ACCELERATING GENDER BALANCE

13 initiatives you should implement
4 initiatives you shouldn't

THE CATALOGUE

LIVING INSTITUTE
-applied diversity intelligence

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"I think that if something should be done here and now it should be to send the right message about role models. There are many women out there that want to advance to the top yet don't behave like men.

Then it would be easier for them to see that it is actually possible."

Male Manager

"

"The leadership style here is very masculine. We have fine leadership values and principles that apply to a feminine leadership style, but it is not being practiced among our managers, Women should take ownership of their ambitions and be proud of dreaming about influence and power.

Female Leader

"

"Our sector is characterized by old men who have an tendency to pick someone who look like the-selves"

Male Leader

IT STARTS WITH A CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

If an exclusionary culture remains unchanged, any initiative to improve gender balance will most likely fail or even make things worse. Many companies and communities have found this to be true over the past ten to twenty years. If you don't change the culture that created the problem in the first place – you probably won't succeed in creating gender balance.

To harvest the financial benefits of enhanced gender balance at the top, ambitious women must feel as valued and welcome to top management positions as ambitious men. It has also become clear that a company culture that champions women and prioritizes gender balance leads to increased overall diversity, with underrepresented groups seeing more opportunities for themselves in these spaces.

Beginning with narrowing the gap between women and men exponentially pays off.

Currently, myths, habits, traps and unconscious biases are blocking a breakthrough. At the same time, an increasing number of top managers are searching for proven, effective paths towards rapid and sustained progress. The clever saying, "culture eats strategy for breakfast" is at play. Culture is the killer, but it also includes the cure.

As this catalogue will display, we have identified, developed and documented the practices required to end old obsolete, one-gender cultures. The downsides of the primary dead end, i.e. working with women-only solutions, have become clear. The barriers, namely unconscious bias, groupthink, blind spots and covering, have been identified. We have mapped the path to set companies and communities free from this old world, so they can welcome new talent, ideas, and perspectives that will make them stronger and improve decision-making processes.

Top management must mean business

The recommendations in this catalogue are proven to bring about transformational culture change. Above all else, an effective, sustainable, cultural transformation requires top management's dedication to prioritizing diversity efforts, for as long as it takes.

So, our first recommendation is to host a facilitated synchronizing process that results in buy-in from company leaders and sets the foundation for transformation. The indisputable business consequences of gender balance, or imbalance, must be clear and shared, and the members of the executive board must define their roles and their goals of the transformation. Numbers and timing must be explored. How many men and women do you want in top management positions, and by when?

"At the end of the day, managers are the key. It is all about top management – it starts there and then drizzles down"

Male Leader of Leaders

Introduce new management tools

The next step is equipping managers to embed inclusivity into company culture by arming them with effective strategies, goals, tools and actions. Competent and motivated managers, with an understanding

of their vital role and personal as well as professional responsibility in the transformation, are key to success. New leadership competences are crucial on a need-to-know and must-do level.

Data driven solutions

Cultural transformation must be data driven. A baseline survey acts as a perception gap-analysis, un-covering how employees actually experience working within the organization. The survey is fielded in year one and results inform the creation of a transformation strategy designed to address the company's specific challenges.

In order to monitor real change, the survey must be conducted annually for a minimum of three years after the company begins implementing change initiatives. As these initiatives are implemented, devel-opment is monitored and corrections are made along the way. The first year typically shows marginal changes in survey results. However, by the third year, significant culture change becomes evident pro-vided the right initiatives has been implanted in the right order.

CULTURE CHANGE INITIATIVES THAT AC-TUALLY WORK

So, what is the recipe for lasting culture change?

We recommend implementing 13 initiatives. Each initiative is individually effective but when used together, impact is amplified.

In this context, culture change refers to creating an environment that is free from limiting stereotypes in recruitment, working conditions, tasks and advancement opportunities.

> *"On the executive level, you have to be a woman leading like a man, which I sometimes do – otherwise I get run over. If it is necessary for me to act more like a man, it won't change the masculine culture.*
>
> Female Leader of Leaders

Frequent stereotypes include:

- Women do not possess leadership talent
- Women are less ambitious than men
- Women are less willing to take on leadership positions due to their family responsibilities

Stereotypes like these fuel unconscious biases and gender preferences that reinforce masculine culture, that is, a culture in which women experience unequal opportunities. Stereotypes obviously exist in fe-male-only cultures, but since those are rare in the business world, this catalogue focuses on masculine cultures. However, the roadmap is also applicable to predominantly female cultures looking to be more inclusive.

It is because of these stereotypes that we strongly advise against the four well known actions, which we call traps (left side in fig 1). They do not contribute to breaking down gender stereotypes and often, lead to the opposite outcome.

Instead, we recommend actions that have successfully broken down barriers in the company, based on data from the internal inclusion survey. Leveraging internal data in this way strengthens understanding, commitment and support in an organization. Actions based on internal data are perceived as more credible, meaningful, motivating and relevant than general best practices from other companies.

On the next pages you will find three graphs. Fig 1 and 2 show the frequency, price and effect for each action as well as the ease/difficulty of implementation.

The 13 actions to the right and the four actions to the left in fig 1 have been ranked by their effectiveness in promoting culture change and consequently, creating gender balance. In this catalogue you will find descriptions of the individual actions and reasons for their locations in the matrix.

The third graph fig. 3 shows the 4 steps of the roadmap designed to break down barriers for women's advancement to the top.

The ranking in fig 1 and 2 and the 4 steps in fig 3 are based on several factors and international studies, research, and experiences from companies in different lines of business.

