

Executive Summary

The cited references are listed in order of appearance in the Bibliography

Question

What are the top factors that prohibit women from advancing into leadership positions at the same rate as men? Focus more on what causes this situation.

Introduction: Current Trend of Women Leadership Position

¹For at least a quarter of a century, women have been entering the professional and managerial ranks of U.S. corporations at about the same rate as men. (See Table 1), yet they remain dramatically underrepresented at senior levels. ²Women currently constitute only 2.2% of Fortune-500 CEOs and ³about 15% of these companies' board seats and corporate officer positions. This report will analyze the top factors and make some recommendations to solve them.

Analysis: The top factors that prohibit women from advancing into leadership position

We assessed impediments for women advancing into senior leadership positions by using ⁴an ecological model which takes societal, organizational and individual levels into consideration.

1) Societal Level Factors

Broad societal forces and policies perpetuate **assumptions and stereotypes** which present challenges to women in leadership roles.

- **Legislation and policies** related to employment equity, human rights, access to affordable day care and reproductive rights have a profound impact on the ability of women to advance in the workplace.
- **Social Norm driven by media** ⁵Media perpetuates gender stereotypes by using images to reinforce gendered notions of leadership, often presenting men as "experts". Stereotypes are further perpetuated when female executives are portrayed as anomalies. ⁶Media images show women in home and ⁷as younger than men, which ⁸communicates and reinforces perceptions of female professional incompetence and unsuitability for leadership position. ⁹Pervasive stereotypes present women as lacking the 'right stuff' to be leaders, especially in the traditionally male-dominated domain such as business and politics.

2) Organizational Level Factors

¹⁰While most organizations have attempted to change the exclusive work environments of previous eras, systemic barriers affecting the advancement of women still remain.

- **Higher Performance standards and risky task.** ¹¹When women are promoted to leadership positions, they are often held to higher performance standards than men and ¹²tasked with responsibilities associated with great risk of failure. ¹³They are also less likely to be given 'stretch' assignments and developmental opportunities, which are both critical to promotional opportunities.
- **Bad human resource practices.** ¹⁴Research indicates that both recruitment choices and succession planning decisions are heavily influenced by informal networks and the adherence to unwritten rules. Once hired, women are often disadvantaged in terms of opportunities for networking and mentoring. ¹⁵Research by the Diversity Institute and Catalyst(2007) showed that 66% of women feel that 'who you know' is more important

than 'what you know' when it comes to decisions about which employees will be promoted.

- **The conflict between work and family.** ¹⁶Many female workers are also mothers. Their children and husbands can provide some burden that may negatively impact their chances at women's leadership position. It is also related with women's feeling that they cannot handle balancing work and family life with the rigorous demands that a leadership position takes. ¹⁷A Pew study indicates that one third of women surveyed believed that their failure to reach the top management is "due to family obligations and family responsibilities".
- **Perceptions of the work-family conflict** ¹⁸Even if women decide to go for top management and are willing to handle their work from a CEO and their family simultaneously, evaluators may not promote them due to their own perceptions of the work-family conflict that women go through.

3) Individual Level Factors

At the individual level, some research indicates that women's lack of confidence to succeed often leads to making decisions that affect their career prospects.

- ¹⁹**The sense of diminished self-efficacy** is often shaped by the social context in which there are limited role models and highly gendered professional stereotypes and notions of leadership. For example, ²⁰Women are less likely to promote themselves; when they are successful, they are more likely to credit the team or circumstance and when they fail, they are more likely to blame themselves.
- ²¹**Communication style** Another factor that has far reaching implications is differences in communication styles and ²²the fact that women are less likely to negotiate for what they want. ²³When women do assert themselves and negotiate, they are considered less socially attractive, less likeable, and less hireable.

Recommendations

Given that such top factors which is holding women to be promoted to top management, companies need to establish integrated strategies which affect change at the societal, organizational and individual levels.

- **Leadership and Governance:** For Leadership Diversity in the organization, women must have the support and commitment of executive management who have the power to influence change across the organization. Diversity strategies with executives' commitment and initiatives can be more easily understood and communicated across the organization by engaging women in succession planning with explicit diversity goals in mind. ²⁴ Mentors and role models of women managers can also have a great effect.
- **Balancing work & family:** Leading organizations have a wide range of programs aimed at reducing the challenges of balancing work and family obligations. For example, ²⁵TB bank and ²⁶HP Canada offer flexible work options, reduced workweeks, job partnership/sharing, and changing number of days in the workweek while keeping the hours the same.
- **Sharing Women's Success Stories:** Regardless of the barriers that persist, it is obvious that talented women are succeeding and taking their place in leadership roles. Therefore, it is critically important that women learn from their experiences in order to inspire and coach aspiring female leaders.

Appendix

Table 1. ¹Women in Management in the United States, 1960-Present

Unit: %

Official Dept. of Labor Category	1960	1970	1980
Managers and administrators, except farm	15.6	15.9	26.2

Official Dept. of Labor Category	1985	1990	1995
Management, professional, and related occupations (reconstructed)	33.3	36.5	38.7

Official Dept. of Labor Category	2000	2005	2010	2011
Management, professional, and related occupations	48.8	50.6	51.5	51.4

¹ Catalyst. Catalyst Quick Take: Women in Management in the United States, 1960-Present. New York: Catalyst, 2012.

