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We know intuitively that diversity matters. It’s also increasingly clear that it makes sense in purely business terms. Our latest research finds that companies in the top quartile for gender or racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians. Companies in the bottom quartile in these dimensions are statistically less likely to achieve above-average returns. And diversity is probably a competitive differentiator that shifts market share toward more diverse companies over time.

While correlation does not equal causation (greater gender and ethnic diversity in corporate leadership doesn’t automatically translate into more profit), the correlation does indicate that when companies commit themselves to diverse leadership, they are more successful. More diverse companies, we believe, are better able to win top talent and improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction, and decision making, and all that leads to a virtuous cycle of increasing returns. This in turn suggests that other kinds of diversity—for example, in age, sexual orientation, and experience (such as a global mind-set and cultural fluency)—are also likely to bring some level of competitive advantage for companies that can attract and retain such diverse talent.

McKinsey has been examining diversity in the workplace for several years. Our latest report, Diversity Matters, examined proprietary data sets for 366 public companies across a range of industries in Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In this research, we looked at metrics such as financial results and the composition of top management and boards. The findings were clear:

- Companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.
- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.
- Companies in the bottom quartile both for gender and for ethnicity and race are statistically less likely to achieve above-average financial returns than the average companies in the data set (that is, bottom-quartile companies are lagging rather than merely not leading).
In the United States, there is a linear relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and better financial performance: for every 10 percent increase in racial and ethnic diversity on the senior-executive team, earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) rise 0.8 percent.

Racial and ethnic diversity has a stronger impact on financial performance in the United States than gender diversity, perhaps because earlier efforts to increase women’s representation in the top levels of business have already yielded positive results.

In the United Kingdom, greater gender diversity on the senior-executive team corresponded to the highest performance uplift in our data set: for every 10 percent increase in gender diversity, EBIT rose by 3.5 percent.

While certain industries perform better on gender diversity and other industries on ethnic and racial diversity, no industry or company is in the top quartile on both dimensions.

The unequal performance of companies in the same industry and the same country implies that diversity is a competitive differentiator shifting market share toward more diverse companies.

We’re not suggesting that achieving greater diversity is easy. Women—accounting for an average of just 16 percent of the members of executive teams in the United States, 12 percent in the United Kingdom, and 6 percent in Brazil—remain underrepresented at the top of corporations globally. The United Kingdom does comparatively better in racial diversity, albeit at a low level: some 78 percent of UK companies have senior-leadership teams that fail to reflect the demographic composition of the country’s labor force and population, compared with 91 percent for Brazil and 97 percent for the United States.

These numbers underline the work that remains to be done, even as the case for greater diversity becomes more compelling. We live in a deeply connected and global world. It should come as no surprise that more diverse companies and institutions are achieving better performance. Most organizations, including McKinsey, must do more to take full advantage of the opportunity that diverse leadership teams represent. That’s particularly true for their talent pipelines: attracting, developing, mentoring, sponsoring, and retaining the next generations of global leaders at all levels of organizations. Given the higher returns that diversity is expected to bring, we believe it is better to invest now, since winners will pull further ahead and laggards will fall further behind.

This article is adapted from the report Diversity Matters (PDF–1,732KB), which was re-released in February 2015.

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ENDLESS meetings that do little but waste everyone’s time. Dysfunctional committees that take two steps back for every one forward. Project teams that engage in wishful groupthinking rather than honest analysis. Everyone who is part of an organization — a company, a nonprofit, a condo board — has experienced these and other pathologies that can occur when human beings try to work together in groups.

But does teamwork have to be a lost cause? Psychologists have been working on the problem for a long time. And for good reason: Nowadays, though we may still idolize the charismatic leader or creative genius, almost every decision of consequence is made by a group. When Facebook’s board of directors establishes a privacy policy, when the C.I.A.’s operatives strike a suspected terrorist hide-out or when a jury decides whether to convict a defendant, what matters is not just the intelligence and wisdom of the individual actors involved. Groups of smart people can make horrible decisions — or great ones.

Psychologists have known for a century that individuals vary in their cognitive ability. But are some groups, like some people, reliably smarter than others?

Working with several colleagues and students, we set out to answer that question. In our first two studies, which we published with Alex Pentland and
Nada Hashmi of M.I.T. in 2010 in the journal Science, we grouped 697 volunteer participants into teams of two to five members. Each team worked together to complete a series of short tasks, which were selected to represent the varied kinds of problems that groups are called upon to solve in the real world. One task involved logical analysis, another brainstorming; others emphasized coordination, planning and moral reasoning.

Individual intelligence, as psychologists measure it, is defined by its generality: People with good vocabularies, for instance, also tend to have good math skills, even though we often think of those abilities as distinct. The results of our studies showed that this same kind of general intelligence also exists for teams. On average, the groups that did well on one task did well on the others, too. In other words, some teams were simply smarter than others.

We next tried to define what characteristics distinguished the smarter teams from the rest, and we were a bit surprised by the answers we got. We gave each volunteer an individual I.Q. test, but teams with higher average I.Q.s didn’t score much higher on our collective intelligence tasks than did teams with lower average I.Q.s. Nor did teams with more extroverted people, or teams whose members reported feeling more motivated to contribute to their group’s success.

Instead, the smartest teams were distinguished by three characteristics. First, their members contributed more equally to the team’s discussions, rather than letting one or two people dominate the group.

Second, their members scored higher on a test called Reading the Mind in the Eyes, which measures how well people can read complex emotional states from images of faces with only the eyes visible.

Finally, teams with more women outperformed teams with more men. Indeed, it appeared that it was not “diversity” (having equal numbers of men and women) that mattered for a team’s intelligence, but simply having more women. This last effect, however, was partly explained by the fact that women, on average, were better at “mindreading” than men.

In a new study that we published with David Engel and Lisa X. Jing of M.I.T. last month in PLoS One, we replicated these earlier findings, but with a
We randomly assigned each of 68 teams to complete our collective intelligence test in one of two conditions. Half of the teams worked face to face, like the teams in our earlier studies. The other half worked online, with no ability to see any of their teammates. Online collaboration is on the rise, with tools like Skype, Google Drive and old-fashioned email enabling groups that never meet to execute complex projects. We wanted to see whether groups that worked online would still demonstrate collective intelligence, and whether social ability would matter as much when people communicated purely by typing messages into a browser.

And they did. Online and off, some teams consistently worked smarter than others. More surprisingly, the most important ingredients for a smart team remained constant regardless of its mode of interaction: members who communicated a lot, participated equally and possessed good emotion-reading skills.

This last finding was another surprise. Emotion-reading mattered just as much for the online teams whose members could not see one another as for the teams that worked face to face. What makes teams smart must be not just the ability to read facial expressions, but a more general ability, known as “Theory of Mind,” to consider and keep track of what other people feel, know and believe.

A new science of effective teamwork is vital not only because teams do so many important things in society, but also because so many teams operate over long periods of time, confronting an ever-widening array of tasks and problems that may be much different from the ones they were initially convened to solve. General intelligence, whether in individuals or teams, is especially crucial for explaining who will do best in novel situations or ones that require learning and adaptation to changing circumstances. We hope that understanding what makes groups smart will help organizations and leaders in all fields create and manage teams more effectively.

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Is there a diversity dividend?

COMMENTS (136)

Is there a diversity dividend? That was the question that we posed in a special Talking Business programme from the World Economic Forum, in Davos.

There is evidence, for instance, that boards of directors with greater diversity generate more dividends. That means greater returns to shareholders and fewer bonuses paid to managers.

So, it matters who’s at the top. Yet, only 4% of bosses in the UK financial services industry and 4.6% of chief executives of S&P 500 companies are women, and there are just six black CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.

With respect to gender, there are numerous studies that show that adding women to the labour force increases national output, or gross domestic product, which I have written about before.

The panel referred to evidence that makes the business case that a more diverse workplace boosted the bottom line. For instance, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology study has found that changing from all-male or all-female workforces to equal numbers of both sexes could raise revenues by around 40%.

Unconscious bias
For women, as well as racial and ethnic minorities, these are not new debates. For LGBT - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender - executives, the issue has increasingly come to the forefront, with Apple's Tim Cook, Beth Brooke-Marciniak, of EY, and Antonio Simoes, of HSBC, generating headlines.

This year was the first time that LGBT diversity was discussed on the main WEF stage, the world's biggest gathering of business and policy leaders.

Everyone would agree that it's good to promote and attract talented people from all backgrounds who are qualified for the job. The challenge is how to do that with an eye on diversity and why such disparities still exist.

When we asked our audience if discrimination was why top executive jobs are still not reflective of society, the show of hands indicated that nearly half thought that was still the case.

The panel emphasised that a lack of diversity was due more to unconscious bias than overt discrimination. Unconscious bias leads to people hiring people like themselves. As former US State Department official Anne-Marie Slaughter pointed out: "We all hire ourselves."
She also stressed that women CAN have it all - if there are changes in the workplace. An article she wrote in 2012, Why Women Still Can't Have It All, generates debate to this day.

So, it seems that systemic policies and workplace practises that ensure that merit is rewarded are still needed.

These aren't straightforward to fashion. Mentorship and role models, childcare assistance, and being conscious of female labour force interruptions to start a family, were all mentioned by the panel.

Tokenism
And, the panel debated whether affirmative action or positive discrimination was needed, or if that would lead to tokenism.

Bernard Tyson, chief executive of Kaiser Permanente, one of America's largest healthcare companies and one of the few black bosses, and Beth Brooke-Marciniak, global vice-chair of public policy at EY (formerly Ernst & Young) who is the most senior openly gay female executive of a large global company, both said that an appointment that added to diversity was a worthwhile criterion.

Inga Beale, the first female chief executive of Lloyds of London in its 327 year history, said that she doesn't worry about tokenism, but the "rule of three" mattered - you need three people of diverse backgrounds and not just one. Once teams are diversified, there won't be tokens.

Measuring outcomes is another issue. How is success measured? Guy Ryder, the head of the International Labour Organisation, and Anne-Marie Slaughter, now the CEO of New America, would like to see organisations reflect the societies in which they operate.

For others on the panel, having a diverse work environment where people can be themselves was what they wanted to see.

In terms of a diversity dividend, no one wants to see talent wasted. There are also other forms of diversity, such as being physically challenged, to be considered.

But, how to achieve a diverse workplace that generates dividends will require a lot more discussion not just in legislatures, but in boardrooms, schools, and in communities.
Orchestras historically believed that women were too weak for certain instruments, e.g., trumpets and brass, and unconsciously discriminated until they went to fully blind auditions.

Once they auditioned by number, behind a screen, without vocal cues, ‘weak’ performances from females suddenly became ‘powerful’.

People see patterns all the time, even false ones, and retraining is hard work.

Diversity doesn’t necessarily mean that there is a dividend. That comes with the quality of the staff. With the best will in the world you cannot guarantee a dividend just by adding a person or persons to make the staff more diverse. Would there be problems in companies making positive discrimination and excluding the best person for the job?
work/life balance is at best an elusive ideal and at worst a complete myth, today’s senior executives will tell you. But by making deliberate choices about which opportunities they’ll pursue and which they’ll decline, rather than simply reacting to emergencies, leaders can and do engage meaningfully with work, family, and community. They’ve discovered through hard experience that prospering in the senior ranks is a matter of carefully combining work and home so as not to lose themselves, their loved ones, or their foothold on success. Those who do this most effectively involve their families in work decisions and activities. They also vigilantly manage their own human capital, endeavoring to give both work and home their due—over a period of years, not weeks or days.

That’s how the 21st-century business leaders in our research said they reconcile their professional and personal lives. In this article we draw on five years’ worth of interviews with almost 4,000 executives worldwide, conducted by students at Harvard Business School, and a survey of 82 executives in an HBS leadership course.

Deliberate choices don’t guarantee complete control. Life sometimes takes over, whether it’s a
parent’s dementia or a teenager’s car accident. But many of the executives we’ve studied—men and women alike—have sustained their momentum during such challenges while staying connected to their families. Their stories and advice reflect five main themes: defining success for yourself, managing technology, building support networks at work and at home, traveling or relocating selectively, and collaborating with your partner.

**Defining Success for Yourself**

When you are leading a major project, you determine early on what a win should look like. The same principle applies to leading a deliberate life: You have to define what success means to you—understanding, of course, that your definition will evolve over time.

Executives’ definitions of professional and personal success run a gamut from the tactical to the conceptual (see the exhibit “How Leaders Define Work/Life ‘Wins’”). For one leader, it means being home at least four nights a week. For another, it means understanding what’s going on in the lives of family members. For a third, it’s about having emotional energy at both work and home.

Some intriguing gender differences emerged in our survey data: In defining professional success, women place more value than men do on individual achievement, having passion for their work, receiving respect, and making a difference, but less value on organizational achievement and ongoing learning and development. A lower percentage of women than of men list financial achievement as an aspect of personal or professional success. Rewarding relationships are by far the most common element of personal success for both sexes, but men list merely having a family as an indicator of success, whereas women
describe what a good family life looks like to them. Women are also more likely to mention the importance of friends and community as well as family.

The survey responses consisted of short phrases and lists, but in the interviews executives often defined personal success by telling a story or describing an ideal self or moment in time. Such narratives and self-concepts serve as motivational goalposts, helping people prioritize activities and make sense of conflicts and inconsistencies.

When work and family responsibilities collide, for example, men may lay claim to the cultural narrative of the good provider. Several male executives who admitted to spending inadequate time with their families consider absence an acceptable price for providing their children with opportunities they themselves never had. One of these men, poor during his childhood, said that his financial success both protects his children and validates his parents’ struggles. Another even put a positive spin on the breakup of his family: “Looking back, I would have still made a similar decision to focus on work, as I was able to provide for my family and become a leader in my area, and these things were important to me. Now I focus on my kids’ education...and spend a lot more time with them over weekends.”

Even the men who pride themselves on having achieved some degree of balance between work and other realms of their lives measure themselves against a traditional male ideal. “The 10 minutes I give my kids at night is one million times greater than spending that 10 minutes at work,” one interviewee said. It’s difficult to imagine a woman congratulating herself for spending 10 minutes a day with her children, but a man may consider the same behavior exemplary.
Indeed, women rarely view themselves as working for their families the way men do. Men still think of their family responsibilities in terms of breadwinning, whereas women often see theirs as role modeling for their children. Women emphasize (far more than men do) how important it is for their kids—particularly their daughters—to see them as competent professionals. One said, “I think that work is such a big part of who I am. I want my kids to understand what I do. I am a whole being.”