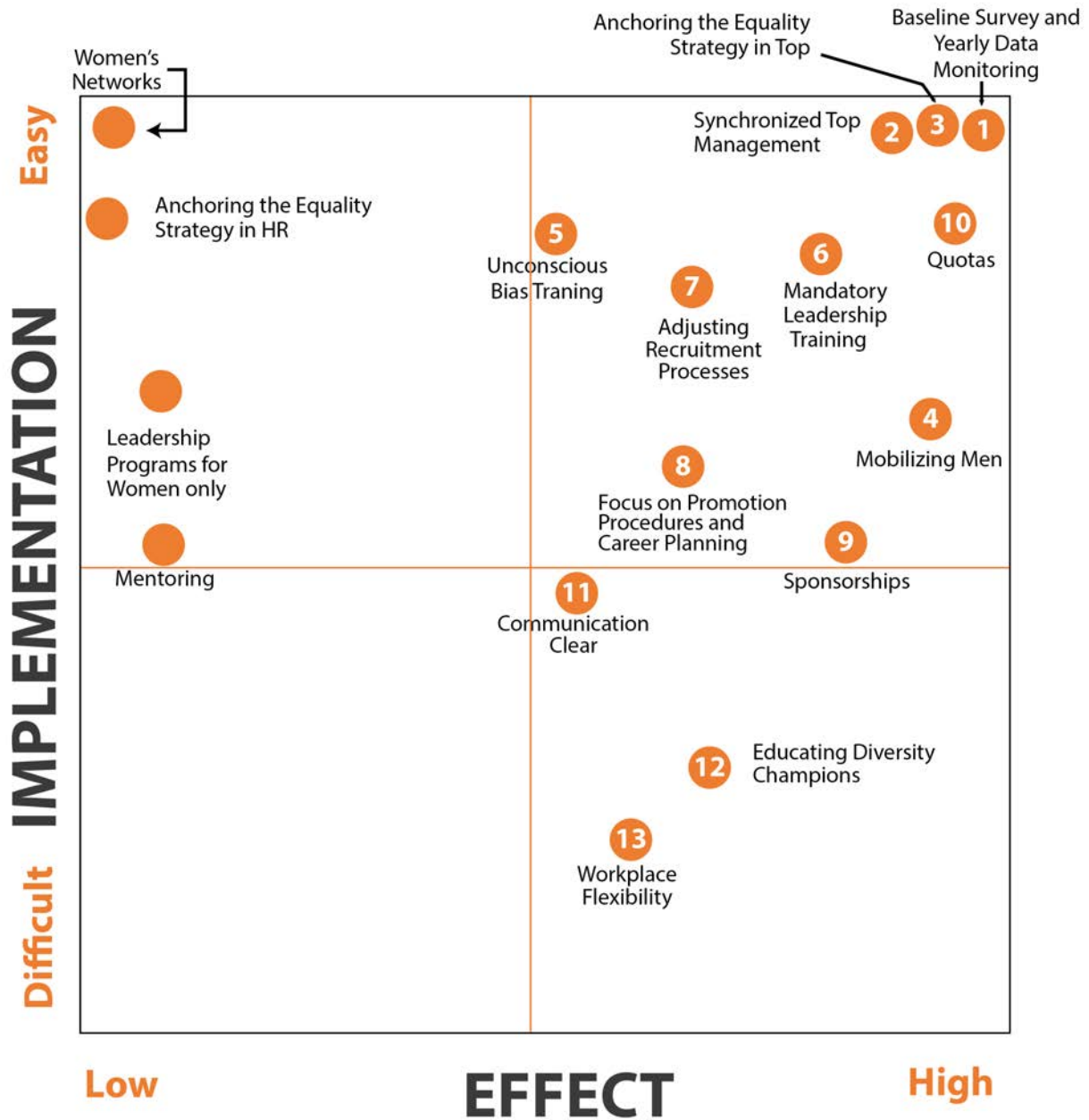# THE 17 ACTIONS RANKED ACCORDING TO EFFECT AND EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Fig. 3. The numbers in the circles show the recommended implementation order for obtaining the most significant effects.

The four actions with low, no or even counterproductive effects are not recommended if you want to welcome more women into your management teams.

