes optional not imperative."

Picking up the burden

The second critical pivot point, according to Blount, occurs when women move into the mid-career years, where long-term relationships and caregiving roles become focal for women.

Whether by choice, necessity, or default, well-educated career women – especially if paired with a well-educated, employed man – typically pick up more of the burden for meeting their families' non-work needs during this phase. "Women tend to balance two full-time roles, that of the corporate worker bee and as homemaker-mother, the latter being uncompensated," says Ullrich. "Management has to establish a culture that counteracts this unspoken bias where caregiving responsibilities diminish an employee's competence."

Blount and Ullrich highlight an important point. OECD data shows that US labour force participation by women aged 25–54 peaked at 74–75 per cent around 2000 and now hovers at 69–70 per cent, the level it was at in the mid-1980s. Yet Denmark, Norway, and Sweden – nations where high quality, affordable child and elder care is the norm – all rank among the top OECD nations in female workforce participation. "Part of the solution clearly lies in our ability to improve the availability, affordability, and quality of child and elder care. Part of the solution also relies on companies expanding opportunities for flexible work hours and career paths," adds Blount.

Shaping a new era in female leadership

Businesses truly invested in future growth must prioritise the development of inclusive meritocracy that recognises women, not as a homogenous group but as a vast and diverse talent pool. Shaping a new era in female leadership requires leading from a different place, to bring to the fore new thinking and a new range of actions. Top leaders need to visibly and consistently communicate the business benefits of gender parity and provide sustained support to frontline managers who are key to accelerating women's ascent in the workplace. While training programs, networking groups and mentorship initiatives are all integral to women's advancement to executive leadership, leadership teams should track progress on key metrics for women's career advancement and hold all management levels accountable for creating change. ■





Jan Gooding

Think Inclusion rather than Diversity

I suspect coming from a model of 'reason and persuasion' is the reason 'unconscious bias' training has been so ineffective. Understanding that we all have bias may explain the problem, but it doesn't help people get to a solution.

If I could distil my advice they would be the five tips shown below.

By calling myself 'Inclusion Director' rather than Diversity Director I was able to signal immediately that my role was everything, not just the gender agenda. People have become fatigued by feminism because of the level of attention it gets in conversation at the apparent expense of other issues. And

PHOTO: ANDREW PERKINS

women resent being lumped together, either as a problem to be solved or wanting the same things. I felt strongly that the workplace culture change that would help everyone would, by definition, help women.

At Aviva we called our employee resource groups 'Communities' to capture the idea that they were heterogeneous, and everyone was welcome to join any of them. To reinforce our desire for diverse leadership we stipulated that all our Communities, namely Generations, Pride, Origins, Carers, Balance and Ability, had gender-balanced co-chairs.

We encouraged everyone to join the community they were passionate about, rather than the one they particularly identified with. All the co-chairs were sanctioned to spend three working days a month leading their Communities and creating plans that would help influence the approach to recruitment, promotion and retention. Every market was encouraged to launch at least three Communities in the first year, and then add to them in relation to their local agenda.

In November 2017 Aviva launched equal parental leave in Canada, Ireland, UK, France and Singapore. That means all employees, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or how they become a parent will be entitled to the same parental leave in each country. This creates a level playing field for parents and goes to the heart of changing minds by changing behaviour.

Every day hundreds of decisions are made and actions

taken, which reinforce or change the working culture. It is changing the balance of those in favour of an inclusive culture which cannot be left to chance. The more it is designed into working practices the faster change will happen. ■

Jan Gooding is Chair of Stonewall, which campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people across Britain. She was formerly Global Inclusion Director at Aviva, the multinational insurance company

1 Explain the commercial relevance so 'doing something' has a clear bottom line benefit to your company. The culture change must be led and endorsed by the board, with tangible evidence from them that it is about action not talk. This is not CSR or HR: it's business strategy.

4 Design inclusion into all policy development, communication and HR processes relating to recruitment, progression and retention, including training. It is not a separate subject.

2 Properly resourced and validated Employee Resource Groups must be established to enable employees to help educate colleagues and drive change from within. This is too important to leave to volunteers and goodwill.

5 Invest in visible symbols of change such as gender-neutral toilets; subtitles on internal videos; review the imagery and language of recruitment ads for bias; introduce a multi-faith approach to the celebration of religious festivals; create transparent processes for the allocation of work.

3 Set targets, track and publish progress of improvements to the culture and the diversity of your people, using quantitative and qualitative data. Transparency is crucial.

JAN GOODING gives some advice about how to alter the culture of the workplace to include everyone

In the last few years I have often been asked: "What has diversity got to do with growing the business? Isn't it just some grand form of social engineering?"

Thankfully there are many leaders who have already been persuaded that the pursuit of an inclusive culture is commercially beneficial. McKinsey's 2018 *Delivering*

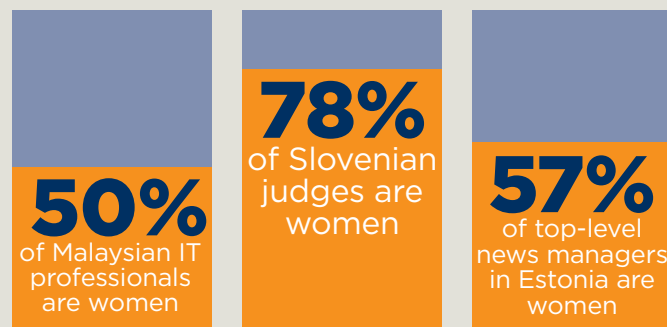
Through Diversity report was one of many to forcibly make the case, backed up by hard data. A more academic approach was taken by the *Journal of Management* in its 2016 study: *The Business Case for Women Leaders: Meta-Analysis, Research Critique and Path Forward*. There are plenty of others.