Many women said that the most difficult aspect of managing work and family is contending with cultural expectations about mothering. One admitted that she stopped working at home after her daughter referred to the Bloomberg network as “Mommy’s channel.” Another commented, “When you are paid well, you can get all the [practical] help you need. What is the most difficult thing, though—what I see my women friends leave their careers for—is the real emotional guilt of not spending enough time with their children. The guilt of missing out.”

Both men and women expressed versions of this guilt and associated personal success with not having regrets. They often cope by assigning special significance to a particular metric, such as never missing a Little League game or checking in once a day no matter what. “I just prioritize dinner with my family as if it was a 6 PM meeting with my most important client,” said one interviewee. Another offered this suggestion: “Design your house right—have a table in the kitchen where your kids can do homework while your husband cooks and you drink a glass of red wine.” Though expressed as advice, this is clearly her very personal, concrete image of what success at home looks like.

**Managing Technology**

Nearly all the interviewees talked about how critical it is to corral their e-mails, text messages, voice mails, and other communications. Deciding when, where, and how to be accessible for work is an ongoing challenge, particularly for executives with families. Many of them cautioned against using communications technology to be in two places at once, insisting on the value of undivided attention. “When I’m at home, I really am at home,” said one. “I force
myself to not check my e-mail, take calls, et cetera. I want to give my kids 100% of my attention. But this also works the other way around, because when I’m at work I really want to focus on work. I believe that mixing these spheres too much leads to confusion and mistakes.”

That last point is a common concern: Always being plugged in can erode performance. One leader observed that “certain cognitive processes happen when you step away from the frenetic responding to e-mails.” (The history of science, after all, is marked by insights that occurred not in the laboratory but while the scientist was engaged in a mundane task—or even asleep.) Another executive pointed out that 24-hour availability can actually hamper initiative in an organization: “If you have weak people who must ask your advice all the time, you feel important. But there is a difference between being truly important and just not letting anyone around you do anything without you.”

Strikingly, some people at the top are starting to use communications technology less often while they’re working. Several invoked the saying “You can’t raise a kid by phone”—and pointed out that it’s not the best way to manage a team, either. Often, if it’s logistically possible, you’re better off communicating in person. How do you know when that’s the case? One interviewee made an important distinction between broadcasting information and exchanging and analyzing ideas: “Speaking [on the phone] is easy, but careful, thoughtful listening becomes very challenging. For the most important conversations, I see a real trend moving back to face-to-face. When you’re evaluating multibillion-dollar deals...you have to build a bridge to the people.”

Deciding when, where, and how to be accessible for work is an ongoing challenge, particularly for executives with families.

When it comes to technology in the home, more than a third of the surveyed executives view it as an invader, and about a quarter see it as a liberator. (The rest are neutral or have mixed feelings.) Some of them resent the smartphone’s infringement on family time: “When your phone buzzes,” one ruefully noted, it’s difficult to “keep your eyes on that soccer field.”
Others appreciate the flexibility that technology affords them: “I will probably leave here around 4 PM to wrangle my kids,” said one participant, “but I will be back and locked into my network and e-mails by 8 PM.” Another participant reported, “Sometimes my kids give me a hard time about being on my BlackBerry at the dinner table, but I tell them that my BlackBerry is what enables me to be home with them.”

Both camps—those who hate being plugged in and those who love it—acknowledged that executives must learn to manage communications technology wisely. Overall, they view it as a good servant but a bad master. Their advice in this area is quite consistent: Make yourself available but not too available to your team; be honest with yourself about how much you can multitask; build relationships and trust through face time; and keep your in-box under control.

**Building Support Networks**

Across the board, senior executives insisted that managing family and professional life requires a strong network of behind-the-scenes supporters. Absent a primary caregiver who stays at home, they see paid help or assistance from extended family as a necessity. The women in our sample are adamant about this. One said, “We hire people to do the more tactical things—groceries, cooking, helping the children dress—so that we can be there for the most important things.” Even interviewees without children said they needed support at home when they became responsible for aging parents or suffered their own health problems.

Emotional support is equally essential. Like anyone else, executives occasionally need to vent when they’re dealing with something crazy or irritating at work, and friends and family are a safer audience than colleagues. Sometimes leaders also turn to their personal networks for a fresh perspective on a problem or a decision, because members of their teams don’t always have the distance to be objective.

Support at work matters too. Trusted colleagues serve as valuable sounding boards. And many leaders reported that health crises—
Great Leaders Who Make the Mix Work

DIVERSITY FEATURE by Boris Groysberg and Katherine Connolly

Eight ways to create an inclusive culture, according to interviews with 24 top CEOs.

When you’re young, you think you can control everything,” one interviewee said, “but you can’t.” Executives told stories about heart attacks, cancer, and parents in need of care. One talked about a psychotic reaction to medication. In those situations, mentors and team members helped leaders weather difficult times and eventually return to business as usual.

What about mixing personal and professional networks, since executives must draw on both anyway? That’s up for discussion. The men we surveyed tend to prefer separate networks, and the women are pretty evenly split. Interviewees who favor integration said it’s a relief to be “the same person” in all contexts and natural to form friendships at work, where they spend most of their time. Those who separate their work lives from their private lives have many reasons for doing so. Some seek novelty and a counterbalance to work. “If all of your socializing centers around your work life, you tend to experience an ever-decreasing circle of influence and ideas,” one pointed out. Others want to protect their personal relationships from the churn of the workplace.

Many women keep their networks separate for fear of harming their image. Some never mention their families at work because they don’t want to appear unprofessional. A few female executives won’t discuss their careers—or even mention that they have jobs—in their own or family members’—might have derailed their careers if not for compassionate bosses and coworkers. The unexpected can waylay even the most carefully planned career.
conversations outside work. But again, not all women reported such conflict between their professional and personal “selves,” and several suggested that the tide is turning. One pointed out, “The more women have come into the workplace, the more I talk about my children.”

Traveling or Relocating Selectively

Discussions about work/life balance usually focus on managing time. But it’s also critical to manage your location—and, more broadly, your role in the global economy. When leaders decide whether to travel or relocate (internationally or domestically), their home lives play a huge part. That’s why many of them believe in acquiring global experience and racking up travel miles while they’re young and unencumbered. Of those surveyed, 32% said they had turned down an international assignment because they did not want to relocate their families, and 28% said they had done so to protect their marriages.

Many leaders believe in acquiring global experience and racking up travel miles while they’re young and unencumbered.

Several executives told stories about getting sidetracked or derailed in their careers because a partner or spouse needed to relocate. Of course, travel becomes even trickier with children. Many women reported cutting back on business trips after having children, and several executives of both sexes said they had refused to relocate when their children were adolescents. “When children are very young, they are more mobile,” one explained. “But once they are 12 or 13, they want to be in one place.”

Female executives are less likely than men to be offered or accept international assignments, in part because of family responsibilities but also because of the restrictive gender roles in certain cultures or perceptions that they are unwilling to relocate. Our survey results—from a well-traveled sample—jibe with student interviewers’ qualitative findings. Almost none of the men surveyed (less than 1%, compared with 13% of the women) had turned down an international assignment because of cultural concerns. But for female executives, not all
travel is created equal: Gender norms, employment laws, health-care access, and views on work/life balance vary from country to country. One American woman said it requires extra effort in Europe to make sure she doesn’t “come off as being intimidating,” a concern she attributes in part to being tall. Another woman said that in the Middle East she has had to bring male colleagues to meetings to prove her credibility.

Though women in particular have such difficulties, international assignments are not easy for anyone, and they may simply not be worth it for many executives. Members of both sexes have built gratifying careers while grounding themselves in a particular country or even city. However, if travel is undesirable, ambitious young executives should decide so early on. That way they can avoid getting trapped in an industry that doesn’t mesh with their geographic preferences and give themselves time to find ways other than travel to signal open-mindedness, sophistication, skill diversity, and willingness to go above and beyond. (Several executives noted that international experience is often viewed as a sign of those personal attributes.) “International experience can be helpful,” one executive observed, “but it’s just as important to have had exposure across the business lines. Both allow you to understand that not everybody thinks as you do.” Some executives even question the future of globe-hopping, noting that carbon costs, fuel costs, and security concerns may tighten future travel budgets.

Collaborating with Your Partner

Managing yourself, technology, networks, travel—it’s a tall order. Leaders with strong family lives spoke again and again of needing a shared vision of success for everyone at home—not just for themselves. Most of the executives in our sample have partners or spouses, and common goals hold those couples together. Their relationships offer both partners opportunities—for uninterrupted (or less interrupted) work, for adventurous travel, for intensive parenting, for political or community impact—that they might not otherwise have had.

Leaders also emphasized the importance of complementary relationships. Many said how much they value their partners’ emotional
Since 2008 more than 600 students in Harvard Business School’s second-year Managing Human Capital course have interviewed 3,850 C-suite executives and leaders (of whom 655 were CEOs, presidents, or board members) at companies and nonprofits around the world.

The goal? To gain greater insight into how today’s top leaders make choices in their professional and personal lives. This project has been a true partnership between the students and the executives. Everyone involved wanted to deeply explore what it means for leaders to manage their human capital in the 21st century—and more specifically, in the wake of the recent global recession.

The executives were a diverse group (44% female, 56% male) and represented a wide range of industries, including finance, retail, energy, health care, and technology. They came from 51 countries, and 45% of them had worked in countries other than the United States.

The interviews were semistructured: As long as students related their questions to topics covered in Managing Human Capital, they were allowed considerable leeway in what to ask and how far to go in following up on responses. That way they could dig into the issues they found most compelling.

To supplement the interviews, we surveyed 82 senior executives who were attending a 2012 leadership course at HBS. We asked them about their experiences managing their careers and families. The sample consisted of 58 men and 24 women from 33 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and

intelligence, task focus, big-picture thinking, detail orientation—in short, whatever cognitive or behavioral skills balance out their own tendencies. And many of those we surveyed consider emotional support the biggest contribution their partners have made to their careers. Both men and women often mentioned that their partners believe in them or have urged them to take business risks or pursue job opportunities that were not immediately rewarding but led to longer-term satisfaction. They also look to their partners to be sounding boards and honest critics. One executive said that her partner asks “probing questions to challenge my thinking so I can be better prepared for an opposing viewpoint.”

What Partners Contribute

Executives say that their partners and spouses share their vision of success, bring complementary skills, and provide the following types of support:

![Bar chart showing types of support](image-url)
A partner’s support may come in many forms, but what it almost always boils down to is making sure the executive manages his or her own human capital effectively. The pressures and demands on executives are intense, multidirectional, and unceasing. Partners can help them keep their eyes on what matters, budget their time and energy, live healthfully, and make deliberate choices—sometimes tough ones—about work, travel, household management, and community involvement.

Men, however, appear to be getting more spousal support overall. Male interviewees—many of whom have stay-at-home wives—often spoke of their spouses’ willingness to take care of children, tolerate long work hours, and even relocate, sometimes as a way of life. But by and large, they no longer seem to expect the classic 1950s “corporate wife,” who hosted dinners for the boss and cocktail parties for clients. (Exceptions exist in some countries and industries. One male executive who works in oil fields said, “When you are living and working in those camp environments, it is indispensable to have your wife talk with other spouses.”) Men frequently noted that their partners won’t allow them to neglect their families, health, or social lives. For example: “My wife is militant about family dinner, and I am home every night for dinner even if I have to work afterward.”

Women, by contrast, slightly more often mentioned their partners’ willingness to free them from traditional roles at home. One explained, in a typical comment, “He understands the demands of my role and does not put pressure on me when work takes more time than I would like.” In other words, male executives tend to praise their partners for making positive contributions to their careers, whereas women praise theirs for not interfering.

When we look at the survey data, we see other striking differences between the sexes. Fully 88% of the men are married, compared with 70% of the women. And 60% of the men have spouses who don’t work full-time outside the home, compared with only 10% of the women. The men have an average of 2.22 children; the women, 1.67.
What Tomorrow’s Leaders Think

The fact that the interviewees all agreed to take time from their hectic schedules to share their insights with students might introduce a selection effect. Busy leaders who choose to help students presumably value interpersonal relationships. Because they’re inclined to reflect on work and life, they’re probably also making deliberate choices in both realms—and they certainly have enough money to pay for support at home. All that may explain why many interviewees reported being basically happy despite their struggles and why few mentioned serious damage to their marriages or families due to career pressures. This sample is an elite group of people better positioned than most to achieve work/life balance. That they nevertheless consider it an impossible task suggests a sobering reality for the rest of us.

Our student interviewers say, almost universally, that the leaders they spoke with dispensed valuable advice about how to maintain both a career and a family. One interviewer reported, “All acknowledged making sacrifices and concessions at times but emphasized the important role that supportive spouses and families played.” Still, many students are alarmed at how much leaders sacrifice at home and how little headway the business world has made in adapting to families’ needs.

Executives of both sexes consider the tension between work and family to be primarily a women’s problem.

Male executives admitted that they don’t prioritize their families enough. And women are more likely than men to have forgone kids or marriage to avoid the pressures of combining work and family. One said, “Because I’m not a mother, I haven’t experienced the major driver of inequality: having children.” She added, “People assume that if you don’t have kids, then you either can’t have kids or else you’re a hard-driving bitch. So I haven’t had any negative career repercussions, but I’ve probably been judged personally.”
Executives of both sexes consider the tension between work and family to be primarily a women’s problem, and the students find that discouraging. “Given that leadership positions in corporations around the world are still dominated by men,” one explained, “I fear that it will take many organizations much longer than it should to make accommodations for women to...effectively manage their careers and personal lives.”

Students also resist leaders’ commonly held belief that you can’t compete in the global marketplace while leading a “balanced” life. When one executive argued that it’s impossible to have “a great family life, hobbies, and an amazing career” all at the same time, the student interviewing him initially thought, “That’s his perspective.” But after more conversations with leaders? “Every single executive confirmed this view in one way or another, and I came to believe that it is the reality of today’s business world.” It remains to be seen whether, and how, that reality can be changed for tomorrow. We can’t predict what the workplace or the family will look like later in this century, or how the two institutions will coexist. But we can assert three simple truths:

**Life happens.**
Even the most dedicated executive may suddenly have his or her priorities upended by a personal crisis—a heart attack, for instance, or a death in the family. As one pointed out, people tend to ignore work/life balance until “something is wrong.” But that kind of disregard is a choice, and not a wise one. Since when do smart executives assume that everything will work out just fine? If that approach makes no sense in the boardroom or on the factory floor, it makes no sense in one’s personal life.