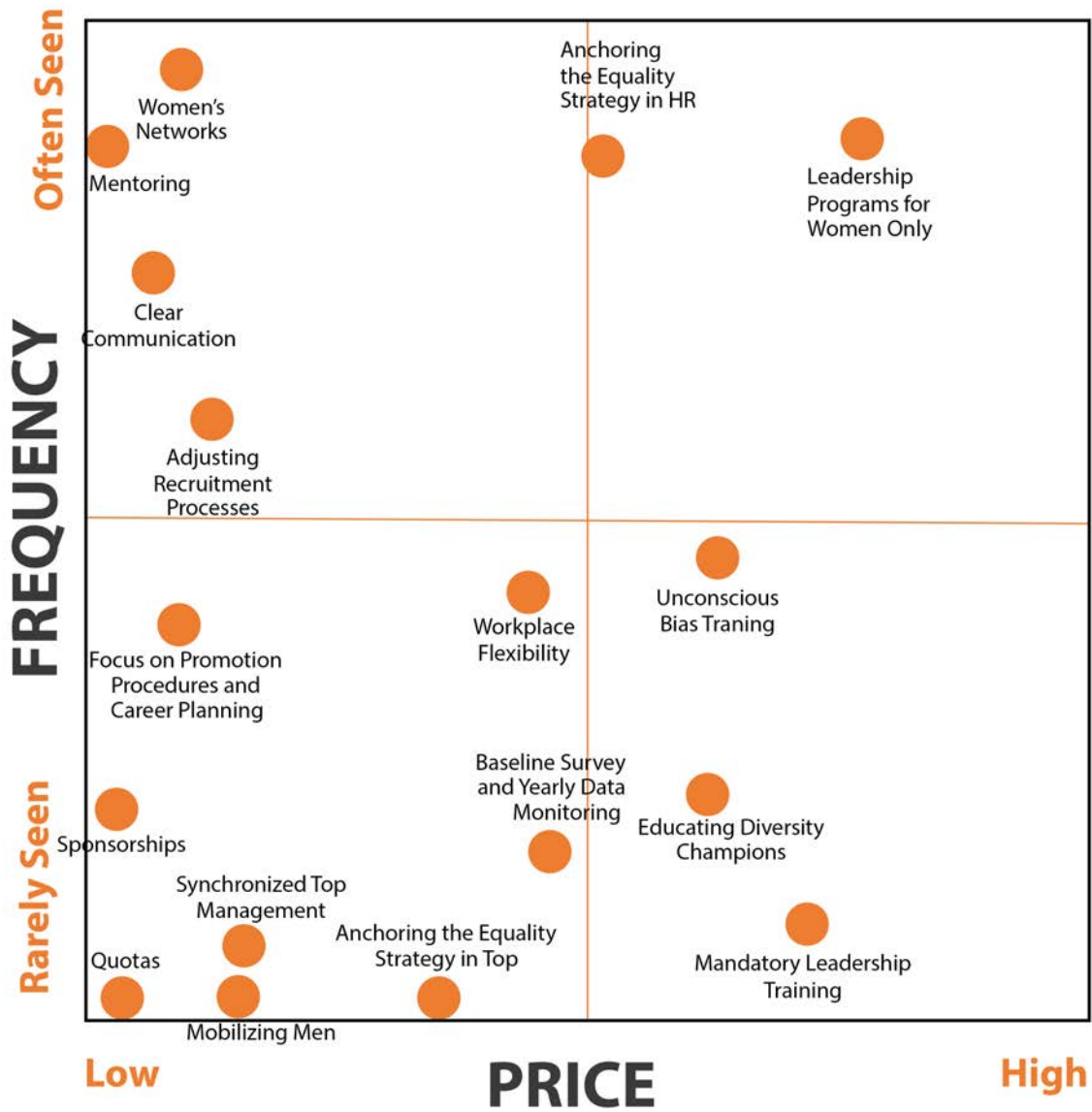## THE 17 ACTIONS ARRANGED BY FREQUENCY AND PRICE

Fig 2 illustrates the 17 actions, arranged by how frequently they occur in organizations - and the estimated cost to implement them relative to each other.

RECOMMENDED ROADMAP

The four-step process:

IMPLEMENTING IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES

- Training
- Synchronization
- Measure and monitor changes over next year

DRIVE

- Why is D&I is important to us?
- What happens to us if nothing changes the next 5-10 years?
- To whom is this important and why?

4 ACTION

1 DRIVE

3 STRATEGY

2 KNOWLEDGE

STRATEGY BUILDING

- Begin with the end: Where do we want to be in 2 years from now? 5 years? 10 years?
- How do we change the culture that created the problem in the first place?
- Who should be involved?
- What initiatives should be implemented - for whom and when?

BASELINE ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STATE

- What do the numbers show?
- What do employees, constumers, managers, young talents say?
- Is there a perception gap between the different groups?

Fig 3 shows the impactful roadmap in 4 steps

Despite the urgency, plan your launch of gender balance actions wisely

Impatience is increasing as gender balance becomes more urgent. Top managers are looking for fast results. While the feeling of urgency is understandable, rushed implementation often leads to the adoption of generic initiatives that are based on insufficient knowledge about the true challenges and how to attack them. When we conducted a recent analysis in the financial sector, participating organizations were able to see not only the numbers, but also the reasons women were absent from their management teams. The companies involved were also surprised by the wide range of challenges and imbalances among the group. These seemingly small, but important differences mean that all initiatives must be custom-designed and conducted with a high degree of cultural sensitivity and experience.

The actions are more effective when driven by data and carefully planned. So, don't waste time (and money) on random initiatives until you know the real reasons behind the numbers, the specific range, and the order of initiatives that will help you reach your goals. After these factors become clear, everything moves fast.

Accelerating gender balance in organizations 13 actions to get you there

Action #1: Baseline Inclusion Survey and yearly monitoring

WHY?

Fielding an inclusion baseline survey provides the data needed to implement the actions with most impact. Repeating the survey annually allows us to confirm that we are on the right track and adjust our data-driven actions accordingly. The findings inform our evidence-based strategy.

Once we have identified the organization's challenges and gaps, the path to success becomes much clearer.

By intentionally choosing actions that catalyze cultural transformation and monitoring the effects, the desired inclusive culture will emerge on its own. This culture will be capable of breaking down the barriers that created systematic problems in the first place.

> *"I am fact driven. Show me some stats and numbers on a fairly detailed level. That twill force top management to open their eyes."*
>
> *Male Leader of Leaders*

HOW?

