4 Steps for a Successful Women's Leadership Development Program

Steps Your Organization Can Take Today to Support Career Growth Among Women

While some progress has been made with gender equality in corporate leadership, there's significant room for improvement. Year after year, the Women in the Workplace Report from LeanIn and McKinsey and Co. shows the same trend — women are promoted to manager at far lower rates than men, which makes it nearly impossible to drive progress at more senior levels.

Some factors holding women back include that they are often overlooked for leadership opportunities and aren't provided effective resources to grow into leadership roles.

FOR EVERY

100 men promoted to manager, only **87** women advance[1]

Organizations with gender diversity on their executive teams are **21%** more likely to have above-average profitability[2]

Another challenge with improving women's representation in the leadership pipeline is that many organizations mistakenly take a one-size-fits-all approach to women's leadership development, which doesn't work, as no two journeys are the same. Each woman is at a different stage in her career, on a unique career path, and balancing her own work and personal responsibilities.

How can your organization more effectively offer leadership development opportunities that enable women to learn how, when and where they want to learn, and drive gender diversity across your leadership pipeline as a result? We've highlighted several actions you can take to make this a reality.

96% of women in leadership said they had to adjust the way they lead or motivate their teams in response to workplace challenges related to the pandemic[3]

62% of women report feeling undervalued by their manager or leader, and it's a top reason women leave their workplace[4]

Support Targeted Leadership Development Tracks

Women preparing for their first promotion to manager need different learning and development resources than women at middle or senior management levels. And if you offer all women the same career development resources, you probably won't make as much progress as you'd like toward your gender diversity goals. To support high-potential women on the road to leadership, it's important to offer targeted tracks that meet women no matter where they are on their leadership journey.

reacHIRE's virtual, cohort-based leadership development program has four learning tracks and an accompanying Manager Journey to support the women in your organization during pivotal milestones in their career journey:

- Elevate your high potential Early Career talent by fostering growth and leadership skills
- Equip your Mid-Career female talent for senior roles for a diverse leadership pipeline
- Empower People of Color & Allies to to navigate intersectionality, foster internal networks, cultivate belonging and drive allyship
- Excel your individual contributor Technical female talent by enabling them to drive technical thought leadership initiatives within the organization

68% of early career women agree they do not feel supported at work[5]

Between entry level and the C-suite, the representation of Women of Color drops off by more than **75%**[6]

Offer Flexible Learning Options with a Comprehensive Curriculum

As they navigate how to best balance work responsibilities, learning and career advancement unfortunately falls lower on the priority list for many women, which can have a negative impact on workplace equality for years to come.

To empower women to develop their leadership skills whether they're working remotely, in a hybrid setting, in the office, or working a reduced or flexible schedule, it's key to have flexible learning and development options. More flexible opportunities such as on-demand learning resources, microlearning modules and peer-to-peer networking opportunities allow employees to learn at their pace and on their own time.

In addition to flexible options for learning, reacHIRE's leadership development program features a structured curriculum led by expert guides. Learning and leadership-building modules within the program include today's must-have skills, such as: being resilient, operating with impact, building relationships, and creating a growth mindset, among others.

25% of women with caregiving responsibilities feel their professional development has stifled during the pandemic[7]

78% 78% of women think in-office workers are more likely to be promoted than remote workers[8]

Foster Belonging & Community

When employees feel they belong and see real evidence that they are valued, they perform better, are more engaged, and more likely to stay.

This sense of community and belonging is even more important as women rise the ranks and see fewer of their peers. Women on the leadership path who take a team-based journey to build their leadership skills in small cohorts can build meaningful relationships and rely on one another to help seize opportunities and overcome challenges.

Through the leadership development program, women can leverage the power of cohort-based peer learning to develop and advance in their careers. Additionally, community-supported goal setting and tracking helps women celebrate individual and team wins in a psychologically safe, supportive setting.