**There are multiple routes to success.**
Some people plan their careers in detail; others grab whatever opportunity presents itself. Some stick with one company, building political capital and a deep knowledge of the organization’s culture and resources; others change employers frequently, relying on external contacts and a fresh perspective to achieve success. Similarly, at home different solutions work for different individuals and families. Some executives have a stay-at-home partner;
others make trade-offs to enable both partners to work. The questions of child care, international postings, and smartphones at the dinner table don’t have “right” answers. But the questions need to be asked.

**No one can do it alone.**
Of the many paths to success, none can be walked alone. A support network is crucial both at and outside work—and members of that network must get their needs met too. In pursuit of rich professional and personal lives, men and women will surely continue to face tough decisions about where to concentrate their efforts. Our research suggests that earnestly trying to focus is what will see them through.

Boris Groysberg is a professor of business administration at Harvard Business School and the coauthor, with Michael Slind, of *Talk, Inc.* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2012). His work examines how a firm can be systematic in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage by leveraging its talent at all levels of the organization. Follow him on Twitter @bgroysberg

Robin Abrahams is a research associate at Harvard Business School.

**This article is about WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

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Where Are the Women?
Measuring Progress on Gender in Architecture
Lian Chikako Chang (lchang@acsa-arch.org), ACSA Director of Research + Information
October 2014

The farther up you look in the world of architecture, the fewer women you see. In this chart, we’ve rounded up some common and publicly available metrics behind this claim. Like thousands of aspiring architects, we’ll start at the bottom and work our way up—while also pausing on the way to consider what these measures mean.

Women in Architecture by %
Measuring the pipeline through the profession

AIA Gold Medals
Pritzker Prizes
AIA/ACSA Topaz Medallions
IDP Supervisors
ACSA Distinguished Professors
Licensed AIA Members
AIA Member Principals and Partners
Deans
Architect Employment
Lecture Series Speakers
School Directors, Heads, and Chairs
AIA Associate Members
NCARB Record Applicants
IDP Interns
ARE Test Takers
Architecture Degrees (all levels)
Accredited Architecture Degrees
Architecture Students
U.S. Population

2 in 5 architecture students are women.
Male and female architecture students graduate at equal rates.
U.S. Population: The Census Bureau reports that in 2013, 51% of the 316 million estimated people residing in the United States were women.

Architecture Students: In its most recent annual report (2013), the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) indicates that 43% of a total of 25,958 enrolled students in NAAB-accredited architecture programs (B.Arch, M.Arch, and D.Arch) in 2012-13 were female. Although the representation of women in architecture schools has been steadily growing, women still represent significantly fewer than 50% at this early stage.

Accredited Architecture Degrees: NAAB’s most recent Report on Accreditation in Architecture also shows that in 2012-13, 42% of a total of 6,347 accredited architecture degrees were awarded to women. Because a NAAB-accredited degree is a requirement for licensure in most states, earning this degree is a clear and measurable moment in the “pipeline” into the profession.

Architecture Degrees (all levels): Based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 41% of a total of 10,893 degrees architecture degrees in 2012-13 were awarded to women. Whereas the above NAAB data count only the accredited degrees that are generally required for licensure, NCES does not distinguish between NAAB-accredited and non-professional architecture degrees and instead counts both. Either way, women make up 41%–42% of recent architecture graduates, and this number was relatively consistent across all levels from Associate’s up to Doctoral degrees.

ARE Test Takers: In 2013, 40% of those actively taking the various divisions of the Architect Registration Examination as a step towards licensure were women, according to NCARB (http://www.ncarb.org/About-­NCARB/~/media/Files/PDF/Special-­Paper/NCARB_by_the_Numbers_2014.pdf).

IDP Interns: In addition to taking the ARE, candidates for licensure must gain work experience through the Intern Development Program (IDP). NCARB by the Numbers report by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), reports that in 2013, 40% of those actively submitting hours were women.

These two data points from NCARB combined with the education statistics from NCES and NAAB are a sign these early career stages aren’t pushing women out (or at least, not any faster than they push out men). That said, flexibility in IDP in terms of experience settings, categories, and beginning IDP before graduation means that this metric actually counts people with a range of situations and career stages, and this can get complicated. For example, the AIA’s 2005 report on diversity noted that nearly twice as many men as women completed IDP in fewer than three years (20% versus 11%) and more women completed IDP in 4 to 6 years (46% versus 38%). If this remains true today, the relatively robust number of female IDP interns in any given year may be somewhat buoyed up by those who remain at this stage while their male peers have already moved on.

NCARB (http://www.ncarb.org/About-­NCARB/~/media/Files/PDF/Special-­Paper/NCARB_by_the_Numbers_2014.pdf) Record Applicants: Applying for an NCARB record is a first step for students or graduates to complete IDP or the ARE. So this is a good indication of intention to become a licensed architect and a solid measure of the pipeline into the profession, since each person should generally only pass this milestone once, to be counted in one year only. In 2013, 39% of NCARB record applicants were women.

AIA Associate Members: The 2014 Foresight Report from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) indicates that in 2011, 30% of its associate members were women. This membership category is open to anyone meeting “one of the following criteria: professional degree in architecture; currently working under the supervision of an architect; currently enrolled in the Intern Development Program (IDP) and working toward licensure; or faculty member in a university program in architecture.” So although this number is an inexact measure of the “pipeline” through the profession, this voluntary membership is a sign of identification and intentions.

We’ve talked about a “pipeline” into the profession a few times, but what does it mean? This idea is often used to describe people of a given demographic advancing from one stage to the next over the course of their careers. When disproportionate numbers stall or drop out at various points along the way, this is described in terms of a “leaky” pipeline.

Although such a mechanical analogy is necessarily reductive, it can help us think at a macro scale. For example, are there few women at the top of the profession due to generational reasons, because there are more women “coming down the pipeline” who just need a few more years to arrive? Or are there specific, measurable points in the pipeline that remain leaky today? Measuring this isn’t easy, as the AIA’s 2005 report on diversity suggests, but we’re going to try. So brace yourselves, because it’s about to get messy as we keep climbing up this chart.
Gender in Architecture School Leadership

1 in 4 guest lecturers in architecture schools are women.

1 in 4 working architects and architectural designers in the U.S. is a woman.

Fewer than 1 in 5 deans at U.S. architecture schools are women.
School Directors, Heads, and Chairs: Based on our data at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) (resources/data-resources/acsa-atlas-project), but omitting the more gender-balanced Canadian schools, we find that in 2013, 27% of 140 directors, heads, and chairs at U.S. architecture schools with accredited programs were female. [Note: a version of this slide updated in 2014 is available here (http://www.acsa-arch.org/images/default-source/data/gender-leadership-2014-23.jpg?sfvrsn=4).]

School Lecturers: Lori Brown and Nina Freedman of SHaE surveyed 73 architecture school lecture series in the spring of 2013 (http://www.metropolismag.com/July-August-2013/Architectures-Lean-In-Moment/), and found that 26% of 510 scheduled lectures were by women. Further data would be interesting here—for example, how many individual men and women were represented among those 510 lectures, and how many of the most frequent lecturers were women?

Architect Employment: The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf) reports that in 2013, 25% of the 193,000 people working as “architects, except naval” in the United States were women. This is a powerful but complicated statistic. The BLS counts those who are employed in any industry in an “architects, except naval” role. So this includes those working as architects for the federal government or for developers, but not those employed as craftspeople, university instructors, urban designers, writers and critics, or other roles in which a person may identify with architecture while not practicing it in the strict sense. It includes the self-employed and those on leave, but not those who are unemployed. Importantly, the BLS does not distinguish between licensed and non-licensed practitioners (“apprentices and trainees”). If we’re measuring different points along our pipeline, this metric refers to points that are potentially before, during, and after—or even separate and parallel—to the steps towards licensure described above. By comparison, NCARB reports (http://www.ncarb.org/News-and-Events/News/2013/12_2013ArchitectsSurvey.aspx) that there were 105,847 registered architects in the United States in 2012-13, so the BLS figure of 193,000 counts many “intern architects” who are pursuing licensure, as well as those who are not working towards a license.

Deans: By ACSA (resources/data-resources/acsa-atlas-project)’s count, 19% of 86 deans at U.S. architecture schools with accredited programs in 2013 were female.

AIA Member Principals and Partners: The AIA’s 2014 Foresight Report (http://www.aia.org/practicing/AIAB099351) indicates that in 2011, 17% of AIA members who were firm principals and partners were women.

Licensed AIA Members: The AIA knows which of its members have a professional license, and in their 2014 Foresight Report (http://www.aia.org/practicing/AIAB099351) they reported that 15% of their licensed members are women. At first glance, it seems strange that this number is lower than the 17% for AIA members who are firm principals and partners. Is this because firm leaders aren’t necessarily licensed? Or because, once licensed, women become principals and partners at slightly higher rates than men? It would also be interesting to quantify whether women are more likely to become sole practitioners or move up the ranks in smaller firms.

ACSA Distinguished Professors: Starting in 1984-85, the ACSA has recognized a handful of living individuals for their sustained achievements in advancing architectural education through teaching, design, scholarship, research, or service. Chosen by a committee based on nominations, 14% (or 17) of 122 recipients (http://acsa-arch.org/programs-events/awards/archives/DP) over 29 years have been women.

IDP Supervisors: NCARB by the Numbers (http://www.ncarb.org/About-NCARB/~media/Files/PDF/Special-Paper/NCARB_by_the_Numbers_2014.pdf) reports that 13% of IDP Supervisors—firm managers who supervise and review the work of intern architects submitting IDP hours, and who in most cases must be licensed architects—are women.

AIA/ACSA Topaz Medallions: One Topaz Medallion (http://acsa-arch.org/programs-events/awards/TP) is awarded each year to a living person who has influenced “a long line of students” over at least a decade primarily spent in North American architectural education. Based on nominations and selected by a jury, 5% (or 2) of 39 recipients since 1976 have been women: Denise Scott Brown in 1996 and Addie Naudė Santos in 2009.

Pritzker Prizes: Known as the "Nobel Prize of architecture," the Pritzker (http://www.pritzkerprize.com/laureates/year) is each year awarded to a single living practicing architect (or occasionally a pair) in recognition of significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through built works of architecture. Decided by a jury, based on nominations solicited from notable people in the field, 5% (or 2) of 39 Pritzker Prize recipients since 1979 have been women. This includes Zaha Hadid in 2004, and Kazuyo Sejima in 2010, alongside her male partner Ryue Nishizawa.

AIA Gold Medals (http://www.aia.org/practicing/awards/AIAB101062): This highest honor that the AIA bestows upon an individual or pair recognizes “a significant body of work of lasting influence,” based on nominations and reviewed by a jury. Of 69 medals since 1907, one has been awarded to a woman (Julia Morgan, posthumously in 2014), representing 1% of the total.

All of this makes it clear that as you look higher in the architectural profession or in academia, you see fewer women. Even in architecture school today, fewer than 50% of students are women, and the numbers start dropping off sharply, from around 40% to around 25% and fewer when we start looking at practice and higher levels in the profession and academia.
You might be thinking that this data on prize winners, going back several decades, don’t necessarily represent the situation for the current generation of women. And you’d be right. Breaking down the gender split among the winners of top awards in practice and academia by decade, in the above chart, we can see that women have been increasingly recognized since the 1980s. But, significantly, even in the most recent years since 2010, fewer than one in five of these awards have gone to women.

How can we understand how the situation for women in architecture is changing over time? If there’s one thing that going through these data sources makes clear, it’s that each has its own caveats and peculiarities that make it not perfectly comparable to the others in the strictest sense. But these are the data we have for now, and acknowledging their imperfections, they’re still revealing. The last chart, below, shows time series data for the metrics we have, going back as far as we have them.

Starting at the top with the green and blue lines, we can see that the proportion of women among NAAB accredited degree earners has historically trailed the proportion of women among enrolled students, but that over the past five years these two lines have converged. In other words, women are graduating with accredited degrees at basically the same rate they’re enrolling, indicating that there is no longer either a gender-based achievement gap or pipeline delay within architecture school.

The purple line shows the increasing participation of women among NCARB Record applicants, based on a chart recently published by NCARB (http://www.ncarb.org/About-NCARB~/media/Files/PDF/Special-Paper/NCARB_by_the_Numbers_2014.pdf). In 1985, women represented over 25% of architecture students but fewer than 10% of NCARB Record applicants. If this gap reflected only the pipeline delay, or time that it would take for these women to progress to further stages at the same rate as their male peers, we
would see the proportion of female NCARB Record applicants exceed 25% a few years after 1985—not fifteen years later, in 2000. So that is an example of a "leaky pipeline," where women were dropping out of the profession at higher rates than men.

In recent years, however, the purple line has nearly reached 40%, indicating that female students and graduates are about as likely to take this step towards licensure as their male colleagues. In other words, the "leaky pipeline" into the profession is no longer that leaky for the stretch between enrolling in an accredited degree program and beginning to pursue licensure by applying for an NCARB Record.

Moving on to the red line, which measures those working as architects or unlicensed architectural designers as measured by the BLS, we can see that practice may be where the gender gap widens. While the BLS is cautious about certain analyses based on time series data (in part because they occasionally adjust their occupational definitions), even with a sizable margin of error it is clear that there are far fewer women in practice than in school. This seems to be a "leaky pipeline" problem rather than a simple delay, because while the number of female students and graduates has stabilized at around 40% in recent years, the number of women working in architect roles has also stopped increasing, and has not gone much higher than 25%.

The gray line at the bottom represents the winners of the four awards we're tracking (AIA Gold Medal, Topaz Medallion, Pritzker Prize, and ACSA Distinguished Professor). With the share of awards going to women increasing by about 5% each decade, if we continue at this pace we'll be waiting until 2080 to see a 50-50 split.

These are the gender gaps that suggest that we need to change, and not simply wait, if we want more women succeeding at the highest levels of the profession and academia. If our goal is to find ways to support women in progressing and achieving within the discipline and profession of architecture at rates more equal to those of men, the data reviewed here suggest that we should focus particularly on two areas: first, what happens before applying to and enrolling in architecture school; and second, what happens at higher levels in the profession, academia, and related practices. We need to attract and build a student body that is 50% female, then better support female graduates as they look for ways to continue and thrive in the world of architecture.