Year 1: Baseline Inclusion Survey

1. An online questionnaire will be sent to a defined group of participants who are representative of the company's demographics. The questionnaire will be designed to uncover existing inclusion and perception gaps and can be merged with other yearly engagement surveys.
2. In-depth qualitative interviews will be conducted with some of the online survey participants. These interviews will be used to validate and further explore survey answers.
3. Internal focus groups will be conducted to qualify the rest of the survey data.

The following years: Monitoring Progress

1. Annual surveys will be fielded, consisting of the same questions as those in the baseline survey. In-depth interviews and focus groups can be used to increase the value of answers but are not mandatory for the process. The knowledge we get from the survey allows us to confirm that we are on the right track and adjust our data-driven actions accordingly
2. The results of the annual analysis will be compared with results from years prior. Actions will be adapted to maximize the intended effect on inequality.

What happens if you skip baseline inclusion survey and monitoring?

When we ask companies why they chose random actions to create gender balance, these are the answers we receive:

"It seemed easy and inexpensive."

"They were the only actions we had heard about."

"We definitely needed to do something immediately."

In these situations, companies find themselves with zero results and increasing demand for change. Unfortunately we often see baseless experiments have negatively impacted enthusiasm for culture change.

To combat this reality, the companies in question must highlight the barriers and bring back insight and motivation. Research shows that including the voices of your employees in the process and allowing those voices to be your quantitative and qualitative point of departure makes change happen faster and go deeper.[1] In other words; we need to slow down to speed up.

Roadmap: Action #1 belongs 2. quadrant "Knowledge" fig. 3

Action #2: Synchronized top management

Why:

Making sure that top management experiences, shares and declares a strong commitment to create a culture that is ready and capable of including more women is the most important key to success. We call this synchronizing top management. These leaders must have an agreement and deep ownership of the culture change agenda in order to credibly share it with employees.

It is all about commitment and accountability.

How?

Conducting a workshop for top management dedicated to strategic culture change to reach gender balance. The baseline inclusion survey will offer the necessary background for realizing and calculating the consequences of the business-critical gender balance. The sense of urgency will increase during the process as will the organization's faith that a fast change is within reach.

"We all have our posh diversity policies. But sometimes it's just there because it has to be there – not because it's owned by top management."

Male Leader of Leaders

The workshop produces a reconciled strategy, well-informed team, shared, specific target figures, a financial overview of actions needed for the coming years, and a strong, credible story.

The business-critical consequences for the top management to discuss include:

- What is the un-tapped bottom line potential of gender balance?[2]
- What is the risk of missing out on talent and the inability to mirror the market/customers?
- What is the risk of a weak pipeline in a high-mobility market if you can´t attract and maintain a workforce with a diverse set of talents and qualifications?

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[1] hbr.org/2019/04/Want fewer employees to quit? Listen to them.

[2] Credit Suisse 2019: "Gender diversity is good for business"

- What is the risk of having homogeneous management teams, consisting of people with more or less the same qualifications, perspectives and experiences when it comes to making increasingly complex decisions and navigating an unpredictable, diverse market?

What happens if top management is out of sync?

It renders all parts of the organization frustrated and weak. Officially stating that diversity and equality are top priorities and then failing to follow through with effective action sends a terrible message. So, before speaking up and promising an inclusive future, make sure you completely agree on what it entails and how and when to get there. Any sign of doubt or hesitation will weaken the ability of the culture to recruit and maintain female talent. In other words, if top management allows unacceptable patterns that benefit one gender group over the other to persist, all culture change work will have been done in vain. Lastly, culture change that profoundly improves future business is not free. The whole organization must be involved, and again, if the budget does not support the intentions, the result will be disappointment and lack of motivation. The next attempt will be harder, and more expensive.

Roadmap: Action #2 belongs in the 1. Quadrant "Motivation" and the 3. Quadrant "Strategy" fig. 3

Action #3. Anchoring the equality strategy in the top

Why:

Gender balance at all management levels is now to be considered a strategic and business-critical ambition, on par with other strategies and as important to the bottom-line. Top management will not be able to remove "change gender culture" from its agenda until the old one-gender culture dies out and a new, inclusive culture is born.

How?

Like other business-critical threats, this one must be given special attention until it is ingrained in th hearts and minds of the organization's people. Almost all lines of business experience constant change and fight for innovative talent and processes. This is exactly what diversity provides if it has been properly inserted into company culture. Reproducing the past is not an option and neither is a one gender culture. Top management must stay in control and follow the development in close collaboration with the internal and external experts in the area.

We have noticed increasing interest from board members looking to leverage the outcomes of a successful gender balance. However, CEOs tend to become frontrunners before there is any intervention by board members.

What if the equality strategy is not anchored in top management?

Research, studies, and our experiences from the past 15 years show us that most companies charge their HR departments with carrying out equality, diversity and inclusion practices. Traditionally, HR is not considered top management. Power-vacuums and minimal resources lead to the lack of women in management positions. Also, when you have repeatedly tried and failed to make the numbers move, fatigue sets in, resulting in general aversion to try new initiatives.

All experiences show us that the companies that have successfully incorporated gender equality have anchored the responsibility in top management. The HR solution has not worked so far – so why keep wasting time?[3]

" *"When I have seen it work, it worked because the top owned it. In large international corporations where I have worked, it has been the message from the top. They drew the big picture and pushed it."*

Male Leader of Leaders

Roadmap: Action #3 belongs in 1. quadrant "Motivation" and 3. quadrant "Strategy" fig. 3

Action #4: Mobilizing men

Why:

Make sure that gender balance does not end up as a women-only project. It has to include everybody, and to many men, the bias and barriers are actually invisible, until they get to know them. By mobilizing the men who *do* see the barriers and experience the unhealthy culture and allowing them to speak up, you send a strong message to their male colleagues. Every employee must be aware that gender imbalance damages the business. It creates a less efficient and less positive work environment. Research has shown that 4 out of 5 men feel bad about the gender imbalance and are looking for ways to change this element in the culture.[4]

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[4] Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London (2019):
https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/global-study-reveals-what-world-thinks-about-womens-equality

How?

