



Advancement of women to lower and middle management

Development & Assessment



Culture & Awareness



- In your assessments, also be on the alert for “protective hesitation”, where you don’t give women clear, consistent and meaningful feedback on order to “protect” them. Avoid this by using an objective, consistent assessment format.
- Be aware of gender bias in self-image: women tend to give themselves lower evaluations for the same performance as men.

Policy & Structure

- Be transparent about how the company is investing in advancement to lower and middle management and about the selection criteria. Make sure that all employees have this information.
- Make the employees’ ambitions, including in the area of leadership, a standard part of regular evaluation interviews.
- Use an objective, consistent assessment format. Apply this format in the same way to everyone.
- Screen career development feedback for gender bias. Make sure that the career development feedback is uniform and consistent for male and female employees. To this end, use standard questions about skills to be developed, team-oriented activities, leadership vision, etc..
- In performance reviews, don’t penalise employees for time taken off for care-related activities related to childbirth, childcare, pregnancy leave and parental leave. Base your assessment on the time spent at work and the employee’s performance during that time.
- Ensure gender balance in talent programmes and in the recruitment of lateral-entry employees.
- Create candidate programmes, aimed at those layers of the organisation where women are well-represented. This may help to advance talented employees at a more rapid pace and plug the leak in the pipeline.



- Create an official mentoring programme. A mentor can help with career advice and may also make his or her network available. When creating a programme like this, make sure to include enough mentors representing minority groups.

Example: At one telecom company, anyone (starting at a particular level) can become a mentor in their mentoring programme. This prevents a situation where the mentoring programme only consists of mentors who are high-profile talents or talents selected by their managers. In doing this, they provide opportunities for a target group that might otherwise miss out..

- Networking within the organisation is important to make ambitions known and to get promoted. Facilitate and encourage informal interpersonal contact and employee networking opportunities that are more inclusive than the traditional drinks after work, like a lunch for example.

- Create a women’s network and organise activities and workshops exclusively for women. Use these activities to focus on the impact of stereotypes on the self-image of women and on increasing visibility.

Example: The work group on diversity and inclusion at one engineering firm organised workshops exclusively for women, in which about 200 women participated. Part 1 was about diversity, inclusion and bias, and part 2 addressed barriers and what women can do themselves to break these barriers.

Evaluation

- Compare the career trajectories of different employees on a regular basis. This may lead to the realisation that one person is not advancing despite positive evaluations and may prevent someone like that from continually getting overlooked “by accident”..

- Create a dashboard which also shows the assessment scores and the perceived potential of female colleagues and male colleagues, and discuss these in management teams.

Reflection



What opportunities does your organisation offer in terms of development & assessment to promote the advancement of women?