64% of women in leadership report that their professional support networks are critical to their wellness and growth[9]

70% of leadership development occurs through experiential learning, but women are largely overlooked for challenging experiential work assignments[10]

Provide Guidance from Experienced Executives

Many companies offer training and development opportunities, but to harness the power of those lessons and build leadership and communication skills, the human element is key.

One way companies can support this is by offering expert guidance to support women's career growth and development, especially if they want to grow a more diverse next generation of leaders.

Through reacHIRE's leadership development program, certified executive Guides with real-world experience offer mentoring and coaching support to women. Leadership Guides are vetted, experienced executives who provide women with virtual support to help individuals stay on track with their specific development plans. Guides also share an outside perspective, so conversations and growth happen in a trusted environment. By providing virtual support, women are supported on their career journeys no matter an organization's work environment — in-office, hybrid, or fully remote.

84% of women in leadership say that mentors played a vital role in developing their resilience[11]

80% of women lack confidence seeking mentors[10]

About reacHIRE's Leadership Development Program

reacHIRE's leadership development program is a scalable solution built to address the challenges of turnover, burnout, and lack of women across your organization. Powered by the Aurora platform, the program helps organizations develop and advance female leaders through team-based learning, virtual coaching, and connected community.

reacHIRE's leadership development program empowers your organization to:

- Engage more of your female talent
- Empower them to grow & advance
- Retain women by building belonging into your workplace culture

Additional benefits include:

- Immediate impact & value
- Quick deployment
- High platform adoption & engagement
- Affordable & scalable
- Actionable insights & metrics

With many leadership development programs, it can be challenging to measure the true impact and effectiveness. reacHIRE provides detailed reporting on its impact, and surfaces actionable insights. Armed with these insights, you'll understand the issues that matter most — and where your company can improve to help women overcome challenges and seize opportunities.
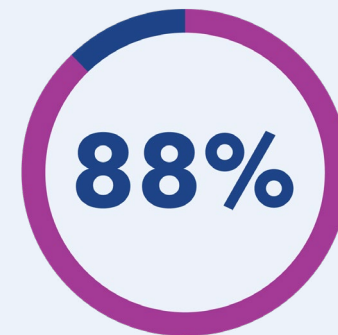
Aurora: Proven Growth in Women's Leadership Development[13]
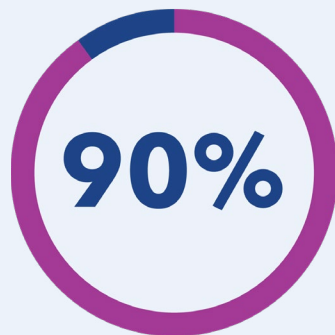
90%
of participants agree the program helped build the skills to advance their career
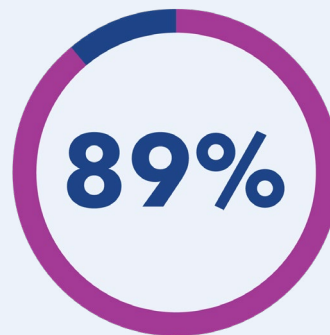
89%
agree the program helped them become a more effective leader

88%
agree the program helped build their leadership skills

About reacHIRE

reacHIRE empowers companies to build diverse talent pipelines by bringing professionals back to work after a career break with our Return-to-Work programs, and developing and advancing future leaders within organizations with our Leadership Development Programs.

LEARN MORE

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Footnotes

1   Women in the Workplace 2023 Report
2   McKinsey & Co. Delivering Diversity, 2018
3   Advancing the Future of Women in Business: A KPMG Women's Leadership Summit Report
4   FTI Consulting: Culture at Work Report
5   reacHIRE Study, 2020
6   Women in the Workplace 2021 Report
7   SHRM Women@Work Data, 2021
8   Gartner: What Women Want from Hybrid Work in the Wake of COVID-19

9   Advancing the Future of Women in Business: A KPMG Women's Leadership Summit Report
10 Center for Creative Leadership
11 Advancing the Future of Women in Business: A KPMG Women's Leadership Summit Report
12 Advancing the Future of Women in Business: A KPMG Women's Leadership Summit Report
13 Aurora Accelerate Data, 2021