Inspired by the UN He-for-She program, we recommend a facilitated workshop where men and women share common experiences regarding benefits and barriers related to gender balance.

Facilitating "barbershop sessions" for men only is another way to create commitment and results. Morning meetings allow groups of men to share their stories and commit themselves to make a difference.

> *"Women on maternity leave should have a raise equivalent to the men's. Make it visible."*
>
> *Male Leader of Leaders*

What will happen if you don´t mobilize the men?

One of the most common and expensive mistakes is turning gender balance into a women-only project. Powerless to change the culture, any women-only action is doomed to fail. Generally, men hold the highest and most powerful positions and are responsible for actions that ensure a better bottom line and innovation through gender balance. Without mobilizing men, change will not happen. In fact, research suggests that the stereotypes about women will continue to thrive and even spread.[5]

Roadmap: Action #4 belongs in 4. quadrant "Action" fig. 3

Action #5: Unconscious bias training

Why:

Bias leads to bad decision making and missed talent opportunities. The training brings bias to the surface, revealing how to identify and minimize it in decision making, recruitment, and relations. In short, unconscious bias is the brain guessing and blinding you to factual information. [6] It happens because the brain is constantly seeking out mental shortcuts to save energy and make fast decisions. The brain's shortcuts are based on stereotypical notions of other people as well as the preferences and prejudices we chose. It is are based on the society we grew up in, the companies we have been working for, and our social relations. The dangerous thing about unconscious bias is that it leads to unintentional discrimination, positive or negative, even if we believe and tell ourselves that we behave objectively and treat people equally.

The target group for unconscious bias training includes all employees and managers in the organization involved in recruitment processes, making important decisions, working at the frontline, meeting customers, leading others, developing products, having communication responsibility, facilitating employee interviews or possessing key HR jobs. All of these employees will benefit from understanding how unconscious bias influences decision making. Participants are given the language and tools to recognize and minimize their personal bias and see how unconscious bias inappropriately affects their work and cooperation.

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[5] M. Flood, G. Russell, J. O'Leary and C. Brown (2017): Men Make a Difference: How to Engage Men on Gender Equality, Synopsis Report, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2017

[6] Eden King, Kristen Jones hbr.org. 'Why subtle bias is so often worse than blatant discrimination'

How?

Unconscious bias training is built on acknowledging that everyone makes bad decisions sometimes. Unfortunately, the training can have negative consequences, and if it is not performed with great caution and competence, it might be counterproductive and could potentially strengthen existing stereotypes.

Bias training should provide the following results:

- Knowledge about what unconscious bias is and typical examples of occurrence
- Knowledge about why all people make bad decisions because of unconscious bias
- Constuctive language that makes is possible o talk about unconscious bias without blaming one another
- Specific tools to deal with unconscious bias in real life situations

What happens if you do not reduce unconscious bias?

If unconscious bias is left unchecked, you lose the ability to avoid its unwanted effects. You will find yourself with a need for diverse perspectives and innovative thoughts.

Still, unconscious bias training alone will not do the trick, in spite of its ability to change the mindset and create a higher degree of self-reflection. If the fundamental culture, overall structures and processes remain unchanged, the effect will be minimal. See action 7.

Roadmap: Action #5 belongs in 4. Quadrant - "Action" fig. 3

Action #6: Mandatory leadership training

Why:

In order to act and lead inclusively, upper and middle management personnel must be trained. New leadership behavior is a required condition for change. Common training will secure a focus on promoting talent and high potential already present in the organization, thereby avoiding reverse quotas, unconsciously preferring traditional male behaviour. Managers are turned into role models and frontrunners for an inclusive corporate culture.

How?

The mandatory inclusion modules, strengthening diversity and equality cognition and competences, can be fit into existing leadership programs. The managers who have already participated in these programs without the diversity dimensions are offered an add-on. Learning to systematically address unconscious bias in decision making is an important part of the inclusion modules. Other mandatory and connected subjects are age, cultural background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and cultural intelligence for internationally operating organizations.

"In no way is it taken into consideration that women are different from men. They should be led and developed differently."

Female without management responsibilities

What if you skip mandatory leadership training?

Well, the answer lies in the wording. Some companies have offered volunteer training, and it is not difficult to imagine who would choose not to participate. Voluntary translates into *not* considered high priority in top management.[7]

Roadmap: Action #6 belongs in the 4. quadrant "Action" fig. 3

Action #7: Adjusting recruitment processes

Why:

HR is an important partner for management. Optimizing HR and recruitment processes to promote gender balance and minimize structural barriers and bias throughout the organization is a must.

How?

In collaboration with key persons from HR, critical processes influencing gender balance in management are reviewed, such as:

- Transparency in occupation of positions and career development is created by busting bias and excluding unintentional inappropriate cultural traits in recruitment, retention, career planning, performance reviews, talent and high potential programs, mentoring, exit and post exit interviews.
- Bias-free one-to-one employer/manager meetings where the manager is made capable of controlling the old discrimination pitfalls are trained.
- External recruitment agencies are informed about the business-critical gender balance goals and required to present qualified male and female candidates to all vacant positions.

