

# Moving the Needle for Women Leaders

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How organisations can inform  
and impact Diversity, Inclusion  
& Belonging for women





## It's time to think differently about Diversity & Inclusion

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Businesses have been caring a lot more about diversity and inclusion for the better part of the last two decades, and yet we still don't have a firm grasp on exactly how to take the right approach and deliver effective diversity strategies. Diversity programmes taken on without a clear roadmap are ineffective at best - or at worst, failures.

While diversity covers a range of human dimensions, the biggest question mark is still hovering around women in the workforce, and female leaders. The link between developing female leaders and a country's economic growth is proven to be closely connected, but it's difficult for many HR leaders to reframe this understanding in a smaller, immediate business context.

While it's impossible to put your finger on one specific cause for a gender leadership gap, LinkedIn data has uncovered a surprising reason women might be struggling to reach leadership positions - timing.

The issue isn't around level of experience for female leaders - it's that after approximately 10 years, the more experience women have, the less likely they are to become leaders. In fact, according to our data, the sweet spot for women taking on a leadership role is somewhere between 10 and 15 years of being in the workforce. However, men typically have a longer window to strive for leadership roles, after 20 or even 30 years.

While we still aren't sure why this is the case - employer bias or personal choice, perhaps - it brings to light a glaring gap in our ability to nurture, develop and actively focus on female leadership, even as it is drawn into the global spotlight.

In this report, we hope to shed some light on the reasons why female leadership is still trailing behind across multiple functions, as well as some unique insights into what is preventing women from reaching the top, and what organisations are trying to do about it.



## Women In Leadership

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Where are female leaders thriving, failing and struggling to reach the top?

# The Progress of Female Leaders in the Workplace

Before we can explore how organisations are starting to think about diversity & inclusion differently, it's important to know their starting point.

Through the analysis of millions of LinkedIn Profiles, we have compiled the industries, job titles and countries where women are thriving professionally. This is helping us to identify barriers the global workforce still needs to overcome.

## 1. There are more women leaders globally than ever before

Women now hold just over 25% of all leadership positions globally. Although a gap remains, this is a significant stride forward since 2008 when we started tracking this data.



⌵ The United States and Canada have the highest percentage of women in leadership, with one third holding roles director-level and above



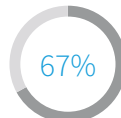
⌵ Spain represents the least change, with female leadership hiring increasing by just 3%



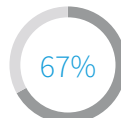
⌵ India has shown the biggest percentage increase in female leadership hiring with a 25% change between 2008-2016

## 2. More women are entering tech

Despite tech still falling behind other sectors, the industry on the whole has acknowledged its shortcomings - and more women being hired into technology roles. This is likely due to an increasingly publicised spotlight on tech companies' gender parity programmes.



⌵ Female UX Designers have seen the sharpest increase in hiring between 2008-2016, at 67%



⌵ Chief Technology Officer has also seen a 67% jump in women being hired



⌵ However, CEOs only witnessed a 20% change - the lowest of the job titles measured

## 3. Plenty of female CHROs, few CEOs

Across the C-suite globally, the single role that women hold more or less equivalent to men is Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). At the other end of the scale is CEOs. While this indicates there is still much work to be done, at least one study found female CEOs actually get paid more than their male counterparts. In fact, female CEOs of the 100 largest public companies in the United States earned an average \$22.7 million in 2015, while male CEOs took home an average of \$14.9 million.



⌵ CHRO is the most gender-neutral executive role, increasing its female hires by 82% between 2008-2016



⌵ Chief Technology Officer follows closely behind with a 60% increase



⌵ The only role to show a decline in female hires is Chief Information Officers, which has seen a dip of 7% in this time frame.

Sources - International Women's Day: Celebrating the Progress of Women Leaders in the Workplace;  
Equilar: Top-Paid Female CEOs

# Top Skills for Women Leaders Globally

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To determine the top attributes of female leaders today, we looked at the most common skills based on LinkedIn profiles. Interestingly, women are noted for their management, leadership and strategic planning skills above all else:

1. Management
2. Leadership
3. Strategic Planning
4. Customer Service
5. Public Speaking
6. Marketing
7. Project Management
8. Social Media
9. Event Planning
10. Research

Our data also shows there has been a 35% increase in global hires made with diversity job titles over the past eight years. This indicates that organisations are starting to acknowledge and prioritise the connect between diversity and business success, especially at senior levels.