Are you looking for better data? ACSA is partnering with member schools on an Architecture Graduate Survey (resources/data-resources/architecture-graduate-survey), targeted at recent graduates who are 6 to 12 months out of school, that aims for the first time to build comparable data on graduates from architecture schools across North America. It’s a baby step, but an important one, and we hope your school will get involved. Contact Lian Chang, Director of Research + Information (mailto:lchang@acsa-arch.org).
### Visualizing Archinect's Architecture Salary Poll
(https://resources/data-resources/salary-poll)

Browse career stories from nearly 4,000 people, and dive into the data through interactives and charts.

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/salary-poll)

### Vital Statistics on Canadian Schools of Architecture
(https://resources/data-resources/canadian-schools)

Every school of architecture in Canada recently completed a survey covering programs, faculty, enrollment, facilities, areas of focus, and more.

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/canadian-schools)

### The State of Community Design
(https://resources/data-resources/community-design)

Charts and maps exploring and summarizing the data contained in ACSA’s community Design

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/community-design)

### Community Design Directory
(https://resources/data-resources/community-design)

Information on over two hundred academic, nonprofit, and private sector organizations using their

### NCES Data on U.S. Programs in Architecture and Related Fields

NCES Data on U.S. Programs in Architecture and Related Fields


### Where are the Women?
(https://resources/data-resources/women)

The farther up you look in the world of architecture, the fewer women you see. We’ve rounded up some publicly available metrics behind this claim, in order to examine them more closely.

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/women)

### Architecture Graduate Survey
(https://resources/data-resources/architecture-graduate-survey)

This data gathering effort aims to learn more about the priorities and activities of recent architecture graduates, and it is now ready to launch. We hope your school will participate!

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/architecture-graduate-survey)

### ACSA Atlas
(https://resources/data-resources/acsa-atlas-project)

Atlas is an ongoing project examining architectural education in relationship to demographics, higher education, the profession, and the economy.

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/acsa-atlas-project)

### Architect Wages in U.S. and Canada

These interactive graphics allow you to explore wages by median, high, and low values across North American cities and states/provinces, in order to better

### Admissions Survey 2014
(https://resources/data-resources/admissions2014)

ACSA shares data from May-June 2014, covering the recent season of admissions and changes in anticipated architecture school enrollments for fall 2014.

*Read the Report* (https://resources/data-resources/admissions2014)

### ACSA Budget and Enrollment Survey
(https://resources/data-resources/budget-and-enrollment-survey)

ACSA’s annual report on budget, applications, enrollment, and faculty staffing, at member schools in the U.S., Canada, and abroad.

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/budget-and-enrollment-survey)

### How long does it take to become an architect around the world?
(https://resources/data-resources/how-long)

We compared the minimum times to become qualified to practice architecture across the world's biggest economies.

*Explore the Data* (https://resources/data-resources/how-long)
Roundup of Data on Architecture Education

This is a collection of links to existing quantitative and qualitative research on architectural education and its relationship to careers and higher education, from non-ACSA sources.

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23 January, 2015

An illustrated story of a woman in architecture

Summer holidays were spent camping by magnificent ancient temples. Every August was the same: driving around southern Greece, stopping at a usually windsy place to try to set that flimsy tent up, then staying for just a day or two to visit an archeological site before we would get back on the road and drive further. First was the ancient sanctuary of Olympia. Next the stone towers in rocky Mani. Then the medieval castle of Monemvasia, followed by the Byzantine churches of Mystras. Next the archeological site of Mycenae and finally the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. This combination of experiences — of sloppy and delicate tents and astonishing Greek temples — was awkward but magical, perhaps formative.

I was thirteen when I wrote my first funding application. I had come to a breaking point about having my own space and designed a little timber room (a shed!), priced it up at Wickes, and wrote a letter to my dad asking for the money. It was about £150. He offered me a pocket money deduction payment plan and I accepted. I drew up the final drawings on squared paper, measured every component, bought the raw materials and built the thing. I got lots of very enthusiastic whistles from passing drivers while I was making it! It wasn’t perfect, in fact it leaked rather badly on account of budget constraints, requiring me to pinch some felt roofing off-cuts from a skip and mastic them together. But it stood; and it was mine.

One of the courses I took at architecture school was called Experimental Aesthetics. It was run by a prominent local artist. I loved that course. Later that same year, when I was developing a design for a children’s centre, I created huge 1:1 scale drawings of the interior that course. Later that same year, when I was developing a design for a children’s centre, I created huge 1:1 scale drawings of the interior.

I was an architect. I was living in a small town, married and pregnant. I never thought my professional career was at risk. I was convinced that I wanted to try to achieve my dream as an architect, leading my own studio, and at the same time be a young mum and settle down with a family. Of course it’s not easy. It’s a question of balance.

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I was young and happy to muddle along on very little money and little sleep. I joined a group of like-minded people and we started creating projects for ourselves that were not so much buildings, but events and actions. We collaborated with a truly cross-disciplinary bunch of people on exhibitions in bus shelters, on for-sale signs, on picnics in the park, on billboards, and so on.

My first real project gave me the confidence to set up my own studio. My client — a relative — asked me to design a new house for her on a really difficult site in the countryside with a rambling collection of sheep sheds and spectacular views. At first I said no, but she twisted my arm. It was hard work. I fought for it through planning and an appeal, and won. That was a wonderful moment. The house included a 20m-long rammell chalk wall, dug from the site itself, and built up layer by layer against the hillside. I was lucky to come across a builder willing to do it. We worked it out together. One section blew down in a gale and the whole thing took a year and half to dry out. But we’ve worked on projects ever since.

I was an architect. I was living in a small town, married and pregnant. I never thought my professional career was at risk. I was convinced that I wanted to try to achieve my dream as an architect, leading my own studio, and at the same time be a young mum and settle down with a family. Of course it’s not easy. It’s a question of balance.

I’ve known my business partner for a very long time. There’s always been an enormous level of trust between us. There was a time when she had a car but no driver’s licence, and I had a driver’s licence but no car. Once, when we’d been working late in the studio and decided to call it a night and drive home (she had a broken collarbone at the time), the only way we could manage it was for her to operate the pedals and steer with one hand, while I changed gears on command! I’m glad to say we got home safely and nobody died. That’s teamwork.

The first formal recognition we received was when an orangery we designed was published in an architecture magazine. Shortly afterwards we received an RIBA award. Hearing the kind words of the jury chairman at the award ceremony when he said ‘these architects are a practice to watch in the future’ made us extraordinarily excited about what lay ahead. I’m still grateful for his support.

We never felt like quitting. The worst moments can sometimes be the best, too. Once I was sitting in a cold, bright, suspended ceiling-ed room with a global developercontractor, who was intent on pursuing a claim against us to avoid final fee payment. I’d been fending off the claim for months. The suited project manager said to me, ‘Do you know that you’re looking straight into the jaws of the lion?’ I have that picture fixed in my mind now — and that lion is potentially every client. Somehow, it didn’t scare me. I knew we’d performed and I knew I could and would defend us to the bitter end. They dropped the claim and we agreed a final payment. More often than not, they’re just trying it on.

I felt humbled and honoured to be recognised for my contribution to the profession. Not only is the architect after whom the prize is named one of my major heroines, I’m lucky enough to have met her. She had a strong feeling for the responsibility of architects, which was common among her generation. When you are starting out you look at the lives of women in your own and other professions and as you progress you appreciate what they achieved — how courageous they were. And she was one of those women.
‘Jane’ explained

If you haven’t read ‘Jane’, the comic strip above, beware: there’s a spoiler coming up.

‘Jane’, as you might have guessed, is not the story of one woman architect, it is the story of 10 architects, all women, their experiences told as one. Last December we asked a number of women in practice, of all ages, to share their memories with us.

The stories they related spanned childhood, university, early careers, highs and lows. We called our story ‘Jane’ because, like Jane Drew, each of our protagonists is a pioneer: a woman making her mark in a male-dominated profession.

But also to invoke ‘Jane Doe’, the placeholder name for women whose identity remains unknown. Throughout history too many women architects have shared this fate, their stories left untold. Not for much longer, we hope, but it’ll take a collective effort, men and women alike.

Rory Olcayto, acting editor, The AJ

Revealed: the voices behind ‘Jane’

Yeoryia Manalopoulou

Yeoryia shared her memories of childhood summer holidays in Greece.

http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/events/wia/jane-the-story-of-an-architect/8676373.article#.VM_Dk8bwe0U.twitter
Yeoryia is a co-founder of AY Architects and author of Architectures of Chance. In 2013, the practice’s Montpelier Community Nursery won an RIBA Regional Award and the Stephen Lawrence Prize and in 2014 Yeoryia was shortlisted for the Emerging Woman Architect of the Year award.

Maria Smith

Maria recounted the memory of the ‘design and build’ shed project she undertook when she was 13 years old.

Maria is a founding director of Studio Weave. In 2013 she was highly commended in the Emerging Woman Architect of the Year category. With Studio Weave, Smith has completed a diverse array of projects for public, private and commercial clients, gaining a number of accolades along the way, including RIBA and Civic Trust awards.

Zoe Smith

Zoe told us about her student days at Strathclyde University.

Zoe Smith was a co-founding director of Block Architecture (1998-2010) and in 2013, along with Cordula Weisser and Dinah Bornat, she founded ZCD Architects. Smith has completed a number of projects for fashion designer Hussein Chalayan and saw her Hackney House shortlisted in AJ Small Projects 2014.

Cordula Weisser

Cordula recalled the time she spent after leaving university exploring alternatives to typical architectural practice.

Before founding ZCD Architects with Zoe Smith and Dinah Bornat, Weisser was a principal member of FAT and set up Working Architecture Group with Jon Goodburn in 2002.

Dinah Bornat

Dinah told us about designing her first project, Dean Barn in Hampshire.

Dinah Bornat runs a postgraduate design unit at the University of East London and a co-founder of ZCD Architects. Before ZCD Dinah was a director at Edward Cullinan Architects and founding director of Bornat Architects.

Olga Felip

Olga shared the positive feelings she felt as a pregnant young architect running her own studio in Spain.

Olga Felip is co-founder of Catalonia-based practice Arquitectura and a director of Architects for Architecture. She received the European Centre of Architecture’s International Architecture Award in 2013 and represented Catalonia at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale.

Cindy Walters & Michal Cohen

Cindy and Michal told us of the deep bond they share and the trust they have in each other.

Walters was born in Australia, studied in South Africa and moved to London in 1990 to work for Foster + Partners. She set up Walters & Cohen with Michal, who was born and educated in South Africa, in 1994. The multi-award winning duo were the AJ’s inaugural Woman Architect of the Year award-winners in 2012.

Deborah Saunt

Deborah described how she felt when her studio’s Plover’s Hill Orangery won an RIBA Regional Award in 2000.

Deborah Saunt founded architectural studio DSDHA in 1998. The firm has won a number of RIBA awards and in 2011 was shortlisted for the Stirling Prize. Saunt also teaches a diploma design unit at the Cass School of Architecture, London.

Alison Brooks

Alison’s memory of the big-league construction industry player who tried not to pay is of course, entirely true.

Alison Brooks is principal and creative director of Alison Brooks Architects, founded in 1996. She is the only British-based architect to have won all three of the RIBA’s most prestigious awards for architecture: the Stephen Lawrence Prize, the Manser Medal and the 2008 RIBA Stirling Prize. In 2013 Alison won Woman Architect of the Year.

Eva Jiricná

Eva is too modest to recount being awarded the 2013 Jane Drew Prize for her outstanding contribution to the status of women in architecture but our news report on the event provided an apt conclusion to ‘Jane’.


Readers' comments (3)

Victoria Pope | 23-Jan-2015 10:13 am

I loved reading this comic strip/article, so refreshing - and it's reminded me of my future aspirations and importantly of who my inspirations are! Right, back to the ‘drawing board’... 

Ruth Brennan | 23-Jan-2015 1:55 pm

Love the drawings!
Nwola Uduku | 29-Jan-2015 2:40 pm

make it a regular appearance on AJ (then I might even subscribe) how about a storyline for ethnic minority architects, etc etc. This is said in support I think its a great cartoon strip and very in keeping with the British psyche in narrative and presentation. Well done to all and its great to see the real cameos being presented at the end.
INSPIRE% Best Practice: Architecture Firms Champion Equity

January 23, 2015

Despite historically high numbers of women entering the profession, it is no secret that the top positions are still dominated by men and a culture of long hours and low pay threaten talent retention. The American Institute of Architects reports that only 19 percent of its roughly 81,000 members were women as of June, up from 11 percent in 1994. And only 12 percent of women architects serve as supervisors or licensed employers in architecture firms.
While there is a whale-list of challenges we currently face in achieving equity, we will rigorously seek out best practices and explore actionable solutions to overcome the disparities; implicit bias and in-group favoritism in hiring and promotion, women's salaries on average consistently less than men, and the negative impact of taking a leave of absence or working reduced hours (often resulting in reduced opportunities for leadership roles and meaningful work).

The NY Times article “To Rescue Economy, Japan Turns to Supermom” by Jonathan Soble explores Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s national pledge to equity. His policies optimistically attempt to ease the way for women with more state-funded child care and other measures to foster “a society where all women shine” in spite of the country’s entrenched patriarchal societal and corporate norms. Soble also highlights that some private companies are initiating changes to work culture in hopes of jumpstarting economic recovery. In Obama's state of the union address this week, he canonized the need to adopt similar policies in the US. It is essential that each and every one of us advocate for these changes in the coming year. The most glaring example is that currently the US is the only developed nation that does NOT have government subsidized family leave.

There is a new movement emerging: beyond quotas and affirmative action
backed by extensive studies that affirm the business case for equity, diversity and collaborative teams. The NY Time Article, Why Some Teams are Smarter than Others, discusses the positive outcomes of having teams with more diversity, empathy and social intelligence. The book Gender Intelligence by Barbara Annis and Keith Merron, a new mindset and effective approach to equity, is globally altering the workplace culture of major corporations. In addition to exposing the forces behind current gender inequality, they introduce game-changing principles that are inspiring a refreshing shift in thinking. The book highlights organizations that have made the transformation from a fixation on a quota-like mentality of "gender equality" towards a focus on gender equity, a philosophy that leverages the natural strengths, differences and potential of each gender to ultimately produce greater economic value and talent retention for the companies that integrate equity and diversity in their business model.