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[7] C.N. Lacerenza, D.I. Reyes, S.L. Marlow, D.L. Joseph, & E. Salas (2017). "Leadership training design, delivery, and implementation: A meta-analysis" i *Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 102:*1686–1718

You can start by using or developing technical solutions that anonymize name, gender, age and ethnicity in job applications. The next step is picking a number of applicants for a competence test so that the final group is chosen in a bias-free process on the basis of competence only. Lastly, when you know all the equally competent applicants, the final consideration must be whether the person contributes to diversity and gender balance – or if he/she strengthens status quo by bringing in more of the same.[8]

What if you forget don't adjust recruitment processes?

If you neglect the necessary HR adjustments, the structure of the system will retain outdated mechanisms that counteract the gender balance and resilient pipeline ambitions. If all the biases known to permeate recruitment and career development are not systematically removed, the old imbalance-creating culture lives on. Furthermore, if leadership training is enforced and HR forgotten, the effect is bound not to appear.

Roadmap: Action #7 belongs in 4. quadrant "Action" i fig. 3

Action #8: Focus on promotion procedures and career planning

Why:

Everyone must learn to let go of the lean-in thinking, where women and men are supposed to be personally responsible for their promotions. We know from research that career development supporting gender balance has to be systematic and include differences in gender-related behaviour. Sponsor schemes have proven to be one of the effective tools.

"It has taken me a while not to talk negatively about having kids. Now I have accepted it and I now own being a mother AND a career woman. You must fight for being true to yourself on your way up the career ladder."

Female with no management responsibilities

Some of the issues we have found in our research include:

- Lack of leadership competences or focus
- Focus on narrow professional issues only, not on the potential of the whole human being and his/her contribution to the culture.
- Potential leaders experience that their ambitions are not met with sincere interest and actions – but rather overlooked
- Men tend to be more visible and more specific when advertising their ambitions
- Women tend to experience themselves as humbler than men and it often feels unnatural for them to offensively advertise their leadership competences and dreams
- Women are seen as less ambitious when they choose not to act like men
- Women are motivated by making a difference and working towards a common purpose and common ambitions, but they are often met with quite different motivation factors
- Women need to be specifically encouraged and motivated until a gender balanced inclusive culture is a reality

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[8] Iris Bohnet (2016): *What works: Gender equality by design* for more examples on how HR processes can be designed to enhance diversity and inclusion.

At the same time, women must be encouraged to be clear and confident when expressing their leadership ambitions, and male managers must be encouraged to enter into this conversation with open, bias-free mindsets.

How:

All managers should be measured on whether they implement actions to clarify and support their employees´ career development qualifications and ambitions all year round – not just considering it a subject for the yearly development meeting.

Another efficient solution is targeted sponsor schemes for individual high potentials throughout the company. (See action 9)

The fact that men and women tend to think and communicate differently when it comes to career initiatives can easily create a vicious circle. The male manager says: "But she never actually said that." And the woman says: "But he never actually asked me."

What happens if you don't focus on promotion procedures and career planning?

Well, the numbers will keep stalling because women will keep holding back and male managers will, often unintentionally, remain human barriers for healthy, diverse pipelines and gender balance in management teams.

Roadmap: Action #8 belongs in 4. quadrant "Action" fig. 3

Action #9: Sponsorship

Why:

Initiating and measuring responsible sponsorships for females with high potential can effectively help push talent to the top of the organization.

How?

Selected leaders in top management teams are designated to become sponsors for individual, promising females. Sponsors must be committed to actively support the women´s career development through sparring, coaching, action, opening doors to networking, etc. Connecting sponsorships to bonus agreements is bound to push the results remarkably.

And what if you neglect the sponsor method?

Contrary to mentorships, sponsorships are obligatory. Bad performance as a responsible sponsor will mean consequences for KPIs and bonuses.

Roadmap: Action #9 belongs in 4. Quadrant: "Action" fig. 3

Action #10: Quotas

Why:

- to drive forward numbers that have been stalling for years
- to have more qualified women apply for management positions
- to solve the gender balance pipeline problem
- to objectively measure progress in the company as well as on individual managerial levels

How?

You can choose soft gender quotas 40/20/40, meaning a minimum representation of 40 % of each gender and 20 % of which the criteria are open.

Hire the best qualified in a bias-free and transparent process. This means the one who – apart from his/her professional competences – contributes to the underrepresented group and thus the degree of diversity. There is no doubt that quotas present some of the best solutions for changing this business-critical aspect of the culture fast.[9]

"We could be bold and set new big goals. And make sure that women are in the race – for example by having at least 1/3 female candidates. If you don't have clear goals, nothing happens. It is self evident: Women are afraid of being alone as they advance – and they will be. As women on the top, you will be twice as alone."

Male Leader of Leaders

very clearly.[11]

Quotas tends to be fairly unpopular. A frequent objection comes from women who do not want to be hired because of gender. In companies choosing quotas to kickstart necessary development, it goes without saying that qualifications must always be the primary criterium.

It is important to remember that for ages, the fact that people are biased has made them pick candidates who meet their unconscious expectations and preferences – for example, a definite gender – instead of objective competences.[10] Also take into consideration that quotas have been proven to make more women opt for positions that they would otherwise opt out of in advance. In other words, quotas solve the pipeline balance problem directly connected with male leaders unintentionally not noticing female talent – even if the female managers in the company do see it

[9] J.F. Christensen & S.L. Muhr (2019): "H(a)unting Quotas: An Empirical Analysis of the Uncanniness of Gender Quotas" i *Ephemera: Theory & politics in organization*, Vol. *19*: 77-105.