The challenge for leaders is more about how to get started, particularly when every company culture starts from such a different place. And, having started, how to sustain progress, when it can seem so slow to materialise.

As a marketing professional I know that people need to do something different before truly changing their minds. It is this principle that leads to so many brands encouraging the trial of a new product, before managing to convert it into a committed purchase.

The truth is that changing the way we think and interact with each other at work is difficult. Societal attitudes and workplace cultures are quite ingrained. It is easier to agree intellectually to the idea of equal opportunity than to live up to it day to day. And resistance is strong, so everyone must work actively together to shift everyday habits.

GLOBAL



WOMEN AND INCLUSIVITY

A GLOBAL DATA SNAPSHOT

HEADS OF STATE

As of October 2017, **11** women are serving as Head of State and **12** are serving as Head of Government. To put this in perspective, there are currently **193** UN member states

GOVERNMENT



Globally, there are **38 states** in which women account for **less than 10%** of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, as of June 2016, including four chambers with no women at all

LEADERSHIP ROLES

***There has been a steady increase in the number of women in leadership roles.** Key management personnel (KMP) has seen the biggest growth of any manager category (up 4.4pp from 26.1% in 2013-14 to 30.5% in 2017-18).

[Source: wgea.gov.au]

MEDIA

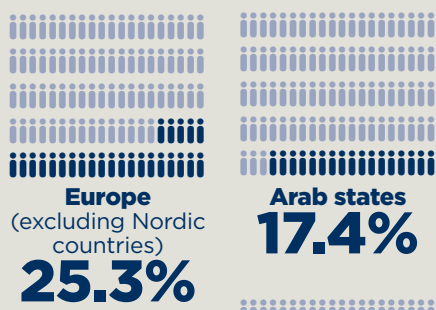
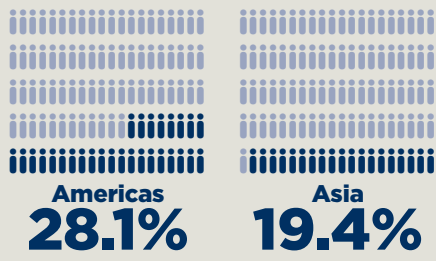
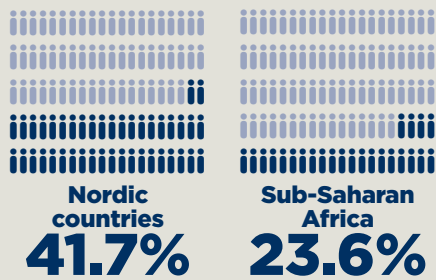
A study commissioned by the GIWL found that **77% of people quoted as experts in online news articles** by the main UK news outlets are **men**



WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Data from June 2017 shows wide variations in the average percentages of **women parliamentarians** in each region and none have reached 50%

[Source: unwomen.org]



SOCIAL MEDIA

35% of Facebook's global workforce is women, up from 33% last year and 31% in 2014

[Source: recode.net]



FTSE LEADERS

In the UK the **Hampton-Alexander review**, which set businesses a target of having a third of boardroom positions occupied by women by 2020, shows that according to figures released in June 2018 **FTSE 100 firms were on track to meet this goal, having reached 29% female representation.** The broader FTSE 350 was some way behind on 25.5% meaning it is likely to come up short.

[theguardian.com]

BOARD SEATS



In looking at trends from the 2629 companies that are on both the R3000¹ in 2018 and 2017,

women gained 469² board seats while men lost 382² board seats

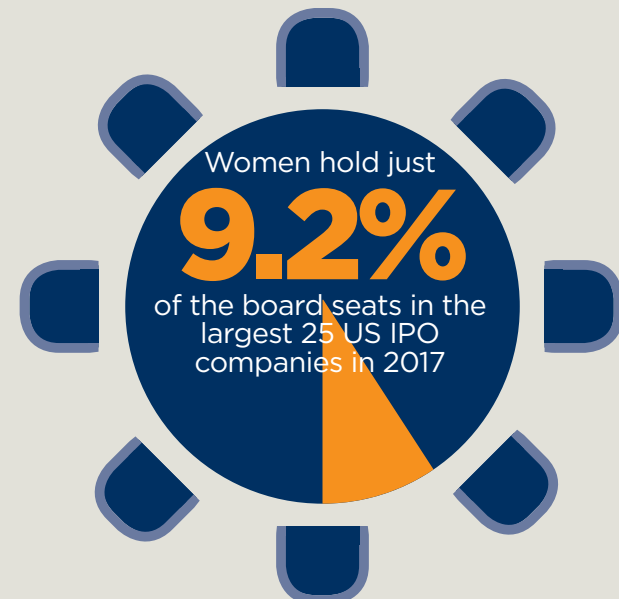
Sixty-three % of the companies that added women did so by adding board seats rather than replacing men.

² Net figures

¹ R3000 is a market-capitalisation-weighted equity index that provides exposure to the entire U.S. stock market. The index tracks the performance of the 3,000 largest U.S.-traded stocks which represent about 98 per cent of all US incorporated equity securities. [Source: 2020wob.com]

US BOARD SEATS

This was up from **8.2% women in 2016**, but **below the 4-year average of 9.4%.** Twelve of the 25 companies went public with no women, and 80% went public with no women or only one on their boards.



EDUCATION

An educated female population increases a country's productivity and fuels economic growth.

Some countries lose more than US \$1bn a year by failing to educate girls to the same level as boys.