At a time when the American Institute of Architects recognizes the need for repositioning, providing greater impact and communicating value to the public we serve, we have a unique opportunity to be innovators. What can we learn from these new principles, research and case studies? How can we apply examples of best practices to innovate our often antiquated profession? We are at a point where many face an unsustainable business model and workplace culture directly attributed to the "Beaux-Arts" practice of charrette; the expectation of working long hours and up to the very last minute before a deadline.
Today, we are pleased to feature the first 4 Architecture firms that champion equity and share their insights to inspire best practices; Shepley Bulfinch, Architecture Plus, JG Johnson Architects and PIVOT Architecture.

Shepley Bulfinch's rich legacy of leadership in design innovation dates back to its 1874 founding by H.H. Richardson in Boston. Since its early years, an emphasis on teamwork characterized the firm's work style. Its cadre of loyal and experienced staff worked together to produce the quality buildings for which it had become known. In that spirit, work was usually attributed to teams, rather than to individuals, a tradition that became stronger with the firm's transition from family business to partnership, and its incorporation in 1972.
It wasn’t until the mid 1980’s that the firm promoted a woman to Principal. Today the demographic is dramatically different; of the 150 employees, 75 are women and of the 10 Principals, 5 are women. Office locations are in Boston and Phoenix. In 2004, Carole Wedge, FAIA became the first woman president in the firm’s history. Since her election, Carole has championed the firm’s commitment to sustainable design and a collaborative working environment that values its talent. In 2009, AI Architect interviewed Carole about her inspirations for pursuing a career in architecture and her tenure at Shepley, which started as a clerk in the mailroom. Carole talks about the firm’s approach and policies that support equitable practice, including work-life flexibility. “The most important thing for us has been to give people flexibility to tell us what they need, and I think architecture is a field where it's pretty easy to give flexibility”.

Denver-based JG Johnson Architects is an award winning hospitality and urban housing design firm that’s also walking the walk. Of the 31 employees, 58 percent are women, 77 percent are licensed architects and 62 percent are in leadership positions. Nicole Nathan is part owner of JG Johnson Architects and is a licensed architect in Colorado and Texas. As Design Principal, Nathan ensures high-quality project design for both architecture and integrated interior design. Ms. Nathan shares that the firm supports a life-work balance that, if absent, would stall women in their middle careers. “The understanding that you can have a family and maintain your identity and value as an architect is what sets our firm apart,” Nathan said.
The firm’s culture encourages all its employees to keep up with their peers who are earning their licenses. “It’s motivating to watch others in the office go through it, and you’ve seen them be promoted and receive elevated roles in their projects,” said Anne Warner, an associate with the firm. “Women are driven to keep up with each other.” Heather Vasquez, another associate with the firm, agrees with that sentiment and notes that younger women often are promoted to management positions. “The leadership and management across the board is younger than at other firms I’ve worked at,” Vasquez said. “It brings new ideas and creative thinking that other firms lack.”

Jim Johnson, the firm’s founding principal, says the firm encourages the advancement of all employees based on merit. “We have been very fortunate to recruit and promote such a large percentage of highly talented and qualified female architects,” Johnson said.

Architecture Plus in Troy, New York is also a leader of design excellence
relatively flat hierarchy, a unique way of managing workloads, and their personal commitment to have a family life resulted in the supportive, flexible work/life culture that is baked in to the DNA of what the firm is today. "We've always had summer hours, flexible start and end times, comp time and technologies that allow folks to work from home." says Frank.

Of the 30 employees today, the majority of the architectural staff are women. In terms of leadership, 2 out of 7 Principals are women and 1 out of 3 Associates. Within the next 3 to 4 years, there is a scenario where the practice could be majority women owned and directed. Most enviable is the firms open support of taking a personal or medical leave and transitions (on and off ramping) back to full time employment without jeopardizing advancement opportunities or meaningful work of good design projects. Newly promoted Principal Mary Kate Young, AIA shares her own experience about the progressive culture.

"A flex work/life arrangement can be negotiated for almost anyone if it is desirable for the firm and the individual. We have had older principals make arrangements for shorter work weeks as they transition to retirement. So folks work offsite regularly or as needed if they have a sick child or a personal thing to take care of that requires working from home for a day. Mothers of small children have worked part-time. I worked part-time for 5 years and then worked full time but was not required to come to the office on Fridays while my children were younger."

Frank further reveals that this employee focused flexibility has resulted in a high retention rate AND a profitable design focused architectural
practice with exceptional buildings and spaces for academic, healthcare and community clients. Many of these projects have received local, state, and national design awards.

Eugene, Oregon based PIVOT Architecture, was established in 1956 and is an award winning interdisciplinary practice that recently achieved LEED Platinum certification for Commercial Interiors for the firm's new office space. Of the 32 employees, 18 are women, including 10 architects and designers and 3 Associates. Among the 7 Principals, 3 are women including the recent promotion of Kelley Howell, AIA and Kari Turner, AIA as the newest Principals.

Kelley Howell has been instrumental in PIVOT landing a number of large projects including some in the higher education field. “I couldn’t have imagined a better group of people to take this next step with. I’m very excited about our work, our clients and our office. Ownership of course comes with additional responsibilities, but it also comes with the opportunity to shape and guide our future,” Kelley said. “PIVOT has always been a place where creativity and inspiration is nourished.”

A key component of PIVOT’s success has been its work with transit agencies. Kari Turner as become an expert on transit architecture speaking at national conferences including Rail-Volution. Kari began her career at PIVOT prior to graduating with a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oregon. She started as a part-time administrative assistant in 1995 while she pursued her architecture degree and joined the firm as a full time designer after graduation. She was promoted to associate in 2007. “I feel like
I have grown up with PIVOT," Kari said. “I started working here in 1995 and have been mentored and guided by all the people who have worked in the firm from the beginning. I feel lucky to have found a place that has allowed me to grow professionally and as an individual for nearly 20 years. I can’t imagine what my life would be like if it didn’t involve PIVOT.”

Have an INSPIRE% Best Practice or Firm "Equity Champion" to share? Contact us!

Written by Rosa T. Sheng, AIA, LEED AP BD+C

In Equity by Design, INSPIRE%, Equitable Practice, Career Advancement
Tags PIVOT Architecture, shepley bulfinch, Architecture Plus, jg johnson

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Fostering women leaders: A fitness test for your top team

Posing five questions can help start a challenging management conversation.

January 2015 | by Lareina Yee

The challenges are well known: women in business continue to face a formidable gender gap for senior-leadership positions. Moreover, there are fewer and fewer women at each step along the path to the C-suite, although they represent a majority of entry-level employees at Fortune 500 companies and outnumber men in college-graduation rates. Increasingly, the barriers too are well known: a mix of cultural factors, ingrained mind-sets, and stubborn forms of behavior, including a tendency to tap a much narrower band of women leaders than is possible given the available talent pool.

Much has been written about the nature of the challenges. I want to focus on what companies can do to take action. In this article, I’ve distilled some forward-leaning practices into five questions that can serve as a fitness test for your top team. In my experience, an organization that is making progress on such issues tends to explore them in concert. At the very least, these questions can help generate the kinds of challenging conversations that executive teams around the world should be having. The stakes are too high not to have them. As I heard the CEO of a US healthcare company say recently, “The business case is simple: my company needs the best talent. Why would I handicap that by 50 percent?”

1. Where are the women in our talent pipeline?

Most senior executives know intuitively how many women do (or don’t) hold top-leadership roles at their companies. But in the United States, surprisingly few of them keep precise track of how women do (or don’t) move through their talent pipelines—from entry all the way up to the top-executive ranks.

A clear picture is important. Because such pipelines tend to be unique, “default” solutions, though well-intentioned, can miss the mark; for instance, ramping up a recruitment drive for women won’t help an organization struggling to retain female vice presidents. In the US healthcare industry, women make up more than 75 percent of the entry labor force but hold fewer than one-third of the most senior positions. Other organizations struggle with recruitment. In US high-tech companies, it is not unusual for women to make up just 30 percent of the entry ranks. One likely factor: the decline in the number of female computer-science college undergraduates. From 2000 to 2011, the proportion of women earning computer-science degrees in the United States sank from 28 percent of the total to 18 percent.

How to gather pipeline information is no secret, and what to do with it shouldn’t be either. Outcome metrics ought to be reviewed annually, and leading indicators (such as employee sentiment and promotion trends) should be examined during quarterly business reviews. All of these metrics must be considered elements of an ongoing management conversation.

Once the pipeline is visible, a related conversation should happen about the distribution of women’s roles—in part to get a better sense of the career barriers they face. For example, in the United States, about two-thirds of women in Fortune 500 companies begin their careers in line (as opposed to support-staff) roles. Yet the figures at the top are reversed: roughly two-thirds of the women in the C-suite occupy human resources, marketing, or other support positions. Whether such patterns are a problem varies by organization; awareness is the first step toward understanding if they are.

A major consumer-goods company, for example, identified 500 pivotal roles across the organization. For each of them, it wants to have a succession plan five candidates deep (a “hit by a bus” plan). The company encourages the creation of diverse slates of candidates on these lists and tracks outcomes over time to ensure that it is making progress on its
diversity goals, including the appointment of enough women to leadership roles. Interestingly, the effort is considered a talent initiative, not a women’s initiative—a distinction that models gender-neutral behavior in promotion decisions.

Finally, companies should consider the benefits of transparency: the act of publicly sharing data on gender diversity sends staff and external parties alike a clear message that the status quo is insufficient. In recent months, several companies (including eBay, Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, and Yahoo!) have taken this step. By doing so, they have initiated a pragmatic conversation about what organizations can do to change.

2. What skills are we helping women build?

Many women’s programs focus on convening, creating, and broadening networks. While these are important investments, they are insufficient. Companies should also instill the capabilities women need to thrive. Some of the most important are resilience, grit, and confidence.

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties—a form of toughness. Grit is resolve, courage, and strength of character. Confidence is a level of self-assurance arising from an appreciation of your own abilities or qualities. In business settings, resilience allows us to get up after making a mistake or encountering a challenge, grit allows us to push through walls and rise above challenges, and confidence helps transform challenging experiences into greater self-assurance, not self-doubt.

In our 2012 interviews with 250 high-ranking women executives, we found that they thought the top attributes of their own success were resilience and grit, which ranked higher than more obvious factors, such as a “results orientation.” We also heard moving stories about how perseverance through challenging circumstances can shape a woman’s ability to lead. A former plant manager, for example, described the aftermath of an accident and her effort (in the middle of the night) to understand the circumstances in which it occurred, to ensure the workers’ safety, and to communicate with the press. Years later, this woman—now a senior executive at the company—cites the experience as a turning point in her career because it gave her confidence at a moment of failure and crisis.

Academic work highlights the importance of determination, as well. The University of Pennsylvania’s Angela Lee Duckworth found that among public-school students in Chicago, those with more grit were significantly more likely to graduate. Similarly, research by Stanford’s Carol Dweck finds that students are more successful when they are praised and recognized for their contributions, hard work, practice, and effort—in short, for a mind-set of growth. Such a mind-set is valuable in corporate environments too, for it suggests that women can shape (and reshape) their own advancement and success. The good news is that these capabilities are coachable and that educational innovation (online, video, and experiential learning, for example) ought to help. Leaders should encourage experimentation to accelerate progress.

3. Do we provide sponsors along with role models?

Intuitively, we know that seeing female role models makes a huge difference to younger women. Research confirms this intuition. For example, a 2012 study found that young Indian girls living in villages with a stronger representation of women in public leadership roles were significantly more likely to see themselves as future leaders. The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media also highlights the influence that visible female role models (or the lack of them) can have on the way girls perceive their future possibilities. (For more, see Geena Davis’s essay, “Addressing unconscious bias.”)

To go further, companies should focus on sponsorship, including the creation of opportunities. In leading companies, formal sponsorship programs help fill the opportunity gap by encouraging women to set higher aspirations and by finding ways to open doors for them. In our survey of female leaders, nearly 60 percent of them said that if they could relive their careers, they would have more sponsors.

Sponsorship is an area where men can play a huge role. In fact, it is one of the most basic commitments male leaders can make to help increase the number of talented women in their organizations. A simple question to ask men in senior roles is this: How many of you sponsor at least one woman? At the same time, of course, ask the women in leadership positions what they are doing to share their stories and to make themselves more visible role models for women throughout the ranks. Sponsorship programs with tangible goals can be highly effective. At eBay, for example, senior vice presidents and vice presidents set a goal of developing top-talent women by sponsoring five of them. Such efforts have helped the company more than double the number of women in leadership roles since 2010.

4. Are we rooting out unconscious biases?

http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/organization/fostering_women_leaders_a_fitness_test_for_your_top_team
One of the biggest challenges exists squarely in the heads of employees: the unconscious biases that shadow women throughout their careers and can set them up for failure. Held by men and women alike, these biases take many forms.

Smart companies work hard to make unconscious biases more conscious and then to root them out so that they don’t affect the culture in wide-ranging and unhelpful ways. Actions include training, surveys (to gain insights), and policy remedies that create a more level playing field. For example:

- Denise Russell Fleming, a vice president at BAE Systems, recently told the Wall Street Journal about work the company is doing to train managers and executives to overcome bias. The effort is designed to weed out even seemingly innocuous behavior, such as overlooking introverts during meetings, that can put women at a disadvantage.  

- To measure the progress of the eBay Women’s Initiative Network, the company uses a survey that highlights areas of concern for all employees—such as promotions, hiring, challenging assignments, and the visibility of job opportunities. In addition to focusing on women in leadership, the company is working to improve its culture more broadly.

- When George Halvorson was chairman and CEO of Kaiser Permanente, he instituted a “rule of two” to encourage diversity and help avoid the “just like me” bias that’s prevalent in many promotion decisions. For appointments at the VP level and above, Halvorson encouraged leaders to bring three candidates, and no more than two of them could have a similar demographic profile—for example, sex or race. (For more, see “Lessons from a veteran diversity advocate,” an interview with George Halvorson.)

- Last year, Google—where men make up 83 percent of all engineering employees and 70 percent of the total population—initiated diversity-training workshops based on academic research into unconscious bias. While reversing biases is difficult, there have been early success indicators in discussions about promotion and in improved awareness.

5. How much are our policies helping?

Although the most stubborn barriers are inside the heads of employees, this isn’t to say that companies have exhausted the potential of corporate policy to effect change. Child-leave policies are one area ripe for improvement: some US companies are raising the number of weeks for maternity leave, thus resembling international norms more closely. Both Google and Yahoo! increased the number of days they allow for child leave. Other companies are more publicly encouraging men to take paternity leave—a move that helps chip away at prevalent gender norms about caregiving. Indeed, in one women’s leadership workshop I attended, the highest-rated recommendation was to make paternity leave mandatory for men so that they could more fully take part in raising kids and reduce the perception that child care is a “women’s issue.” Such ideas are intriguing, as they suggest tangible ways a company’s policies can affect the mind-sets of employees.