More than **37%** of talent acquisition leaders believe diversity will be the number one trend defining the future of hiring.



# Fair Female Representation by Job Function

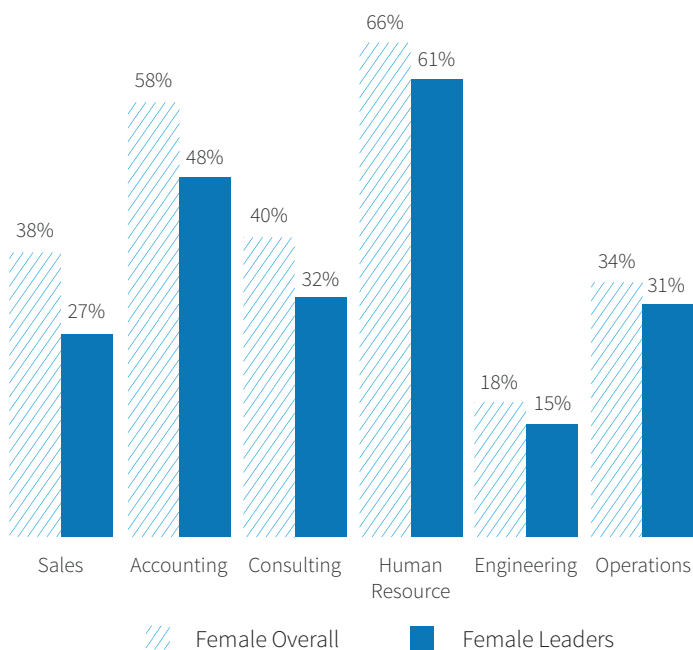
While businesses are making some progress with female representation, a closer look at the gender leadership gap reveals surprising results - namely between the number of women in the workforce and the number of women in leadership positions. By analysing millions of LinkedIn profiles, we can extrapolate the key functions where women are thriving - and where there are barriers still to overcome.

## Critical Functions: Where are the Women?

Sales roles have the worst leadership gap at 11%, with 38% of women being hired into the workforce, but only 27% reaching leadership roles.

At the other end of the scale is HR with the best representation of women at 66%, and 61% of them reaching leadership roles - a gap of just 5%. And while engineering has fewer women in the workforce at 18%, the gender leadership gap is small, with 15% of the female workforce being hired into leadership positions.

% Female overall vs. leadership representation, by select functions



## The Plight of Women in STEM

Women make up **less than a quarter** of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths professionals globally



14% of women work in Engineering



18% of women work in IT



19% of women work in Operations

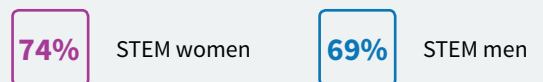


30% of women work in Research

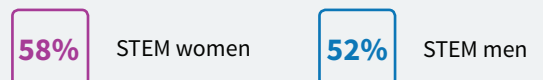
## To recruit STEM women highlight the “human” side of your company

Women are more likely to want to know about:

### Company Culture



### Employee Perspectives



# What is Preventing Women from Reaching the Top?

Research conducted by LinkedIn and Bain & Company of more than 8,000 LinkedIn members – both female and male – found some interesting insights about women’s leadership journeys

## 01 Why Women Stall

From the moment they set foot in the workplace, women are less sanguine than men about their prospects of getting to the top.

Women are:

- 31% more likely than men to question whether they have what it takes to advance in a leadership position
- 19% more likely than men to feel uninspired by their day-to-day work
- 17% more likely than men to say they are not getting the same opportunities for career advancement
- 61% more likely than men to have a spouse with a job as or more intense than theirs
- 5x more likely to be the primary parent

## 02 The Mindset Gap

To find out what it takes to get to the top, we studied those who are already there. Top managers share three key mindsets - the aspiration to strive for a top role; the confidence that they can get there; the endurance to put in the work. Women enter the workforce with a “mindset deficit”:

- At entry-level, **65%** of women aspire to reach the top, compared to **72%** of men
- **63%** of women are confident they can get to the top, while **75%** of men feel that way.
- **62%** of women and **70%** of men say they have the endurance necessary to weather setbacks and challenges.