[Source: unesco.org]

PAY GAP ERADICATION IN SCANDINAVIA

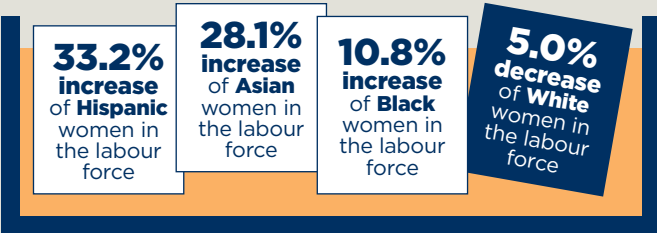
Denmark, Sweden and Norway all encourage private companies to conduct their own surveys in order to uncover and eradicate any salary discrepancies between the genders. Iceland has taken it one step further and become the first country in the world to outlaw a wage gap in both the public and private sector.

[Source: scandinaviastandard.com/what-about-women-in-the-workplace-in-scandinavia/]

ETHNICITY OF WOMEN IN US WORKFORCE

***Women of colour will be the majority of all women in the United States by 2060**

***By 2026 the projected percentage increase in the labour force of women by race or ethnicity:**



[Source: catalyst.org/knowledge/women-color-united-states]

EDUCATION

It has been 30 years since women began to outnumber men at universities and they do so in most countries across the world.

Today women make up **52%** of university students worldwide compared to **49%** in 1999.



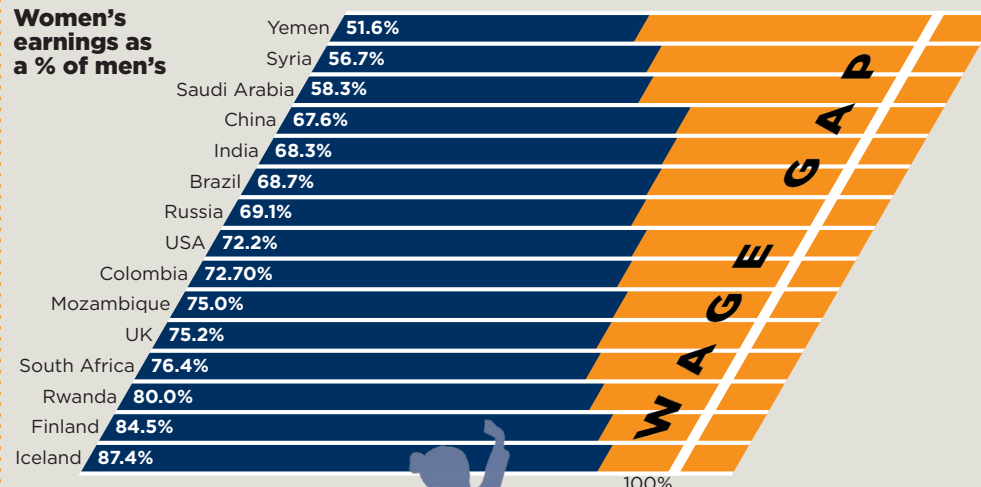
Global split

North America	55%
South America	54%
Europe	54%
Africa	43%
Asia	42%
Oceania	55%

[Source: giwl.kcl.ac.uk]

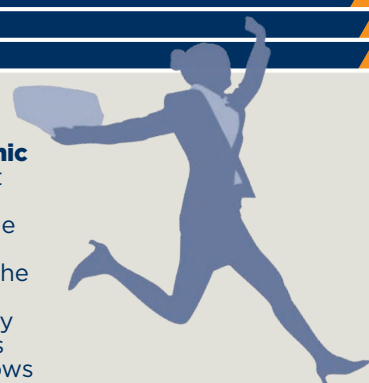
WEF GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT

Women's earnings as a % of men's



The World Economic Forum reports that women in every country face a wage gap of some kind. Exactly how wide the gender pay gap is differs by year or by location. US census data from 2015 shows

that women working year-round and full-time were, on average, paid 80 cents for every dollar a man received, according to an analysis by the American Association of University Women (AAUW).



GENDER PAY GAP



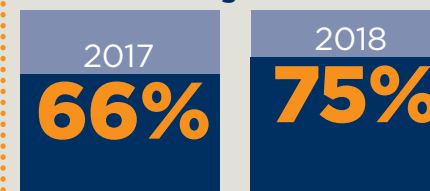
According to Australia's latest figures released by **Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Agency**, over the past five years:

***The gender pay gap has declined every year but progress remains slow.** Women working full-time still earn on average over AUS \$25,500 a year less than men in total remuneration. Pay gaps persist across every industry, manager category and non-manager occupation. More employer action is required if the gap is to close at a faster rate.

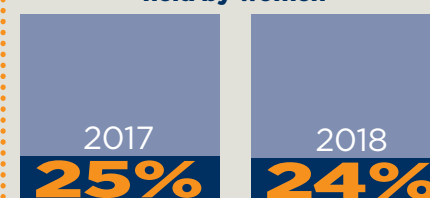
WOMEN IN SENIOR ROLES

Global findings from Grant Thornton's 'Women in Business: Beyond Policy to Progress' Report March 2018 found that:

***Percentages of businesses with at least one woman in senior management**



***Proportion of senior roles held by women**



***Top gender equality policies and practices businesses have in place:**
81% - Equal pay for men and women performing the same roles
75% - Non-discrimination policies for recruitment
59% - Paid parental leave

Top drivers for businesses to introduce gender equality policies and practices:
65% - To attract and keep employees
65% - To live up to organisational values
55% - To enhance company performance

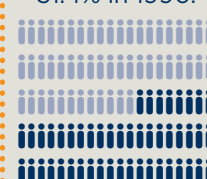
Main barriers that prevent gender equality policies and practices being introduced:
22% - Levels of complexity in translating good intentions into practice
21% - Stereotypes about gender roles
16% - Lack of evidence that it has a positive impact on company performance

[Source: grantthornton.global]

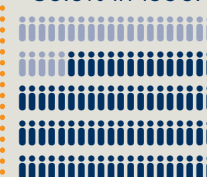
LABOUR FORCE

Globally, the percentage of women participating in the labour force is declining.