Part-time or other flexible work policies are a sore spot; they look great on paper, but few employees take advantage of them: McKinsey research has found that less than 1 percent of men or women did so at companies offering such options at the executive level. Clearly, policies that aren’t much used are great opportunities for management discussions, and while these conversations can be uncomfortable, they can also lead to new ways of working. (For example, see “Championing gender equality in Australia.”)

Uncomfortable conversations are often necessary to identify the pragmatic actions that can improve a company’s odds of developing women leaders. The good news is that the rewards—a stronger workforce that fully taps the available talent across the economy—are well worth it. The power to change and to keep moving forward lies in our hands.

About the author
Lareina Yee is a principal in McKinsey’s San Francisco office.
commentary

Addressing unconscious bias

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Championing gender equality in Australia

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Lessons from a veteran diversity advocate

February 2015—The former CEO of Kaiser Permanente describes the formative experiences that led him to champion gender diversity, and reflects on the ways that diversity benefits both leaders and organizations alike. [more](#)

article

Why gender diversity at the top remains a challenge

April 2014—McKinsey’s survey of global executives finds that corporate culture and a lack of convinced engagement by male executives are critical problems for women. [more](#)
Respecting and Valuing Differences: Corporate Diversity Programs Must Be Inclusive to Be Successful

By Y’Anad Burrell 1 Comment

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February 2, 2015

The strength of diversity is set in motion when we respect and value differences. Diversity is not a program or a marketing campaign to recruit staff, and thinking of diversity in this way relegates it to its compliance-driven origins. A diverse workforce is a company’s lifeblood, and diverse perspectives and approaches are the only way of solving complex and challenging business issues. Deriving the value of diversity means uncovering all talent, and that means creating a workplace characterized by inclusion.

Inclusion is a state of being valued, respected and supported. It’s about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve his or her full potential.

In order to unleash the potential of workforce diversity, a culture of inclusion needs to be established. This should be a culture that fosters enhanced workforce integration and brings latent diversity potentials to life; a culture that is built on clarified normative grounds and honors the differences as well as the similarities of the individual, self and others. Diversity is about balancing this natural tension in different organizational and cultural settings.

Diversity is the measure and inclusion is the mechanism. High-performing organizations move beyond diversity and focus on inclusion. This requires them to examine how fully the organization embraces new ideas, accommodates different styles of thinking (such as whether a person is an introvert or an extrovert), creates a more flexible work environment, enables people to connect and collaborate and encourages different types of leaders.

Organizations that support diversity and also make employees feel included are much more likely to meet business goals than those that focus on diversity and inclusion in isolation (or focus on neither).

One essential component of building a strategy of inclusion is recognizing the biases in how each of us receives and processes information, and the historical biases in our systems of work. Addressing these biases is critical because leaders who experience high levels of inclusion often do not understand levels of alienation in an organization.

When we talk about a culture of inclusion, we think about an organizational environment that allows people with multiple backgrounds, mindsets and ways of thinking to work effectively together and perform to their highest potential in order to achieve organizational objectives based on sound principles. In such an environment, different voices are respected and heard, diverse viewpoints, perspectives and approaches are valued and everyone is encouraged to make a unique and meaningful contribution.

The vision

To create an inclusive organizational culture, the vision needs to address and implement the following aspects:

- **Incorporate diversity and inclusion** into your organization’s strategic goals.
- **Create a work environment** that is free from any harassment and is based on respect for everyone, regardless of gender, race, class, social or cultural origin, religion, disability, lifestyle, organizational level or circumstances.
- **Build a culture of communication** — where inclusion and trust are the norms — by integrating different perspectives to decision-making and problem-solving processes, listening to and trying to understand different
opinions, valuing contrary opinions and arguing positions fairly and looking for the better argument among the validation claims.

- **Provide equal opportunity** for each employee to achieve their fullest potential and to speak openly.

- **Appreciate the contributions** that each employee can make by bringing his or her own perspectives, viewpoints and ideas and by demonstrating solidarity.

Y’Anad Burrell is the CEO of Glass House Communications and president-elect of PRSA’s San Francisco Chapter. She is a San Francisco native with more than 10 years of experience in public relations and strategic communications.

Diversity and Inclusion does have everything to do staffing, social learning, and acceptance. It means your company or organization would seek to hire older workers, foreign workers that might have different religious beliefs. It means the entire company becoming culturally aware and in sync with other nationalities with differences, yet talented. It's not a diversity campaign or diversity looking published materials. Diversity starts in hiring. Then becomes inclusive in all parts of the organization.

February 10, 2015

Post a Comment

**Editor’s Note:** Please limit your comments to the specific post. We reserve the right to omit any response that is not related to the article or that may be considered objectionable.

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**Validation:**

To help us ensure that you are a real human, please type the total number of circles that appear in the following images in the box below.

Post Comment
They say that when a book literally falls off a shelf in front of you, it’s probably a sign. Such was the case with Tara Mohr’s *Playing Big: Find Your Voice, Your Mission, Your Message*: When we flipped it open, we landed on a passage about why criticism—particularly between women—is so prevalent, and we had to buy the book and read it. Tara is a career coach who specifically focuses on women—women who find plenty of ways to hold themselves back and play a bit smaller than they deserve. While she teaches workshops and seminars on the subject, she’s distilled many of her theories and principles into *Playing Big*, which is a great, fast read. (We love her 10 rules for brilliant women, too.) Below, we asked her some questions (and love her advice on finding an Inner Mentor). Have more? We’re hosting a live Facebook Q&A with Tara this Friday for 30 minutes at 9amPST/12pmEST—come join the conversation.
Q

In Playing Big, you talk at length about six reasons why women tend to get so “hooked” by what other people think, both in terms of positive and negative feedback—can you summarize the key points?

A

One of the most notable things I saw in my work with women was how many of them were being held back by a dependence on praise or an avoidance of criticism. That same underlying issue expressed itself in many different forms: For one woman it manifested as continually postponing the launch of a new nonprofit organization because she knew how controversial her approach would be. For another woman it showed up as not sharing her beloved handmade crafts because she worried people wouldn’t like them. Another woman wanted better work-life balance but was driven to work way too hard, because she was addicted to getting gold stars.

“CRITICISM IS PAINFUL AND PRAISE FEELS GOOD FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK AFFECTS WOMEN MORE DRAMATICALLY THOUGH.”

I could relate to all of them. I often felt tossed around in my life and work by my fear of not being liked, or by a desire for approval. So I began to get really interested in this issue.

Certainly, criticism is painful and praise feels good for both men and women. What other people think affects women more dramatically though, for a few reasons:

1. We’re relationship oriented. When people don’t like what we are up
to, it can feel like disharmony or a break in our relationships, which we so deeply value.

2. **We pick up more information about what others think.** A host of studies show women are more adept at reading facial expressions and body language than men. This means we are getting more information than men, all the time, about how people are reacting to us.

3. **Approval from others has been our lifeline.** For most of history, women couldn’t protect themselves through legal, political, or financial means. We didn’t have those options. We could ensure our survival only by adapting to what was desired and approved of by those with greater power. The legacy of that history is still alive in us and can make criticism or challenging the status quo feel like particularly high stakes.

4. **We’re—often rightly—afraid of personal attacks.** Research shows that when women get negative feedback, it tends to be more personal than the feedback men get. It can also be more angry and even violent or vulgar, especially in our internet age.

5. **We’ve got years of good girl conditioning**—messages to not rock the boat and to be likable. This makes doing something that won’t be approved of feel more transgressive.

6. **Lastly, our culture’s focus on women’s appearances (beauty, weight, etc.) sends girls and women the message that how others perceive us matters a great deal.** Think about how many films, movies, or television shows you’ve watched in which the female character’s destiny was determined not by what she did, but by how she was perceived. That sends us a major message, which we often absorb unconsciously, that what other people think about us is more important than our lived experience or our choices.
Q

For Point 4—fear of personal attacks—why do you think women are so inclined to criticize each other? Where does that come from? Why is it socially so accepted?

A

In any society, the people within a marginalized or low-power group end up taking out that pain and anger on each other through in-group conflict. Women today are grappling with our own form of this. To the extent that women are each not fully empowered ourselves—that we are still denying our own dreams or treating ourselves harshly—we will criticize, attack, and try to sabotage other women, because it rattles us to see in them what we have not permitted in ourselves. We will lash out if we see something emerging or expressed in another woman that we have squashed in ourselves. We won’t wholeheartedly support another woman following her passion if we’ve talked ourselves out of our own. We won’t support her idealism and desire to change the world if we treat our own idealism with judgment or harshness. We can’t celebrate success, ambition, assertiveness in another woman if we are curtailing any of that in ourselves.

“To the extent that women are each not fully empowered ourselves—that we are still denying our own dreams or treating ourselves harshly—we will criticize, attack, and try to sabotage other women, because it rattles us to see in them what we have not permitted in ourselves.”
Q

So what needs to happen to change this?

A

Every woman needs to work on her own playing big, and that doesn’t mean simply her ego’s ambitions but rather a pursuit of her heartfelt dreams for her life and her real passions. When she’s given herself full permission to do that, to work on becoming the woman she longs to be, when she’s respecting her own dreams, she can be supportive of other women doing so, too.

When you feel jealous of other women, find yourself gossiping, or wanting to take away from another woman’s success, ask yourself, “Where have I gone astray from allowing and pursuing my own aspirations and what do I need to do to get back on my own side?” It’s about you and your path. It’s not about her.

Q

How can we all hold criticism a little bit better? What’s the appropriate response when you feel attacked (whether “justified” or not)?

A

I want to invite everyone to try on this radical idea: Feedback can never tell
you anything about you. It can only tell you about the person giving the feedback.

For example, if your boss tells you that you are a fabulous manager, that doesn’t tell you anything about you, or even anything about your management skills. It tells you something about what your boss thinks makes a good manager. And if your boss tells you that you are a poor manager, same thing.

“I WANT TO INVITE EVERYONE TO TRY ON THIS RADICAL IDEA: FEEDBACK CAN NEVER TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT YOU. IT CAN ONLY TELL YOU ABOUT THE PERSON GIVING THE FEEDBACK.”

Or if you write a blog and it’s super popular, that doesn’t tell you that you are a “good writer.” It tells you something about what certain people—your readership—connect with.

When we understand feedback this way, we don’t end up feeling attacked by it or validated by it. Instead, we begin to see feedback as extremely important, emotionally neutral information that tells us about the person giving it. If that person is someone we want to work with effectively or reach (a boss, a client, a colleague, or our customers, for example), we still need to take that feedback very seriously and incorporate it! But we do so in order to be effective in working with them, not because we think we need to “fix” something wrong with ourselves.

Speaking of criticism, you talk at length about everyone’s Inner Critic, and the role the Inner Critic plays in shaping your whole destiny. How do you identify—and where appropriate, silence, the Inner Critic?
All of us have a tough inner critic—a voice in our heads that speaks very harshly about us. This is the voice that flips out about your upper arms as you glance at them in a window reflection. It’s the voice telling you that you are a bad mom, or that you don’t have what it takes to run a business. Both women and men have that inner voice, but I think in our time, overall, women tend to be more held back by it.

I believe every girl and woman on the planet needs an Inner Critic 101 Training to learn what this voice is, why we have it, and how to deal with it. Most of us don’t get that education and as a result we end up being very limited by that voice. It really doesn’t have to be that way.

The first step in dealing with your inner critic is learning to identify when it’s speaking. Most of us are so used to its old narratives we think “that’s just me” and we don’t notice when it’s chattering away in our heads. We all need to get to know what our inner critic is saying, and we can do that simply by putting our attention on listening for it. When you hear it, you can simply say to yourself, “Oh, I’m hearing my inner critic now.”

“I BELIEVE IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT WOMEN DO NOT WAIT ON CONFIDENCE IN ORDER TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS!”

The second step is understanding what that voice is. I believe it’s an expression of our safety instinct—our desire to stay protected from any potential failure, rejection, embarrassment. When we are contemplating doing something visible, out of our comfort zones, something we aren’t sure if we’ll succeed at it, that safety instinct fires and starts using all those inner critic lines—You can’t do this! You aren’t ready yet! Go get a Ph.D. in the topic before you say anything about it!—and so on, in order to try to get us back in the comfort zone. That’s why our inner critics often speak up most loudly when we are on the right track with a new direction or career leap.

The third step is to choose to not take direction from that voice. When you know what your inner critic is, and you notice when yours is speaking up,
you have a choice to not take direction from the voice, even as you hear it. I believe it is extremely important that women do not wait on confidence in order to pursue their dreams! We need to learn how to go for our dreams even as our inner critics rant and rave about them. So in answer to your question, we don’t silence our inner critics. We learn to not take direction from them. We learn how to hear the panicked voice of self-doubt but not be run by it.

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Q

On the flip side, you talk about finding your Inner Mentor. It’s a pretty amazing idea that the person you should really listen to most is within—so, how do you find this Inner Mentor?

A

This is such an incredible tool and I want every woman to experience it!

The Inner Mentor is the older, wiser you. It’s you twenty or thirty years into the future, your more fully expressed, authentic self. It’s very easy for women to get a vivid, clear sense of that woman through a short visualization. (Goop readers can access the audio of it from me here with password “taramohr&goop” and do it for themselves.) The visualization helps us access something wiser and deeper by moving away from our surface level goals or our egos’ idealized projections of what we want to become.

Once you’ve “met” your Inner Mentor, you can think about what choices in your life will help you grow more into her and which will take you further away. You can ask yourself: What would she do in this tricky situation? How would she write this difficult email? Would she choose option A or B in this dilemma I’m faced with? I’ve even had a lot of fun with women asking
themselves: What does she do for exercise? What kind of food does she nourish herself with? What's her personal style like? They have a great time starting to make choices more in line with hers—often more loving, enjoyable ways of taking care of their bodies, and a bolder, more unique personal style.

I've now worked with thousands of women to help them discover their Inner Mentors and then “consult” with her on their toughest challenges. I can honestly say, the results are never short of incredible. It can be exhausting to push, push, push towards our goals, and the Inner Mentor gives a really different kind of path—being pulled forward, guided by a compelling vision.