This deficit stays with women into mid-career, meaning women are trailing men at a critical point in their professional journeys.

- At mid-career, **56%** of women demonstrate aspiration, compared to **64%** of men
- **57%** of women show confidence, compared to **66%** of men
- **68%** of women display endurance, compared to **77%** of men

## 03 Drivers of Success

While women who've made it to the top acknowledge their own drive and abilities, they also credit the support, opportunities, coaching, and training they've received. We have established a set of drivers from these successful men and women who have the right mindset for leadership:

- They believe they are **more capable** than their peers of advancing to senior roles.
- They know they have the **skills** and leadership style to reach a top position.
- They feel **inspired** by the senior leaders at their company, seeing them as people they would like to **emulate** in their own careers.
- And they believe they can get the **training** they need to get ahead

We also gleaned insights from mid-career women who don't wish to be senior managers. They don't consider themselves to be on an advancement track due to lack of opportunities, conflicts between work and family, and a lack of role models.

But what could encourage them to get into the right mindset?

1. Ensuring **sufficient training, coaching, and discussion of goals** and career ambitions
2. Clearly outlining **criteria for success** and how they can meet them
3. Giving women **the opportunity to stretch** in their current roles
4. Encouraging a **genuine personal** connection
5. Providing **direct encouragement** to reach top management

## 04 Taking Action

Frontline managers are key to women rising up the ranks. Top-down efforts to promote female advancement are necessary but not sufficient, as women (and men) make decisions about their careers based on daily interactions with their managers and peers. During these formative years, frontline managers play a critical role. This role extends beyond simply building the skills of future leaders on their teams – they must also build their mindsets.

Frontline managers can take these steps to help women who lack inspiration and confidence:

1. **Highlight diverse models of successful leadership.** Show women there is more than one route to the top. Point to role models and discuss how she can build on her own strengths, skills, and priorities.
2. **Invest in day-to-day coaching, including open and regular feedback:** Understand the specific skills and experiences that each woman feels she needs to be successful. Build and formulate a plan to ensure she gets it.
3. **Champion women.** Behind the scenes support is valuable, but advocating for someone to take on a new project or stretch role in front of others further underscores your belief in her potential.

Of course, frontline managers can't accomplish all these things on their own. They need visible and sustained support from the C-suite. Top leaders need to communicate clearly that gender parity is a priority for the business.



# Time To Tackle The Gender Leadership Gap

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How businesses are starting to move  
the needle



# Customer Talks: Diversity & Inclusion



Amanda Revis  
Chief People Experience Officer  
Suncorp

“We focus on building an inclusive environment to support our diverse workforce and leverage the diversity of thought, backgrounds, and experiences that drives innovation and ultimately improved business performance.”

Our approach to gender diversity has seen us achieve gender balance across our total leadership community, at 49% female and 51% male.

We continue to build toward balance within our senior leadership community at 42% female and 58% male currently. Flexible working programs & building a pipeline of female talent are top priority areas.”

Alla Keogh  
General Manager, People & Performance  
MYOB

“We believe attracting and retaining women in tech roles is critical to growing a diverse workforce. Our objectives are to achieve 30% of Women in Tech roles, for our senior technical female leaders to match the employee composition, and for our senior female People Leaders to grow to 41% across the business. Our DevelopHER programme - a 360-hour paid internship program to identify women with prior work experience - gives women from other career backgrounds exposure,

immersion and development in the software industry. Over 10 weeks, women are taught the fundamental skills they need to become sought-after junior Software Developers. After the internship, MYOB may offer permanent positions, or assist them in finding employment through our extensive networks.

We are proud to be led by our CEO, Tim Reed, a member of the Male Champions of Change (STEM) group, to increase the diverse thinking of our leaders and their teams through education and support. We believe that this will have the most profound effect on sustainable long term change.”



Sophie Guerin  
Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Asia Pacific & Japan  
Dell

“In 2015 we started a journey in APJ to increase our representation of women in senior management. While we had developed world class leadership programs, we realised we needed to create a long-term change management strategy in order to build and support our pipeline of female talent.