***Women's labour force participation rate is 48.5%**
 a decrease from 51.4% in 1990.



***Men's labour force participation rate is 75.0%**
 down from 80.0% in 1990.



Many factors contribute to this gender gap, including:

- Structural barriers such as work and family life issues.
- An increase in the number of years women spend in school.
- Lack of employment opportunities, particularly for young women.

***The share of women in the labour force in 2017:**
 Canada: 47.4%
 India: 24.5%
 Japan: 43.7%
 USA: 46.9%
 In the EU28, women's employment rate is 46.0% as of 2018.
 [Source: catalyst.org/knowledge/women-workforce-global]

GENDER PAY GAP

According to the World Economic Forum (2017),

only 58% of the gender gap in economic opportunities has been closed around the world.

As the economic gender gap has been **reduced by only 3% in the past 10 years**, the World Economic Forum claims that **it will take another 118 years to vanish completely.**



WOMEN ENGINEERS



The UK has the lowest percentage of female engineering professionals in Europe, at less than 10 per cent, while **Latvia, Bulgaria and Cyprus lead with nearly 30%.**

[Source: wes.org.uk - statistics on women in engineering]

ASIA PACIFIC

Today, women account for half of the combined population of Asia Pacific but contribute 36% of the US \$26tr of GDP currently generated. Using conservative assumptions, McKinsey estimates that the unpaid care work undertaken by women in Asia Pacific, if included in measurement of GDP, would add US \$3.8tr to the regional total, equivalent to roughly 15% of the region's GDP.



[Source: McKinsey Global Institute: Advancing Women's Equality in Asia Pacific 2018 mckinsey.com]

ASIA PACIFIC

***\$4.5 trillion of additional annual GDP in 2025 could be added to the economies of Asia Pacific by advancing women's equality or 12% above business-as-usual GDP in 2025**

[Source: McKinsey Global Institute: Advancing Women's Equality in Asia Pacific 2018 mckinsey.com]

INVESTMENT BY VENTURE CAPITALISTS IN WOMEN TEAMS

All-women teams received **just US \$1.9bn** of the **US \$85bn** total invested by venture capitalists last year, according to data from M&A, private equity, and VC database PitchBook. That's equal to about



2.2% of 2017's total pot. Meanwhile, all-male teams received about US \$66.9bn - roughly 79%. (Of the remaining 19%, 12% of funds were raised by mixed-gender teams, while 7% was raised by teams whose gender makeup PitchBook was unable to confirm.)

[Source: fortune.com/2018/01/31/female-founders-venture-capital-2017/]

At a time when feminism is once again high on the agenda is there a responsibility among those who have broken through the glass ceiling to 'send the lift back down', and help more female colleagues to follow them into the highest positions in business and leadership?

When a woman successfully negotiates obstacles that have prevented such success, she often takes on the role of mentor, supporter, sponsor or role model, either informally or, increasingly, as part of a corporate programme. But how does it work best, and what are the commercial benefits of such systems?

Clare Glackin, Head of the Industrial Practice at Odgers Berndtson in London, believes women are well placed to introduce systems and a culture that favour woman-to-woman mentoring and inspiration.

"I think at the heart of it," she says, "female leaders are showing quite how successful they are. They naturally create collaborative, solutions-focused cultures where other women can be successful."

Programmes such as InspiringFifty give women leaders the opportunity to 'pay it forward', this time in the tech industry. Established by Janneke Niessen and Joelle Frijters, joint founders and CIO and CEO respectively of Improve Digital, they work according to the premise that 'if she can see it, she

SEND THE LIFT BACK DOWN

LAURA JAMES on the ways in which women are mentoring and supporting other female colleagues into positions of leadership



can be it'. The initiative publishes a list of 50 inspiring women in tech in each country in which it operates. The aim is to provide a record of accessible and visible role models for women and girls who are considering entering or just want to know more about the STEM industries.

Kate Stevenson, a Director of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and this year voted one of that country's 100 most powerful women, has 25 years' experience as a senior financial executive in Canada and the United States. She has often ridden an elevator sent down by a female co-worker.

She says: "I have had some great mentors and role models over the years. I have served on corporate boards over the past dozen years and I would have to call out one individual in particular, Jalynn Bennett. She was my first taste of the old girls' network at play. She was a new director and I was in management. She was quietly brilliant. She worked her magic with utmost discretion. She was respected by her fellow directors and loved by the staff at her board companies as well.

"I was also inspired by her dedication to supporting women. She advised hundreds of us and a few men too, all while serving on some of the most prominent boards in the country, not to mention juggling duties for her family, friends, and community. How was this possible? Boundless energy, a

deep passion, and a light touch – a little hint here, introduction there, or insight that in a flash gave perspective."

For Stevenson, this illustrates the power of the one to influence another. "It is a lesson to me," she says, "of the power, or I might say magic, that one person can have. I still occasionally wonder what Jalynn might say to me on this or that.

"And we all have that power. We cast longer shadows – or can give more light – than we may appreciate".

"There is no one path that's right for all! Every one of our careers is a labyrinth, not a ladder. And the advice out there for women has been overwhelming. We have been told to act a certain way, speak in a certain voice, and even dress in a certain style! When I began my career on Wall Street, we even dressed like men, in dark suits (and I hate to admit, I even sometimes wore a little bow tie!). We were desperately trying to fit into a man's world.

"That's all changing now. Thankfully, we are at the stage where we don't need to follow old rules. We are discovering that our real power comes from being our true selves, celebrating our differences and feminine strengths, and charting our own paths."