—Tara Mohr is an expert on women’s leadership and well-being. She helps women play bigger in sharing their voices and bringing forward their ideas in work and in life. A Coaches Training Institute-certified coach with an MBA from Stanford University and an undergraduate degree in English literature from Yale, Tara takes a unique approach that blends inner work and practical skills training. She is the creator of the Playing Big leadership program for women, which now has more than 1000 graduates from around the world. Her book, Playing Big: Find Your Voice, Your Mission, Your Message, named a best book of 2014 by Apple’s iBooks, shares her pioneering model from the acclaimed leadership program for making the journey from playing small—being held back by fear and self-doubt—to playing big, taking bold action to pursue what you see as your callings. Her work has been featured on national media from The New York Times to Today Show to Harvard Business Review, and has captivated women from all walks of life including Maria Shriver, Jillian Michaels and Elizabeth Gilbert.
BIBLIOTHÈQUE’S FAVORITE BOOKS

Below, a glimpse at one of their curat...
LONDON — Suggest to Helena Morrissey that she is Britain’s version of Sheryl Sandberg, and she smiles politely.

“I think I am meant to be flattered,” Ms. Morrissey, a 48-year-old money manager, said recently in her office in the City, London’s historic financial district. “But I am doing my own thing.”

Like Ms. Sandberg, the Facebook executive, Ms. Morrissey has become the face of women’s advancement in business in her country. Four years ago, she founded the 30% Club, an organization that seeks to increase the representation of women on boards to that number.

But Ms. Morrissey has taken a rather different approach than Ms. Sandberg and others have.

Ms. Sandberg has implored women to assert themselves and find sponsors who can help advance their careers. And countries like Norway and France have mandated legal quotas for the percentage of women serving on boards.

Instead, Ms. Morrissey has directed her steely focus on Britain’s most powerful men.

Working behind the scenes, she has persuaded 120 of the country’s top chairmen that they want what she wants: more diverse boards that will
produce better company returns.

The approach has produced some remarkable results. Since 2010, the percentage of women on Britain’s top boards has nearly doubled, to 23 percent, while in the United States, the figure has crept up a few percentage points to 17 percent.

“There is a spotlight and visibility there that is not present here,” says Brande Stellings, vice president for corporate board services at Catalyst, a nonprofit focused on increasing opportunities for women in the United States.

That Ms. Morrissey is credited with spearheading those results while raising nine children — ages 5 through 23 — could have made her the target of ire in a country that does not always celebrate success. Or it might have fueled the debate about whether a woman can or cannot have it all. It has done neither.

“She’s an anomaly, not a template,” said her husband, Richard, 51, who is a Buddhist and former journalist who cares for the children at home.

Groups like Catalyst in the United States have worked to get more women in positions of power. But progress in the United States has been glacial, making the 30% Club’s methods, and results, all the more compelling.

“If we could in any way, shape or form replicate the success she has had in such a short period of time, we would be doing a good job for the business community here,” said Peter Grauer, chairman of the news and information company Bloomberg L.P. and the founding chairman of the American chapter of the 30% Club, which was started last year.

The 30% Club’s approach is distinctive, and heavily influenced by Ms. Morrissey, whose English-rose approach masks a relentless determination.

Petite, charismatic and impeccably stylish — she made a point of telling Harper’s Bazaar that she prefers Louboutins and insists on heels — Ms.
Morrissey is a charming burst of energy who talks so fast that she can lose track of what she is saying. She openly acknowledges her own shortcomings and believes results matter more than credit.

She works behind the scenes, seeking to persuade others to buy into the group’s philosophy and then own it themselves, an approach that many welcome.

“My style is not to tell people what to do but to show a path that is appealing,” she said.

And she does not go negative. For example, she will not name those who would not join the 30% Club in its early days. Equally, she is supportive of anyone trying to effect change rather than complain about the lack of it.

“I see so much confrontation and negativity and I don’t see that it achieves very much,” she said. Ms. Morrissey is a Sandberg fan and compliments her for starting an important dialogue. “Women do need to lean in but I don’t think it’s fix the women or fix the system. It’s not binary.”

Ms. Morrissey is adamant that the group is not promoting a women’s initiative or a diversity initiative, but a business issue. She cites research from McKinsey, Catalyst and Credit Suisse as evidence that more diverse boards provide better shareholder returns, because homogeneous boards often provide little fresh thinking about customers, risks or outcomes. Not coincidentally, 30 percent representation is the level at which organizational psychologists agree a minority voice can be heard.

To that end, she has encouraged men to lead the charge, and once they are on board employed them to recruit others. When she was trying to build support for the group, she set out to send notes to each chairman of the companies in the FTSE 350 stock index, alphabetically.

When she reached the H’s some unfriendly mail from the A’s started
pouring in. She quickly learned there was a better way.

“It’s best to get chairmen to recruit each other than to use me,” she said.

The open tent, no-pressure strategy seems to be effective in Britain, where complex rules around confrontation seem to permeate every level of society.

“Where I think Helena has been uniquely successful is in quiet advocacy, in getting people who have the power to make a change, believing that they want to make a change,” said Robert Gillespie, a member of the Royal Bank of Scotland board and a former banker at Evercore and UBS.

Ms. Morrissey is vehemently against government-imposed quotas, bucking the trend from much of Europe, but she did name the group for the target she means to reach: 30 percent of boards made up of women by 2015. She believes the group will get to 27 percent by the end of the year, and more if it focuses on the 10 percent of nonexecutive directors who have held seats for more than nine years.

The movement has not been without detractors. One chairman told her she was going to destroy business; others wonder why she is not doing more for broader categories of diversity, like race or sexuality. Also, women’s numbers in senior executive roles in Britain remain paltry.

Still, the 30% Club has expanded, with groups in Hong Kong, South Africa and Ireland as well as the United States, and plans for Canada and Australia.

Perhaps the 30% Club’s greatest asset is its ability to try new approaches. Recognizing that boards turned to executive search firms for lists, it lobbied and won the support of some search firms. Hearing that midcareer women wanted mentorship, but not always within their own organizations, it created a cross-mentoring group where a female lawyer might be mentored by a male asset manager, because she might not want to talk to her boss about balancing children and work, or taking time off to care for an elderly parent.
The group has commissioned research debunking common myths, held events and formed an investor group to engage listed company boards constructively.

“What is so often needed in a campaign is lots of levers to be shifting at the same time,” says Emma Howard Boyd, head of the 30% Club’s investor group and a former Jupiter Asset Management executive.

Ms. Morrissey started her career as a bond analyst for Schroders in New York and she was influenced by senior women there. Returning to London, she was passed over for a promotion. When she asked why, she said that her boss told her it was because she had just had a baby (her first).

She left to go to Newton Investment Management, then a 7 billion-pound asset manager. In 2004, she was asked to be the chief executive, an appointment that took her completely by surprise. The company, a subsidiary of Bank of New York Mellon, now has £50.7 billion under management.

She was part of, and in charge of, various women’s mentoring groups. But she described the efforts as “soul-crushing” since so many smart people had invested so much time with so few results.

The financial crisis provided an opportunity. Europe was barreling toward passing a law that required boards to mandate a level of representation of women on boards. She found such efforts patronizing. And at the same time, boards were being questioned for their utter failure to predict or even grapple with the financial crisis.

“The door was ajar,” she said.

In March 2010, she and 14 other women won the support of two influential chairmen, and decided to start the group. The timing was serendipitous: The new coalition government in Britain commissioned Lord Davies of Abersoch to examine the lack of women on boards. In 2011, he set a
voluntary target of 25 percent by 2015, coinciding nicely with the group’s goal.

With that, it may not be clear who is responsible for the progress that Britain has seen, though some chairmen point to Ms. Morrissey.

“You could find umpteen government and quasi-government reports that have said sensible things from which nothing has happened,” said one, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Ms. Morrissey is also head of a parliamentary commission on women in sports and the chairwoman of an investment management association whose members oversee £5 trillion in assets.

She has begun the new year by taking the group’s message to schools. Teaming up with another charity, Speakers for Schools, the 30% Club is blanketing a handful of British schools, with the chairmen explaining to students how diversity benefits business.

On Monday, Douglas Flint, the chairman of HSBC, offered 400 students in a high school audience in east London some advice.

When he goes to promote a man, he said, the reaction is often: “What took you so long? I’ve been ready for ages.” Women, he said, often question if they have the necessary skills.

“Don’t be too self-effacing,” he told the crowd, channeling Ms. Sandberg.

As often happens, Ms. Morrissey’s personal life attracted a bit of attention at the event. The headmaster of the school introduced Ms. Morrissey as the chief executive of Newton, the recipient of honors from Queen Elizabeth, and one of Bloomberg’s 50 most influential people in 2014.

When he said she also had nine children, the room erupted with gasps, followed by chatter and then a steady buzz of whispering.
“She has more children than most women in most jobs,” said Siobhan Lynch, 18, and a student at the school. “It provides hope in a way.”

A version of this article appears in print on 01/27/2015, on page B1 of the NewYork edition with the headline: Aiming at Glass Ceilings.
The Secret to Smart Groups: It's Women

By Derek Thompson

The concept of "general intelligence"—the idea that people who are good at one mental task tend to be good at many others—was considered radical in 1904, when Charles Spearman proposed the theory of a "g factor." Today, however, it is among the most replicated findings in psychology. But whereas in 1904 the U.S. economy was a network of farms, mills, and artisans, today's economy is an office-based affair, where the most important g for many companies doesn't stand for general intelligence, but, rather, groups.

So, what makes groups smart? Is there any such thing as a "smart" group, or are groups just, well, clumps of smart people?

As a team of scientists from MIT, Carnegie Mellon, and Union College write in this Sunday's New York Times, research suggests that just as some individuals are smarter than others, some groups are smarter than others, across a range of tests and tasks. In other words, there is a "c factor" for collective intelligence. Teams that are successful at solving visual puzzles also tend to be good at brainstorming and beating computers in video games. The authors provide a nice summary of the characteristics of smart groups in their original study (not directly linked in the Times piece, but accessible on page 686 of Science, October 2010):

In two studies with 699 people, working in groups of two to five, we find converging evidence of a general collective intelligence factor that explains a group’s performance on a wide variety of tasks. This “c factor” is not strongly correlated with the average or maximum individual intelligence of group members but is correlated with the average social sensitivity of group members, the equality in distribution of conversational turn-taking, and the proportion of females in the group.

That bolded sentence is hiding a lot of heavy conclusions in plain sight. First, neither the average intelligence of the group nor the smartest person in the group had much to do with the group's "c" factor. Just as great artists don't necessarily form great bands when they pool their talents, smart people don’t automatically make smart groups.
Furthermore, the predictable troupe of buzzwords you would expect to correlate with successful groups—"cohesion," "motivation," and "satisfaction"—didn't have much to do with effective teams, either. Instead, the single most important element of smart groups, according to the researchers, was their "average social sensitivity." That is, the best groups were also the best at reading the non-verbal cues of their teammates. And, since women score higher on this metric of emotional intelligence, teams with more women tended to be better teams.

What the heck is average social sensitivity? It is, essentially, mind-reading. When a member of your team—Michelle, we'll call her—says "I guess Danny really does have the answer for everything," and you detect a hint of aggrieved irony in Michelle's statement, while further noting the simultaneous drop in Michelle's chin as she makes the comment, coinciding with a deflated air of preemptive surrender in Michelle's tone, and you begin to think, hmmm, maybe what Michelle is actually saying is that Danny is a know-it-all jerk?, you are detecting what scientists would call "non-verbal clues." In plain-speak, you are reading between the lines. Indeed, like reading, social sensitivity is a kind of literacy, and it turns out that women are naturally more fluent in the language of tone and faces than the other half of their species.

Women are better at reading the mind through the face even online, when they can't see their teammates' faces. In a follow-up study (the full paper, which again isn't linked in the Times piece, lives here), the scientists gave participants a "Reading the Mind in the Eyes," or RME, test, where they were asked to identify complex emotions (e.g., shame or curiosity, rather than sadness or joy) in pictures of other people's eyes. Then they divided participants into teams and had them perform a number of tests, like brainstorming and group Sudoku. Again, teams with more women, who scored higher on the RME test, performed the best across the tasks. From the paper:

> The [RME] scores of group members were a strong predictor of how well the groups could perform a wide range of tasks together, even when participants were only collaborating online via text chat and could not see each other's eyes or facial expressions at all.

Reading these studies and the Times piece, I could think of two obvious objections.

First: Isn't it possible that there are specific personality traits—like openness or empathy—that might make some men just as good as women at reading the minds of their teammates?  
Second: Is it really true that smarter teammates have so little to do with smart groups?

The researchers answer the first question explicitly, with a no. "We found no significant correlation between a general factor of personality and collective intelligence or RME," they write. Mind-reading isn't a personality trait. It's a skill.

Second, the relationship between smart teammates and smart groups is complicated by the fact that groups are sometimes assigned problems that only require one person to solve. If you ask a team of highly emotionally sensitive people to solve a differential calculus problem, and none of them knows calculus, it's unlikely that they will come to grasp Taylor polynomials by looking deeply into each others' eyes and really, truly listening. When the problem can be solved by one really smart cookie (e.g.: who remembers calculus), it's nice to have a really smart cookie. If, however, the solution requires deep collaboration, EQ trumps IQ.
I found these studies eye-opening for two further reasons. First, there is a growing sense that the Internet can destroy interpersonal skills, kill our emotional intelligence, and turn us into warm-blooded versions of the very robots that we fear will one day take our jobs. But these studies suggest that the rules of empathy hold both on- and offline. Emotionally sensitive people are gifted at reading between the lines, whether the literal lines are brow wrinkles or text messages.

Second, if you take these findings seriously, they represent a third fork of evidence suggesting that the male-female gender wage gap will not only close but also invert. It would surprise me if, in a generation, women aren’t earning more than men across many mainstream industries.

First, women earn the majority of bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, and Ph.D's. The historical relationship between higher education and earnings is simple: Those who learn more earn more. This advantage will continue to enrich women in the labor force. Second, if you look at the direction of job growth, brawny, muscly jobs like construction and manufacturing are in structural decline, while the fastest growing jobs, both at the low-pay end and in the white-collar world, require softer skills where men have no physical advantage. Third, men might have innate disadvantages in collaborative work settings, like the emotional illiteracy alluded to in these studies.

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Is there such a thing as a diversity dividend?

