



Advancement of women to lower and middle management

Retention of talent

Culture & Awareness



- Take a critical look at the unwritten rules and gender bias in the organisation with regard to expertise and leadership.

- Create an inclusive corporate culture where women feel welcome and safe.

- Initiate discussions at work about (gender) diversity, as awkward as this may feel sometimes. For example, organise a “lunch and learn” where colleagues can talk about positive and negative biases they have experienced because of their sex.

Policy & Structure

- Offer flexibility and support for care obligations. Be proactive by initiating discussion about this with men as well as women.

- Offer longer mandatory paid childbirth leave. This will reduce the stereotype that mothers take care of the children and fathers go to work, like the standard association of women with part-time work.

- Have the organisation offer a course on combining work and care obligations for men and women.

- Besides discussing increased work hours with women who are working part-time, also talk about reduced work hours with men who work full-time. Offer men and women the same options with regard to part-time work.

- When talking about reduced work hours, for example after the birth of a first child or in case of family care obligations, also make agreements about increasing the number of contractual hours again at a later time.

- Research shows that women often receive less support and fewer resources from the company to help them do their work properly. Be mindful of this, and offer women adequate resources, such as financing, management support and team size, to enable them to do well as leaders.

- Include the advancement of women as a topic in succession planning and talent management.



- Encourage and facilitate informal interpersonal contacts and employee networking opportunities in inclusive ways. An example would be a company lunch instead of drinks after work.

- Give employees room for “job crafting” - let them decide where, when and how to do their job.
Port authority example *All positions, including management positions, at one port authority have part-time options. In addition, employees are free to decide where and when they work.*

Evaluation

- Make a habit of finding out what the women in your organisation need, what they value and what obstacles they face.

- Check the human resources policy, culture and structure of the organisation for possible gender bias, including in lower and middle management. For example, evaluate whether the requirements for different positions are actually necessary and make sure they do not unnecessarily exclude candidates. Revise if necessary.

- Monitor the gender balance in the entry, advancement and exit figures at different levels, including lower and middle management. Knowledge is power: learn how your organisation is doing in terms of the advancement of women by collecting data. Look at the proportional representation of women at different job levels and at their advancement at each job level. Pay attention to the number of women in leadership positions and the number of women who work part-time.
Example: *one telecom company maintains figures on gender equality on a gender diversity dashboard. The dashboard shows entry, advancement and exit figures for the different (higher) levels. It contains information about the male/female distribution of the team, the objective, how many men/women have left and the percentage of female appointments at each job level. Moreover, it also shows where successful internal and external advancement candidates come from, which can then be taken into consideration.*

- Review the scores of the employee satisfaction questionnaire by gender to find out if there are differences, and if so, what these differences consist of.

- Investigate the effects of tools to improve the gender balance at the company, including in lower and middle management.