[10] C.A. Moss-Racusin, J. F. Dovidio, V. L. Brescoll, M. J.Graham, J. Handelsman (2012) "Faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students" i *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Vol, 109:16474-16479.

[11] M. Niederle, C. Segal, L. Vesterlund (2012): "How costly is diversity? Affirmative Action in light of gender differences in competitiveness" i *Management Science, pp. 1-16.*

Taking the quota road means that for the sake of a highly attractive balance, we temporarily prefer the underrepresented instead of the overrepresented gender - competences being equal.

The result is movement towards a critical mass. This is important. Hiring one or two women into a group of ten men risks making stereotyping worse and thus preventing the women from acting authentically and contributing to a diverse culture change.[12]

Target figures: Implement KPIs for all managers within business relevant areas (see action 1 in the Baseline Analyses).

> Examples of KPIs:

>> - *Recruitment*: which degree of diversity has the manager reached when hiring for his team? If the number is lower than expected, an explanation and stronger actions will be required.

> - *Career development*: which specific actions has the manager implemented to support the individual career development of men as well as women?

"We simply haven't moved the needle. That's why I feel this way: We have to have quotas."

Female Leader of Leaders

What happens if you back away from quotas and ambitious target figures?

An opt-out of effective, kick-starting quotas must be considered carefully. The fact that the image of quotas does not currently match the potential business effect is an argument that could backfire. You might discard a tool that will be needed eventually if the gender balance process turns out to be unacceptably slow. At the same time, setting quotas clearly signals that you mean business as far as systematic recruitment is concerned. It shows that gender balance is not only nice to have, but absolutely necessary.

Quotas can be a binding and thus future proof commitment, which more than most other initiatives, protect top management against its own biases, which likely include the so called MSL – Moral Self Licensing.

Instead of opting out, consider how your solution can re-invent quotas as offensive, competence-based, committed and courageous approaches.

Roadmap: Action #10 belongs in 4. Quadrant: "Action" fig. 3

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[12] hbr.org/2006 How Many Women do Boards Need

Action #11: Clear communication

Why:

When you are working towards diversity, hearing before and after stories can keep you going. Communicating internally and externally about the effects of your culture change efforts can boost morale, maintain commitment, and create an overall healthier environment.

How?

Communication, known to negate myths and bust stereotypes:

- Great stories about role models (men and women)
- Great stories about women making it
- Stories about the new bias-free recruitment and promotion practices
- Great stories about men and women working their way across the organizational silos
- Stories about a top management's commitment to gender balance
- Anti-stereotypes, picturing a diverse talent pool of different ages, genders, ethnicity and life phases – the obvious example being a man taking care of his kids[13]

"Change communication and make it more appealing to women. Change career paths so they fit into women's life circumstances. As things are now, it is created by men and for men."

Female without management responsibilities

What happens if you miss out on the powerful stories, driving the process?

Consistently communicating helps actions and new language sink into the cultural behaviour. If communication back-up is missing, all actions will be assessed against what top management is NOT saying. A metaphor for this could be an organization, feeling like a football team playing a game without knowing the rules of the referee. You are essentially playing without knowing what is important for the future of your business. Communication is key to gender balance success and the diversity image is an important part of the harvest.

Roadmap: Action #11 belongs in 4. quadrant: "Action" fig. 3

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[13] F.E, Oakhill J, Garnham A. (2015): "Counter-stereotypical pictures as a strategy for overcoming spontaneous gender stereotypes". i *Front Psychol.* Vol. 6:1291.

Action #12: Educating diversity champions

Why:

To develop deep diversity competences in a selected group of HR business partners, key personnel and changemakers so that they are prepared for the daily dialogue with managers to fulfil the ambitious goals. They all act on a clearly communicated mandate from top management.

How?

Workshops, during which the participants are turned into D&I champions with the knowledge and tools to skilfully support managers and employees in creating gender balance.

Doubt will crop up frequently and help will be needed. As managers are met with indispensable balance target numbers, they will need support from skilled HR business partners in recruitment and internal career development. These advisors must have authority, confidence, knowledge and skills to challenge the old culture and be valuable partners in all the processes that need to change.

"It really worked in my previous job. There was a strong focus on unconscious bias – and lots of training and networks and performance interviews focusing on creating diverse teams. Not by letting people off, but by making it happen over a period of three years – a mixture of competencies and gender. Only focusing on gender is obsolete. You could only get a full bonus if you enhanced diversity in your team. Our top management was diverse."

Male Leader of Leaders

What if you don't educate change-making champions?

The educated changemakers are top management´s guarantee that the new balance act is on every business agenda in the daily life of the organization. If knowledge and tools are not available, personal responsibility will weaken, excuses will flourish, and old habits will win again.

Roadmap: Action #12 belongs in 4. quadrant: "Action" fig. 3

Action #13: Workplace flexibility

Why:

All employees need flexibility at times.

Men and women between the ages of 30 and 39 especially struggle, as they try to balance work/career with family. However, it is a myth that women carry most of this burden. This is a gender stigma that affects women´s options to enter top management levels for years to come.

A focus on flexibility must, on one hand, be fully transparent in terms of the needs of men and women at different life stages. On the other hand, it must stop the waste of female talent in the long run that results from rigidity in the current system.

How?