A new study of 366 public companies in the U.S., Canada, U.K., Brazil, Mexico and Chile by McKinsey & Co., a major management consultancy, found a statistically significant relationship between companies with women and minorities in their upper ranks and better financial performance as measured by earnings before interest and tax, or EBIT.

The findings could further fuel employers’ efforts to increase the ranks of women and people of color for executive suites and boardrooms — an issue where some progress is being made, albeit slowly.

McKinsey researchers examined the gender, ethnic and racial makeup of top management teams and boards for large concerns across a range of industries as of 2014. Then, they analyzed the firms’ average earnings before interest and taxes between 2010 and 2013. They collected but didn’t analyze other financial measures such as return on equity. (Read the full report.)

Businesses with the most gender diverse leadership were 15% more likely to report financial returns...
above their national industry median, the study showed. An even more striking link turned up at concerns with extensive ethnic diversity. Those best performers were 35% more likely to have financial returns that outpace their industry, according to the analysis. The report did not disclose specific companies.

Highly diverse companies appear to excel financially due to their talent recruitment efforts, strong customer orientation, increased employee satisfaction and improved decision making, the report said. Those possible factors emerged from prior McKinsey research about diversity.

McKinsey cited “measurable progress” among U.S. companies, where women now represent about 16% of executive teams — compared with 12% for U.K. ones and 6% for Brazilian ones. But American businesses don’t see a financial payoff from gender diversity “until women constitute at least 22% of a senior executive team,” the study noted. (McKinsey tracked 186 U.S. and Canadian firms.)

The study marks the first time “that the impact of ethnic and gender diversity on financial performance has been looked at for an international sample of companies,” said Vivian Hunt, a co-author, in an interview. Yet “no company is a high performer on both ethnic diversity and on gender,” she reported.

And “very few U.S. companies yet have a systematic approach to diversity that is able to consistently achieve a diverse global talent pool,” Ms. Hunt added.

McKinsey has long tracked workplace diversity. A 2007 study, for instance, uncovered a positive relationship between corporate performance and the elevated presence of working women in European countries such as the U.K., France and Germany.
When Talking About Bias Backfires

Adam Grant and Sheryl Sandberg on Discrimination at Work

By ADAM GRANT and SHERYL SANDBERG	DEC. 6, 2014

A FATHER and his son are in a car accident. The father is killed and the son is seriously injured. The son is taken to the hospital where the surgeon says, “I cannot operate, because this boy is my son.”

This popular brain teaser dates back many years, but it remains relevant today: 40 to 75 percent of people still can’t figure it out. Those who do solve it usually take a few minutes to fathom that the boy’s mother could be a surgeon. Even when we have the best of intentions, when we hear “surgeon” or “boss,” the image that pops into our minds is often male.

Our culture’s strong gender stereotypes extend beyond image to performance, leading us to believe that men are more competent than women. Managers — both male and female — continue to favor men over equally qualified women in hiring, compensation, performance evaluation and promotion decisions. This limits opportunities for women and deprives organizations of valuable talent.

To solve this problem, business leaders, academics and journalists are working to raise awareness about bias. The assumption is that when people realize that biases are widespread, they will be more likely to overcome them. But new research suggests that if we’re not careful, making people aware of bias can backfire, leading them to discriminate more rather than less.

In several experiments, Prof. Michelle Duguid of Washington University in St. Louis and Prof. Melissa Thomas-Hunt of the University of Virginia
studied whether making people aware of bias would lessen it. They informed some people that stereotypes were rare and told others that stereotypes were common, then asked for their perceptions of women. Those who read that stereotypes were common rated women as significantly less career-oriented and more family-oriented. Even when instructed to “try to avoid thinking about others in such a manner,” people still viewed women more traditionally after reading that a vast majority held stereotypes.

In another study, Professors Duguid and Thomas-Hunt told managers that stereotypes were common or rare. Then, they asked managers to read a transcript from a job interview of a candidate described as either female or male. At the end of the interview, the candidate asked for higher compensation and a nonstandard bonus. When the managers read that many people held stereotypes, they were 28 percent less interested in hiring the female candidate. They also judged her as 27 percent less likable. The same information did not alter their judgments of male candidates.

Why would knowledge about stereotype prevalence lead to greater stereotyping? We can find clues in research led by Prof. Robert Cialdini at Arizona State University. In a national park, Professor Cialdini’s team tried to stop people from stealing petrified wood by posting: “Many past visitors have removed the petrified wood from the park, changing the state of the Petrified Forest.” Even with this warning, theft rates stood at 5 percent. So they made the sign more severe: “Your heritage is being vandalized every day by theft losses of petrified wood of 14 tons a year, mostly a small piece at a time.” This warning influenced theft, but not in the direction you’d expect: stealing jumped from 5 percent to almost 8 percent.

The message people received was not “Don’t steal petrified wood,” but “Stealing petrified wood is a common and socially acceptable behavior.” We have the same reaction when we learn about the ubiquity of stereotypes. If everyone else is biased, we don’t need to worry as much about censoring ourselves.

If awareness makes it worse, how do we make it better? The solution isn’t to stop pointing out stereotypes. Instead, we need to communicate that these
biases are undesirable and unacceptable.

Professor Cialdini’s team slashed the theft rate to 1.67 percent by adding a simple sentence to the sign:

“Please don’t remove the petrified wood from the park.”

Professors Duguid and Thomas-Hunt used a similar approach to prevent bias awareness from backfiring.

Rather than merely informing managers that stereotypes persisted, they added that a “vast majority of people try to overcome their stereotypic preconceptions.” With this adjustment, discrimination vanished in their studies. After reading this message, managers were 28 percent more interested in working with the female candidate who negotiated assertively and judged her as 25 percent more likable.

When we communicate that a vast majority of people hold some biases, we need to make sure that we’re not legitimating prejudice. By reinforcing the idea that people want to conquer their biases and that there are benefits to doing so, we send a more effective message: Most people don’t want to discriminate, and you shouldn’t either.

Encouraging people to correct for biases does more than change the way we view others. It also affects the opportunities women will seek for themselves. One of us, Adam, presented data in his classes at Wharton on the underrepresentation of women in major leadership roles and discussed the factors that held women back. He thought a public dialogue would prompt action. But during the next five months, there was no change in the percentage of female M.B.A. students who applied for a leadership position on campus.

The following year, he shared the same data about the shortage of female leaders, with one sentence added at the end: “I don’t ever want to see this happen again.” During the next five months, there was a 65 percent increase in the number of female M.B.A. students who sought out leadership roles compared with those who had in the previous year. And the female students who heard this statement were 53 percent more likely to apply for leadership positions than those who did not hear it that year.

To motivate women at work, we need to be explicit about our disapproval
of the leadership imbalance as well as our support for female leaders.

When more women lead, performance improves. Start-ups led by women are more likely to succeed; innovative firms with more women in top management are more profitable; and companies with more gender diversity have more revenue, customers, market share and profits. A comprehensive analysis of 95 studies on gender differences showed that when it comes to leadership skills, although men are more confident, women are more competent.

To break down the barriers that hold women back, it’s not enough to spread awareness. If we don’t reinforce that people need — and want — to overcome their biases, we end up silently condoning the status quo.

So let’s be clear: We want to see these biases vanish, and we know you do, too.

*This is the first of four essays in a series on women at work.*

Adam Grant is a professor at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of “Give and Take.” Sheryl Sandberg is the chief operating officer of Facebook and the founder of LeanIn.org.

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President Obama covered a wide range of topics during his State of the Union address on Tuesday night, from cybersecurity to international relations to education. But between discussion of immigration, climate change, and foreign relations, another big idea kept popping up. Many of the President’s proposals involved improving the lives of women, particularly in the workplace, something he believes will be critical to ensuring the country’s economic strength.

This isn’t an altogether new thing for this President or the Democratic party. Winning favor with female voters has been a key mission of President Obama’s tenure in office from the outset, starting with the passage of The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act just days after his inauguration in 2009. That piece of legislation, the first President Obama signed in office, made it easier for people to challenge their employers on issues of unequal pay, which disproportionately impact women.

Then, last year, he issued an executive order prohibiting federal contractors from punishing workers who discuss salaries, and he has been a vocal supporter of the Paycheck Fairness Act, which the Republican party has repeatedly shot down.

On Tuesday night, President Obama took up the cause once again, advocating for a number of changes that would both directly and indirectly influence women’s ability to participate and thrive in the workplace.

Affordable Childcare
The first of these proposals was the creation of more affordable childcare options.

As one Pew report recently noted, the number of stay-at-home mothers in the U.S. is on the rise after several decades of declines. And according to the report, one key reason for that may be that the cost of childcare is also on the rise, forcing some women who would have preferred to pursue a career to stay home with their children instead. Obama aims to change this.

“It’s time we stop treating childcare as a side issue, or a women’s issue, and treat it like the national economic priority that it is for all of us,” he said during the State of the Union.

Paid Maternity Leave
He also broached the topic of paid sick and maternity leave, noting that the United States is the only “advanced country on Earth” that doesn’t guarantee either to its workers. That leaves 43 million Americans with no access to paid leave.

The President said he would work with states to develop paid leave laws and asked Congress to vote on legislation that would provide these benefits to every American worker.

Closing the Gap—and More
Once again, he stressed the need for legislation to close the gender wage gap, guaranteeing female employees pay that is equal to that of their male counterparts. “It’s 2015,” President Obama said. “It’s time.” And he laid out a wide range of other goals that would disproportionately benefit women, including a proposal of a $3,000 tax break per child, per year.

According to a recent Pew study, single mothers account for one quarter of U.S. households, and according to the Census Bureau, about half of kids with single moms live in poverty. So though this tax cut would benefit members of both sexes, it stands to have a more dramatic impact in the lives of single moms living in poverty.

The Thrust
The thrust of the argument behind many of these programs is the idea that it’s not sexism holding women back in the workplace, but logistics. During a recent talk at the Clinton Global Initiative, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton — widely expected to make her own run for President again in 2016 — shared many of the same thoughts about closing the gender gap in business.

At the time, she said that in not offering working women “support systems,” including free preschool and maternity leave, the U.S. government is forcing them to make a choice between working and caring for their families. “Those are not just nice luxuries for women,” Clinton said. “They would fundamentally free up women to be in the workforce if they had the skills and desire to do so.”

The odds are slim that President Obama will be able to enact such legislation within his last two years in office. But one thing is for sure: the Democratic party is preparing to make the role of women in the workplace a key battleground of the 2016 election.
YEARS ago, while producing the hit TV series “The Shield,” Glen Mazzara noticed that two young female writers were quiet during story meetings. He pulled them aside and encouraged them to speak up more.

Watch what happens when we do, they replied.

Almost every time they started to speak, they were interrupted or shot down before finishing their pitch. When one had a good idea, a male writer would jump in and run with it before she could complete her thought.

Sadly, their experience is not unusual.

We’ve both seen it happen again and again. When a woman speaks in a professional setting, she walks a tightrope. Either she’s barely heard or she’s judged as too aggressive. When a man says virtually the same thing, heads nod in appreciation for his fine idea. As a result, women often decide that saying less is more.

Some new studies support our observations. A study by a Yale psychologist, Victoria L. Brescoll, found that male senators with more power (as measured by tenure, leadership positions and track record of legislation passed) spoke more on the Senate floor than their junior colleagues. But for female senators, power was not linked to significantly more speaking time.

Suspecting that powerful women stayed quiet because they feared a backlash, Professor Brescoll looked deeper. She asked professional men and women to evaluate the competence of chief executives who voiced their opinions more or less frequently. Male executives who spoke more often than
their peers were rewarded with 10 percent higher ratings of competence. When female executives spoke more than their peers, both men and women punished them with 14 percent lower ratings. As this and other research shows, women who worry that talking “too much” will cause them to be disliked are not paranoid; they are often right.

One of us, Adam, was dismayed to find similar patterns when studying a health care company and advising an international bank. When male employees contributed ideas that brought in new revenue, they got significantly higher performance evaluations. But female employees who spoke up with equally valuable ideas did not improve their managers’ perception of their performance. Also, the more the men spoke up, the more helpful their managers believed them to be. But when women spoke up more, there was no increase in their perceived helpfulness.

This speaking-up double bind harms organizations by depriving them of valuable ideas. A University of Texas researcher, Ethan Burris, conducted an experiment in which he asked teams to make strategic decisions for a bookstore. He randomly informed one member that the bookstore’s inventory system was flawed and gave that person data about a better approach. In subsequent analyses, he found that when women challenged the old system and suggested a new one, team leaders viewed them as less loyal and were less likely to act on their suggestions. Even when all team members were informed that one member possessed unique information that would benefit the group, suggestions from women with inside knowledge were discounted.

Obviously, businesses need to find ways to interrupt this gender bias. Just as orchestras that use blind auditions increase the number of women who are selected, organizations can increase women’s contributions by adopting practices that focus less on the speaker and more on the idea. For example, in innovation tournaments, employees submit suggestions and solutions to problems anonymously. Experts evaluate the proposals, give feedback to all participants and then implement the best plans.

SINCE most work cannot be done anonymously, leaders must also take steps to encourage women to speak and be heard. At “The Shield,” Mr.
Mazzara, the show runner, found a clever way to change the dynamics that were holding those two female employees back. He announced to the writers that he was instituting a no-interruption rule while anyone — male or female — was pitching. It worked, and he later observed that it made the entire team more effective.

The long-term solution to the double bind of speaking while female is to increase the number of women in leadership roles. (As we noted in our previous article, research shows that when it comes to leadership skills, although men are more confident, women are more competent.) As more women enter the upper echelons of organizations, people become more accustomed to women’s contributing and leading. Professor Burris and his colleagues studied a credit union where women made up 74 percent of supervisors and 84 percent of front-line employees. Sure enough, when women spoke up there, they were more likely to be heard than men. When President Obama held his last news conference of 2014, he called on eight reporters — all women. It made headlines worldwide. Had a politician given only men a chance to ask questions, it would not have been news; it would have been a regular day.

As 2015 starts, we wonder what would happen if we all held Obama-style meetings, offering women the floor whenever possible. Doing this for even a day or two might be a powerful bias interrupter, demonstrating to our teams and colleagues that speaking while female is still quite difficult. We’re going to try it to see what we learn. We hope you will, too — and then share your experiences with us all on Facebook or in the comments section.

This is the second of four essays in a series on women at work. Sheryl Sandberg is the chief operating officer of Facebook and the founder of LeanIn.org. Adam Grant is a professor at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of “Give and Take.”

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