Colleen Johnston recently retired from her position as Group Head, Direct Channels, Technology, Marketing and Corporate Affairs at TD Bank

WE ALL HAVE THAT POWER. WE CAST LONGER SHADOWS, OR CAN GIVE MORE LIGHT, THAN WE MAY APPRECIATE

KATE STEVENSON



Group Canada. She's currently taking up non-executive board positions. She believes attitudes – and systems – are changing.

She says: "For 10 years at TD bank I was the Chair of the Women in Leadership initiative. That was about not only putting together a team to look at systemic issues, but more importantly to focus on whether we were encouraging women to really believe in themselves, be confident in their future and not to define themselves as women in business but as a person.

"Good sponsorship is me saying 'I think very highly of Mary and I think Mary would be really good here'. In doing that I'm putting my reputation out there and my brand behind that person because I believe in them and that goes a long, long way."

Equally, Johnston believes that, over recent years, more groups of women are getting together to be mutually supportive and encouraging. "Where women can play a role for other women is to engage in a positive discussion of what the future holds."

At Odgers Berndtson in London, Clare Glackin believes such leadership roles come naturally to women, assuming that the right corporate culture is in place.

"With gender removed from the equation," she says, "successful leaders are able to create diversity and actually lead in a way that comes quite naturally to women. Often they're not the most high-profile

“WHERE WOMEN CAN PLAY A ROLE FOR OTHER WOMEN IS TO ENGAGE IN A POSITIVE DISCUSSION OF WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

COLLEEN JOHNSTON



of leaders. Often they're more low-key. They're people who are tremendously successful but don't take the glory.

"That type of leadership is coming to the front and that makes it easier for women because that tends to be their focus: on collaboration and inclusion."

Sending the lift back down is as much, she adds, about "a company culture that values investing in people. This needs to come from the top and the focus needs to be on the long-term benefit to the organisation rather than the ego and personal financial gain of the leader.

"That's what sends the lift back down for everybody. It's not necessarily about individual women sending individual lifts back down – it's about the culture of a company." ■



COLLEEN JOHNSTON

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1. Identify where you are now in your career and then ask yourself: "Where do I see my future and what will I do with it?"
2. Document your life story, e.g.: "I started out as this, and ended as that. In order to achieve my goals, I had to take two different positions in-between and spend some time working from headquarters."
3. Think about the people who might currently be holding these "in-between" positions and try finding out more about what they do, what their challenges are and what makes them successful.
4. Now, focus on yourself and determine the gaps in your profile that may need to be addressed to take this next step.

The exercise is not about documenting your future career path, but more of a way for you to better understand yourself and the areas in which you'd like to further develop. In removing the elements that are liable to vary or change, you are forced to focus on "you" rather than potential outside influences. Truly understanding why you want to pursue an EMBA will allow you to convincingly argue these points in your essays, interviews, and negotiations with your employer.

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INVESTMENT GOES ALONG WITH EMPOWERMENT

THE DIGITAL WORLD IS PROVIDING MORE AND BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO INVEST, SAYS NATASHA D'SOUZA



KATE BRODOCK

The past two years have proven tumultuous for the technology industry, with sexual harassment, gender pay gaps, and under-representation of women dominating headlines. "We are on the verge of a true movement," believes Kate Brodock, CEO of Women 2.0, a global media and tech brand focused on diversity and gender equality. History suggests that a major movement needs both fight and a flock - a community in public solidarity with those championing a cause. The past decade saw tremendous awareness and community building efforts, says Brodock. The flock was ready. But it's only now that the fight has begun.

A straw in the wind came in November 2018; 20,000 Google employees orchestrated a global walkout, protesting the exit of the creator of Android, for at least one proven sexual harassment claim. It's a shift from 2015, when Ellen Pao lost her \$16 million gender discrimination lawsuit against the venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers. Today she is widely seen as laying the groundwork for starting the conversation on systemic bias in Silicon Valley.