Increased flexibility in certain periods of life should be offered to all employees – men as well as women – to avoid wasting talent in the long term. The open-minded approach cannot depend on the individual manager´s understanding or good will. A catalogue of formal initiatives should be made available to all employees. It should include:

- Stop the late, and often unnecessarily long, afternoon meetings
- Option to leave early to pick up kids and catch up later from home
- Dinner to go, laundry pickup, etc.
- Options to share jobs to ease the workload and keep talent on board during tough times

It is a great idea to highlight examples of modern men in the company choosing the new flexible options for combining career and family. They are also on the lookout for alternative ways that lead to a more holistic life, and new heroes are needed.

"Someone said that she had experienced much more acceptance and understanding of women's family obligations. It is done in a totally different way.

Female Leader of Leaders

What if you opt out the openness and flexibility?

Lack of flexibility has kept qualified, ambitious women from top management levels. Not because family life is more important to women than to modern men, but because decision makers consider family life to be a barrier for female ambition. Women who have kids are not seen as being ready to have a career even if they themselves – and often women colleagues – see the potential. Following the institutionalizing of flexible working conditions (e.g. earmarked maternity leave for men) in the EU, the demand for national flexibility will naturally increase. But there is no reason to wait for evidence that flexibility for all results in business success as well.

Roadmap: Action #13 belongs in 4. quadrant "Action" fig. 3

The traps; 4 actions with minor or even zero inclusion and gender balance effect

The quadrants to the left in fig. 1 on page 8

1. Women´s networks
2. Anchoring the equality strategy in HR
3. Mentoring
4. Leadership programs for women-only

Action #14: Women's networks

From a research point of view, there is no evidence that women-only networks impact the number of women in top management teams or that it has an effect on retention of female talents. We advise against women-only networks because they tend to get in the way of initiatives that actually work.

In these networks, what women often do is confirm each other´s bad experiences and hopelessness as far as progress is concerned. The conclusion is inevitably that they tend to move on to a more progressive organization where their experiences, competences, and ambitions are put to use.

When a company initiates women-only networks, this is what happens:

1. The signal is that this is a female problem and that women need to fix it on their own
2. Competent women who participate in women-only networking activities are confirmed in their suspicion that they have chosen the wrong workplace in which their ambitions will never be meet and they tend to leave

Despite good intentions, the initiative is counterproductive. Women-only networks might be nice, but they do not contribute to solving the gender balance problems.

Action #15: Anchoring the equality strategy in HR

HR is a vital player in the needed culture change, and it might be tempting (and easy) to place the responsibility entirely upon the HR department. However, knowing the business-critical nature of the imbalance, responsibility must still fall to top management. Without top management´s full and frequently expressed support, even the best HR employees will fail at implementing the culture transformation and reaching target numbers.

HR is the right hand of top management and we have seen HR managers and employees perform miracles to further the gender agenda. But, that never happens without an outspoken mandate from the CEO, a synchronized top management and a budget corresponding to the future business benefits.

Moreover, evidence shows us that managers and employees who have been left alone, struggling with this important ambition for ages, are stigmatized as *feminists. This stigma hits women harder than men.* [14]

Action #16: Mentoring

Mentor schemes offer another popular path. The idea here is to offer women mentors to help them fulfil their ambitions. A great deal of research has identified the problems with traditional mentoring. First, there is a lack of obligation and consequence if the results fail – and there is no success bonus either. Also, a mentee will rarely make it to a higher level than her mentor.

There are important differences between mentoring and a sponsor scheme. While mentoring includes zero consequences, if sponsor schemes do not produce results, the sponsor's job may be lost, or his bonus withheld.

However, the two schemes can easily be confused with each other. If failed mentoring has severe consequences for the mentor, then it should be considered among the efficient actions. We do recommend use of the term sponsor to stress that both parties in the agreement have something to win or lose when evaluating the result.

Action #17: Leadership programs for women-only

Women-only leadership programs are primarily designed to change women´s behaviour and the way they look at and express their own ambitions. What employees are demanding is the opposite – they want to see diverse and authentic leadership styles being appreciated by the culture.

Separate female leadership-training tends to indicate that women, despite their professionalism and high ambitions, lack something in themselves. In other words, they need to be changed into something that the men already are.

Inclusive cultures are created and function incredibly well when men and women work together towards a shared purpose and shared business goals – respecting and exploiting their valuable differences.
It is crucial that the gender balance efforts do not turn into a *blame game*.

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[14] S. Johnson, D. Hekman (2016): "Women and Minorities Are Penalized for Promoting Diversity" i *Harvard Business Review*

SUGGESTIONS TO FURTHER READING

BOOKS

Iris Bohnet (2016): *What Works: Gender Equality by Design*

Shirley Engelmeier (2014): *Becoming an Inclusive Leader: How to Navigate the 21st Century Global Workforce*

Howard Ross (2014): *Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives*

Barbara Annis & Keith Merron (2014) Gender Intelligence: *Breakthrough Strategies for Increasing Diversity and Improving Your Bottom Line*

ARTICLES

McGinn, Kathleen L., and Nicole Tempest. *"Heidi Roizen."* *Harvard Business School Case 800-228, January 2000.*

Woolley, Anita Williams, et al. *"Evidence for a collective intelligence factor in the performance of human groups." science*330.6004 (2010): 686-688.

Kramer, V. W., Konrad, A. M., Erkut, S. (2006): *"Critical Mass on Corporate Boards: Why Three or More Women Enhance Governance"*

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Mobilizing Men: HeForShe Barbershop: https://www.heforshe.org/en/barbershop

Creating inclusion nudges: http://inclusion-nudges.org

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