We defined some ambitious goals to achieve by 2020: 1) To be known for best in class leadership; 2) To be recognised as a great place to work; 3) to double our

representation of women in senior leadership. To achieve these goals we developed a roadmap called Project Inclusion - an end-to-end organisational change management plan that covers five key pillars: leadership, policies & benefits, pipeline, education & development and communications, with a total of 25 work streams.

The success of this approach is ultimately grounded in the fact that we recognise diversity is not achieved through a narrow focus area or one off training. Inclusion, which drives and harnesses the power of diversity, is achieved when an organisation is built to enable and support an inclusive ecosystem.”

Sunita Cherian  
SVP Human Resources, Diversity & Inclusion Head  
Wipro

“Diverse experiences and perspectives are essential for developing new ideas and innovation. Inclusion means valuing the differences & celebrating the uniqueness among individuals, with respect. We aim for Team Wipro to be sensitive and result oriented. This means that while everyone’s views are considered, the decision is based on merit, rather than on who proposed the idea. We recognised the need for an organisational framework that established gender inclusion as a priority.

‘Women of Wipro’ was launched in 2008, and soon became a call to action where we analysed the stages

of a typical woman’s life and career stages. The early stage of her career is focused on building perspective and fuelling aspirations, and our Exposure Programmes include structured job rotations and networking opportunities for this. The middle stage blends in Flexibility Initiatives, which help her effectively manage growing job responsibilities with duties at home. The next stage is about strengthening a seasoned professional, and our Empower Programmes include mentoring and Women in Leadership workshops to identify specific challenges here.

Addressing each progressive stage of their careers has helped our women professionals gain in stability and confidence over the longer term, and to enjoy a longer career runway.”





## Building a Diverse & Inclusive LinkedIn

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Introducing a third dimension that speaks to the heart: Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

# Closing the Gender Gap: A Sense of Belonging

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Thankfully, organisations are coming to an aligned realisation that diversity & inclusion is necessary - but it's not enough. In order to turn up the dial and increase their chances of success, female talent and leaders must feel as though they belong.

To start to understand what best-in class looks like, LinkedIn consulted with a number of leading customers to gain a holistic understanding of their diversity roadblocks, aspirations, and ongoing efforts to shift the focus for success.

Overall, organisations and their talent divisions are:

- Identifying where they have made progress and accurately measuring pipeline metrics across the employee lifecycle
- Constructing effective plans and programs to tackle gaps and obstacles
- Providing resources, training and development to help create leadership paths for women
- Allowing women more opportunities for career growth throughout their life, not just in their 20s and 30s

*“Belonging matters - it’s that third dimension to diversity & inclusion. It’s a strength at a company level. It fuels your culture and it fuels your energy.”*

- Pat Wadors, CHRO, LinkedIn



# Calling ‘DIBs’ on Diversity

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Most leaders around the world recognise the need for diversity & inclusion initiatives, but stamping out something as ingrained and complex as bias is not as simple as force-feeding diversity and inclusion as one programme or training session.

Diversity and inclusion are necessary, but not sufficient. To truly succeed in this arena, we need to introduce belonging.

## Belonging

*“I can be authentic, I matter, and I am essential to my team”*

It’s with this trifecta in mind that LinkedIn launched The DIBs Index - an ongoing and evolving research project into Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging that helps our organisation focus our actions and measure success. This opportunity to create a comprehensive measure of experiences of diversity, inclusion and belonging started with our Employee Voice Survey.

## Why Belonging matters

LinkedIn’s vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. To accomplish it, we believe it’s critical to build diverse teams that are a reflection of our members. Therefore, we are committed to creating a work environment where employees not only feel included, they also feel like they belong.

According to our Diversity Report, representation as of June 2016 is as follows: at LinkedIn, women account for 42% of overall employees and 35% of leadership - a 5% improvement since 2015 and a 10% improvement since 2014. We will continue to strive to do better.

We also gave our US employees the opportunity to self-identify across several key measures of diversity, such as gender and ethnicity. Employees could also anonymously disclose if they identify as having a disability, which has allowed us - for the first time - to gain a better understanding of the 3% of our workforce

who have a disability, and recognise that these people are too often invisible members of the workforce.