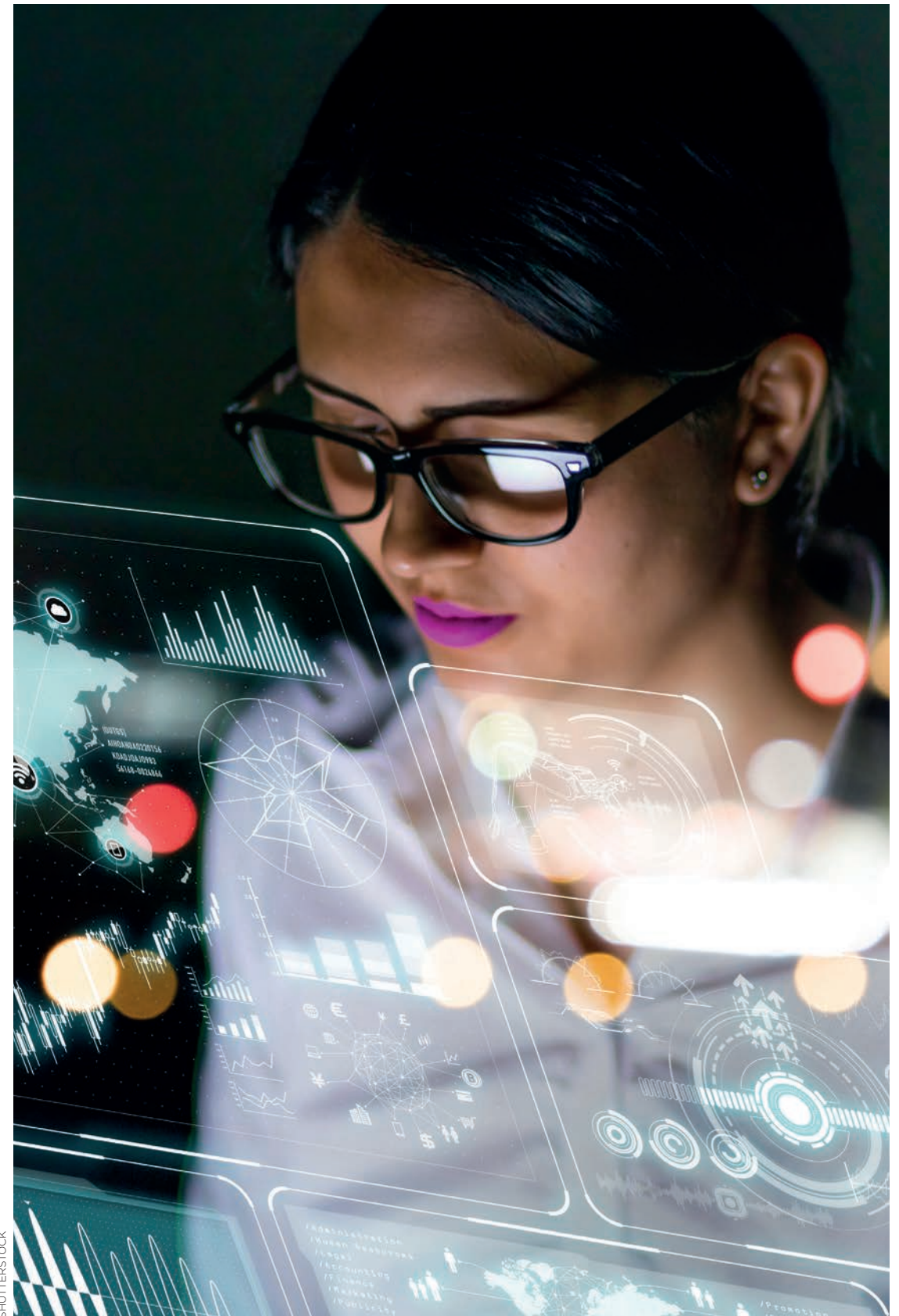
"Pao's loss seeded the argument that would later ignite a movement," says Kathryn Ullrich, a Partner at Odgers Berndtson's San Francisco office adding: "The voice of women in tech reiterates the age old messages previously falling on deaf ears that women are not getting the opportunities and are not getting paid equally. And that voice isn't stopping, it's only getting louder."

While awareness-building by women in tech is at an all-time high, the numbers still have a long way to go. Of 239 billion-dollar venture-backed companies worldwide, only 23 have a female founder. Last year boasted of only one women- →



ELLEN PAO

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



SHUTTERSTOCK



TRISH COSTELLO

led tech IPO: Stitch Fix led by Katrina Lake. Perhaps the most notable result of these efforts is the growth of a new class of investing: women investing in women. According to Crunchbase, which records data on the world's most innovative companies, in Q3 2018 \$6.4bn went into startups having at least one female founder. But that's just 14 per cent of all global venture funding.

The incredibly low amount of capital making its way to female founders seems odd, given numerous reports on the commercial success of female-founded businesses. In 2015, First Round Capital – which backed Uber, Warby Parker, and Birchbox – published a report demonstrating a correlation between performance and the presence of at least one female founder, with these investments outperforming investments in all-male teams by 63 per cent.



TANIA BOLER



THE ELVIE PUMP

ELVIE.COM

In the past few years, more women started taking things into their own hands by launching their own funds, some specifically investing with a gender lens such as Trish Costello's Portfolia, Pocket Sun and Elizabeth Galbut's pan-US/Asia-based SoGal Ventures and Anuradha Duggal and Sutian Dong's Female Founders Fund. In tandem, femtech has emerged as a disruptive tech class of its own, as more female founders embrace technology and choose to address problems that matter to them. "When I became a mother, I saw so many areas of post-natal health that could be positively impacted by technology. I was so angry that 70 per cent of new mothers and one in three women had preventable pelvic floor problems that could be addressed through exercise," says Tania Boler, Co-founder of Elvie, a British female-focused healthtech startup whose debut product – a pelvic floor training device – aims to shatter the taboo around women's health.

"Women may be under-represented in tech but as more women are starting to make a name for themselves within the industry, digital female health is one of the fastest growing sectors," says Ida Tin, CEO and Founder of female health app Clue. In fact, between 2015 and 2018 femtech has received more than \$1bn in funding and is set to be the next big disruptor in the global healthcare market, according to a study by Frost & Sullivan.

But while women may be altering some aspects of the technology and VC landscape, it hasn't yet translated into more money for female founders. "We're still at Version 1.0," says Ullrich. "Unfortunately women-led or female-focused startups tend to be under capitalised, which inhibits growth. Other companies swoop in, often male-led and typically better-funded, pick up

their great ideas and take over the market," adds Trish Costello, CEO of Portfolia, an entrepreneurial investing platform designed for women.

Increasing the number of female General Partners at VCs, boosting the numbers of qualified female investors and creating more for women to invest in what counts for them are needed, believes Costello. Portfolia, which aims to go global by the end of 2019 says it's one of the few venture investing processes designed for women. In November 2018 Portfolia successfully closed its FemTech Fund, the first venture fund in the US focused solely on women's health.

"Companies hiring women and embracing a gender diverse workforce is equally vital," says Lauren Shearer, an Associate in the Technology and IT Services Practice at Odgers Berndtson in London, adding: "It's a tacit understanding, especially on the part of larger and more established organisations, that gender diversity in their leadership is a must." Ali Palmer, a Partner and Head of Consumer & Telecoms at Odgers Interim, concurs. "Clients emphasise their need for a diverse shortlist, some will only accept a 50/50 gender diverse shortlist."