Bibliography

- ¹ Taking gender into account
- ² Catalyst, U.S. Women in Business, 2011
- ³ Catalyst, Women in U.S. Management, 2011
- ⁴ Thurston, W., & Vissandjee, B. (2005). An ecological model for understanding culture as a determinant of health. *Critical Public Health*, 15(3), 229-136
- ⁵ Wilson, T.(2004). *The playful audience: From talk show viewers to Internet users*. New Jersey, NJ: Hampton press; Wood, P., & Landry, C.(2008). *The intercultural city: Planning for diversity advantage*. London, UK: Earthscan.
- ⁶ Prieler, M., Kohlbacher, F., Hagiwara, S., & Arima, A. (2011). Silver advertising: Older people in Japanese TV ads. In F. Kohlbacher & C. Herstatt (Eds.), *The silver market phenomenon: Marketing and innovation in the aging society*(2nd ed., pp 239-247). Heidelberg, DE: springer.
- ⁷ Mastro, D., & Ortiz, M. (2008). A content analysis of social groups in prime-time Spanish language television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 52(1), 101-118.
- ⁸ Heflick, N.A., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2009). Objectifying Sarah Palin: Evidence that objectification causes women to be perceived as less competent and less fully human. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45, 598-601
- ⁹ Kandola, B. (2004). Skill development: The mission link in increasing diversity in leadership. *Industrial and commercial training*, 36(4), 143-147
- ¹⁰ Metz, I. (2009). Organizational factors, social factors, and women's advancement. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 58(2), 193-213
- ¹¹ Lyness Heilman, 2006. When fit is fundamental: Performance evaluations and promotions of upper-level female and male managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(4), 777-785; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007. Why are women penalized for success at male tasks?: The implied communality deficit. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 81-92
- ¹² Ryan & Haslam, 2007. The glass cliff: Exploring the dynamics surrounding the appointment of women to precarious leadership positions. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 549-572
- ¹³ Powell & Graves, 2003. *Women and men in management*(3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: sage.
- ¹⁴ Linehan & Scullion,2008. The development of female global managers: The role of mentoring and networking. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 83(1), 29-40; McDonald, 2011. What's in the 'old boys' network? Accessing social capital in gendered and racialized networks. *Social Networks*, 33(4), 317-330. ; Sabbatini, 2008. Unwritten rules: What you don't know can hurt your career. Retrieved from http://www.catalyst.org/file/209/ur_final_web.pdf
- ¹⁵ Catalyst.(2007). 20078 Catalyst census of women board directors of the FP500: Voices from the boardroom. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst.org/file/141/census%202007-%20cadana.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Buckalew, E., Konstantinopoulos, A., Russell, J., & Seif El-Sherbini. (2012). The future of female CEOs and their glass ceiling. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 3(4), 145-153. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1036929638?accountid=10267>
- ¹⁷ Parker, K. (2009). The harried life of a working mother. Retrieved from: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1360/working-women-conflicted-but-few-favor-return-to-traditional-roles>
- ¹⁸ Hoobler, J. M., Wayne, S. J., & Lemmon, G. (2009). Bosses' perceptions of family-work conflict and women's promotability: Glass ceiling effects. *Academy of Management*

Journal, 52(5), 939-957.

- ¹⁹ Wendy cukier, Pinoo Bindhani, Sarah Amato, Shelley Smarz, Amonrat Saekang (2012). Women in senior leadership positions:a profile of the greater Toronto area, http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/diversity/resources/DiversityLeads_Gender_2012.pdf
- ²⁰ Bowles & McGinn, 2005. Constraints and triggers: Situational mechanics of gender in negotiation. *Journal of Personality and social Psychology*, 89(6), 951-965
- ²¹ Basow, S. (2008). Speaking in a ‘man’s world’: Gender differences in communication styles. In M.A. Paludi (Ed), *The psychology of women at work* [pp. 15-30]. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- ²² Babcock, L. & Laschever, S. (2007). *Women don’t ask: the high cost of avoiding negotiation- and positive strategies for change*. New York, NY: Bantam Dell.
- ²³ Bowles, H.R., Babcock, L, & Lai, L. (2007). Social incentives for gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiation: Sometimes it does hurt to ask. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 103, 84-103
- ²⁴ Mary C. Mattis, (2001), “Advancing women in business organization: key leadership role and behaviors of senior leaders and middle managers”, *Journal of Management Development*, Vol.20 Iss:4 pp.371-388
- ²⁵ TD Bank. (2012). Flexible work options. Retrieved from <http://www.td.com/careers/why-td/flexible-work- options/balance.jsp>
- ²⁶ HP Canada. (2012). One vision. Thousands of viewpoints. Retrieved from <http://www8.hp.com/ca/en/jobsathp/learn-about-us/Diversity-one-vison.html>