## How LinkedIn introduced Belonging

We leveraged some questions from our engagement survey and mapped aspects to diversity and inclusion. This allowed us to track trends over time, and then with the help of academic research and benchmarking, we re-adjusted the mapping to calculate Index scores. We also added new questions for employees to respond to, such as:

- I feel comfortable being myself at work
- I go out of my way to help others feels like they belong at LinkedIn
- Even when something negative happens, I do not question whether or not I belong at LinkedIn
- Someone I work closely with cares about me as person

We are working to make life at LinkedIn more accessible for all groups of our employees. We share stories so that we can become advocates for each other, and we are holding ourselves accountable to increase representation of those employee groups who may have been previously less visible.

We believe strongly that a sense of belonging is the key to unlocking the full potential of our employees and get closer to successfully achieving our collective vision.

# LinkedIn's Women's Initiative (WiN)

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Why did LinkedIn create this new initiative around increasing women in leadership positions? Because we want to WiN.

## What is WiN?

In 2014, LinkedIn launched the Women's Initiative with the target to increase the number of qualified, high potential female senior leaders. The goal is a culture where every employee can thrive and reach their fullest potential, and creating a workplace where building teams with diversity in mind is valued.

Achieving this diversity and inclusion in the workplace is not just the right thing to do - it's critical to our long-term success as a business.

## Areas of Focus:

- Creating a culture of conscious inclusion
- Investing in high-potential women through skill development, coaching, visibility and opportunities to showcase talent
- Hiring qualified senior women internally or externally in senior leadership roles
- Communicating what we do to drive awareness and understanding

## Who is eligible?

- A strong performer who is consistently exceeding expectations
- High potential leader who is ready for promotion within 1-2 years
- Senior manager level



# Key Takeaways For Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

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For several decades, companies have embraced a focus on diversity and inclusion - but on the whole, the needle has not been moved enough for women. The outcomes of D&I initiatives rest with the executive leadership teams, but in order to truly change a culture and make a holistic difference to how your female employees view their day-to-day interactions with your company, the key is in shifting everyone's mindset. Every facet of an employee's professional experience should be crafted, nurtured and measured for the right outcomes.

To make a difference and close the gender gap, companies must work to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. It's imperative that companies commit to developing and maintaining a work environment where employees not only feel included in a diverse ecosystem, but that they also belong.

## 1. Hire

At entry-level, 65% of women say they aspire to reach the top of their careers, compared with 72% of men. At mid-career, this gap is still present, with 56% of women demonstrating aspiration, compared to 64% of men. This is a damaging mindset that works against being able to move the needle for women, and something that should be addressed right from the beginning of the recruitment cycle. Democratising access to opportunity is absolutely critical for every single person.

Your talent acquisition goals must be around developing a robust, diverse and inclusive candidate pool, and building a balanced and unbiased process for applicants. The foundations have to be laid before diversity, inclusion and belonging can show real, tangible impact on your bottom line.

## 2. Develop

Ensuring women develop the right mindset for success depends heavily on their direct managers. Sufficient training, coaching and discussions of goals is key, but making sure frontline managers are equipped to outline criteria for success and giving women the opportunity to stretch in their current roles is critical. Direct encouragement and a genuine personal connection between female employees and their managers is absolutely necessary.

## 3. Retain

Allowing employees to always be their authentic selves at work is critical to retention. At LinkedIn, we measure belonging in the candidate interview process and in employee engagement surveys, and have found that sharing moments of belonging is a key driver to engagement and intent to stay on board.

To support this, companies can help women who might be lacking inspiration for success by ensuring they can see a clear path to the top. Invest in day-to-day coaching and ensure you are actively promoting a culture of regular feedback. And last but not least, celebrate and champion women. Support is meaningful, but actively advocating for someone to step up into a new role, or lead a project, is even more beneficial to their sense of belonging and ability to succeed.

The key for companies is to consider diversity, inclusion and belonging with how it relates to your employees, as well as benchmarking across competitors and other industries.

To uncover more insights and intelligence around how your company compares with other businesses, contact your LinkedIn representative for your own customised report.

## **ABOUT LINKEDIN TALENT SOLUTIONS**

LinkedIn Talent Solutions offers a full range of recruiting solutions to help organisations of all sizes find, attract and engage the best talent.

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With over 500 million members worldwide, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.