Inclusivity is an equally important factor. Brodock says that while most tech companies monetarily support the women-in-tech movement, primarily by sponsoring women's-oriented initiatives, "it simply wasn't enough to enable a truly inclusive workplace. It isn't enough to give your hiring manager a mandate or a target percentage for hiring women into a tech role, and then step off of the pedal. A company's leadership needs to equally ensure that these new female recruits will be supported, recognised and championed within their organisations. ■



THE ELVIE TRAINER



SUTIAN DONG AND ANURADHA DUGGAL

DANI FRESH



KATHRYN ULLRICH

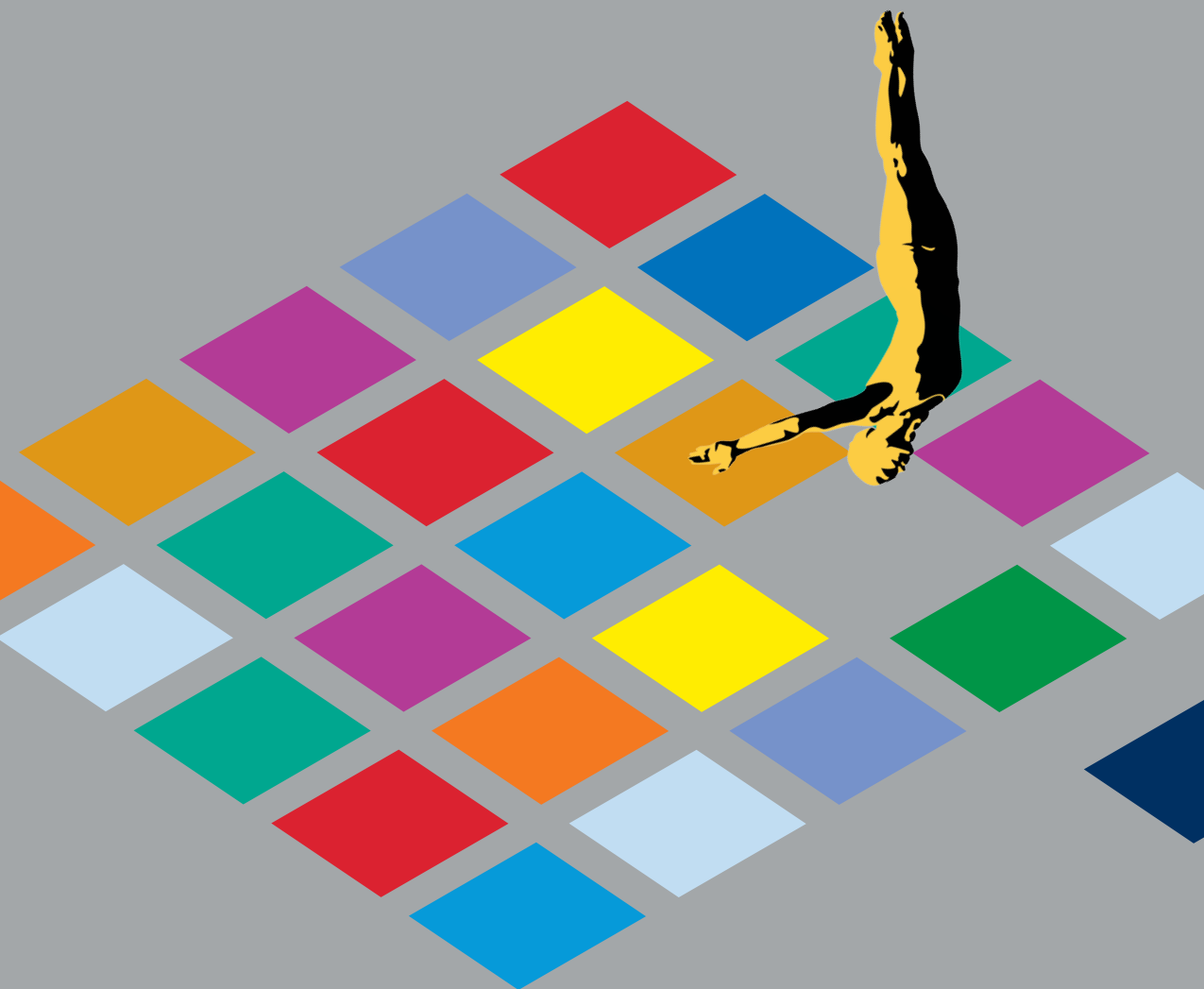
ABOUTME



LAUREN SHEARER

Diving into the pool

Odgers Berndtson is helping its clients to think more courageously about candidate shortlists and to really explore the diverse talent pool that's out there



The three principal leaders of the Odgers Berndtson *Global Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group*: **Jane Griffith** based in Odgers Berndtson's Toronto office and **Aine Hurley** and **Stuart Morton** based in London



Executive search firms have an essential role to play in helping clients create more inclusive and diverse leadership teams. The question is: how are they going about it and what challenges do they face?

For Odgers Berndtson, the process *must* begin internally. To that end the firm has created Unlimited, which it says is its own "methodology, belief and commitment to putting inclusion and diversity at the heart of everything it does". The firm's Global Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group drives Unlimited's worldwide initiatives, which enables colleagues – and ultimately helps clients – to make more informed choices and play an active part in creating a more diverse culture.

The three principal leaders of the Steering Group – Jane Griffith based in Odgers Berndtson's Toronto office and Aine Hurley and Stuart Morton based in London* – work together with Odgers Berndtson offices around the world to ensure this diverse and inclusive culture respects differences and treats everyone with dignity and fairness. Initiatives such as becoming an Inclusion Ally – essentially an individual who believes all colleagues should experience equality, fairness, dignity and happiness at work – help meld together the essential tenets of Odgers Unlimited.

