
WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE 2016

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

Women in the Workplace 2016 is a comprehensive study by Lean In and McKinsey & Company on the state of women in corporate America.

The study shows that women are less likely to receive the first critical promotion to manager—meaning that far fewer end up on the path to leadership—and they are less likely to be hired into more senior positions. As a result, the higher you look in companies, the fewer women you see.

The good news is, we can get this right. Read our study to explore women and men’s different experiences at work, generate ideas for how you can support the women you work with, and see what companies can do to create a more inclusive workplace.

INSTRUCTIONS

Individually or as a group, read the *Women in the Workplace 2016* report (available at womenintheworkplace.com). Then use the questions below for a group discussion about the ideas presented in the report.

- Share your overall reaction to the report. What new information did you learn? Did anything in the report surprise you? Did anything concern you?
- Which findings about women’s work experience resonate with you based on your own experience? Explain why.
- Based on the findings, what are some ways you can better support the women at your company? As a group, brainstorm at least ten ideas.
- A key finding of the report is that women lobby for promotions and ask for raises as often as men—but often face social pushback when they do. Have you experienced this? If so, what did you do? As a group, share your stories and discuss some strategies for navigating this bias.

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- Women are often subtly disadvantaged in many of their daily interactions at work. For example, fewer women than men believe their contributions are appropriately valued. There are ways that you can help counter this. For example, if you hear a coworker run away with a woman's idea, you can remind everyone it originated with her by saying, "Great idea . . . thanks to Katie for surfacing it." As a group, brainstorm some more ways that you can make sure women's ideas get credit and their contributions are valued.
 - A key study finding is that women of color face even more barriers to advancement than white women. Even though they make up 20 percent of the U.S. population, women of color hold a mere 3 percent of C-suite positions, despite having higher aspirations for becoming a top executive than white women. Were you surprised by this finding? Why? One step to improving racial diversity in companies is creating awareness of the problem. What are some ways you could raise awareness around racial diversity in your workplace?
 - Women and men worry equally about balancing work and family. However, women *with and without children* are far more likely to say they don't want the pressure of a leadership role, suggesting they expect to face more challenges or are doing a different cost-benefit analysis. Why do you think this is?
 - The report points to several areas where companies are struggling to put their commitment to gender diversity into practice. What process breakdowns do you see in your company, and how can you make improvements as an individual contributor, manager, or leader?

If your company employs more than 1,000 people and did not participate in the *2016 Women in the Workplace* study, please sign up for the 2017 study at womenintheworkplace.com.