Says Hurley: "Strengthening inclusion

at Odgers Berndtson is not just an imperative as an employer. It also allows us to think creatively and broadly about search, to find and attract the best people for clients and challenge clients' thinking when we need to. We need to ask clients the tricky and brave questions, but in a way that's supportive and ensures that the client has taken the time to think about what the art of the possible could be. As the 'expert advisor' our role is to help clients make an even more courageous and unexpected appointment – for the *right* reasons."

Unconscious bias

Jane Griffith is also working on a specific aspect of Inclusion & Diversity: "In Canada, we are focusing our research on how unconscious bias pervades language and creates a systemic barrier to entry, promotion and continuation of women in the workplace. A recent *Harvard Business Review* piece found that individuals tend to use language to describe people in ways that support traditionally held stereotypes and beliefs. The article addresses the different words used to describe male and female leaders. This study found that women not only had fewer positive descriptors (four to men's 10), they also had six times the number of negative descriptors (12 to men's two). However, the words themselves were also very powerful. The top positive female words were 'compassionate' and 'enthusiastic', while the words for men were 'analytical' and 'competent'. These words can have →



Caroline Dever,
Odgers
Berndtson
Melbourne

“

We know diversity is becoming a priority and the conversation is happening

”

harmful consequences for women as the male words align more closely with business language and descriptions for ideal candidates in many senior executive roles.”

Ultimately, says Griffith, “our use of language can limit gender diversity in the workforce, from hiring, to assessments, to terminations. Biased language can be found in everything from job postings, to candidate screening processes and resumé and performance reviews, perpetuating the status quo inside industries, companies, functions and roles”.

In practice, adds Griffith, the entire Odgers Berndtson Canadian team (covering five offices across the country) receives training on unconscious bias “to ensure that qualified candidates, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and so on, are not overlooked because of our own inherent biases”.

Shifting the conversation

The imperative for Odgers Berndtson is to help clients specify roles in such a way – removing ingrained practices and thinking – to deliver a pool of talented people which is diverse. Odgers Berndtson is shifting the discussion with clients to one where the conversation expands the pool of potential leaders considered rather than contracts. Too often the conversation has been sector specific – “I need someone who has 15 years’ retail experience for this role” – where individuals from other customer-facing, fast-paced organisations could deliver equally relevant, broader

experience – bringing diversity of thought and perspective.

Stuart Morton believes that increasing diversity on shortlists, and giving the client better and wider choice, can be driven by a number of factors: “Many businesses face digital transformation, new delivery models, a more flexible workforce and outsourced capability – to Asia for example. All of this enables us to broaden the pool of people and to offer more diverse choice.”

Much of this may seem self-evident today, particularly for millennials who expect that there will be diversity and inclusion in the leadership team as a matter of course not as an afterthought.

Knowing where to start

In Australia, says Caroline Dever, a Managing Partner in Odgers Berndtson’s Melbourne office, “our experience is that progress is incremental. We know diversity is becoming a priority and the conversation is happening. The conundrum for organisations is knowing where to start and how to implement a meaningful strategy while managing levels of disruption not dealt with previously. Diversity can become a lower priority.

“Our approach has changed to how we manage diversity for our clients. We, too, have introduced unconscious bias training, which is critical. Our briefing process with clients is structured differently – we need to know where our clients are on the diversity journey. As an executive search firm, we must ensure we push ourselves to look at our processes more critically and make a →



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Lauren van Halderen (right) and **Chania Stempowski** (left), Joint CEOs at Odgers Berndtson South Africa

“

The Odgers Berndtson South Africa team has a strong track record of offering diverse and inclusive shortlists on Executive and Board searches

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deliberate effort to uncover talent that reflects all walks of society. How we ourselves look at the diversity challenge must continue to change and evolve if we are going to lead on supporting and promoting diversity to our clients.”

Gaining momentum

The South African experience is particularly interesting where cultural diversity is prioritised. In June 2017 the Johannesburg Stock Exchange Listings Requirements were amended to ensure that companies “must have a policy for the promotion of racial diversity at board level and they are further required to report annually to their shareholders how they have applied the policy. Listed companies are also required to report on how they have complied with their own voluntary targets and to report on the progress they have made.”

According to Lauren van Halderen and Chania Stempowski, Joint CEOs at Odgers Berndtson South Africa, “Corporate South Africa is still very much male-dominated at top leadership level, but that is slowly changing. Grant Thornton’s 2018 International Business Report shows that the percentage of women in senior management positions in corporate South Africa has risen by three per cent. As a female-led executive search firm, we play a vital role in bringing the gender agenda to the table in our conversations with clients, and we are finding that such conversations are gaining momentum in boardrooms too.

“The Odgers Berndtson South Africa team has a strong track record of offering diverse and inclusive shortlists

on Executive and Board searches, we have unique networks into the corporate South African landscape across industries and we are committed to developing the next tier of board leadership. We regularly introduce younger, more creative and diverse thinkers into the board selection process, who are from different backgrounds, with industry experience and views on the future world of work.”

Responsibility to clients

Each day across Odgers Berndtson’s global network efforts are being redoubled to not only ensure clients understand the proven benefits of more diverse talent in their executive and board teams but also to explain, in a collaborative way, that thinking differently can be liberating.

“Our responsibility to our clients,” says Griffith, “is to support them to make diversity a reality in their organisations. We are committed to ensuring that we provide our clients with choice and are continuing to find ways to improve the creativity with which we tackle assignments. We actively create networks with organisations that assist us in sourcing more diverse candidates. More broadly, our commitment to diversity is at every level of our own organisation. We value diversity in ethnicity, disability, gender, language, age, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, political persuasion, experience and education. We aim to ensure that employees are treated fairly, evaluated objectively and enabled to succeed.” ■



*Jane Griffith

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