

Green Lights and Stop Signs

The road to gender parity
in retail and consumer goods



Center for
Creative
Leadership®

network of
executive women



retail, consumer goods & services



About NEW

Founded in 2001, the Network of Executive Women is the retail and consumer goods industry's largest learning and leadership community, representing nearly 10,000 members, 750 companies, 100 corporate partners and 20 regions in the U.S. and Canada. Our events, best practices, advocacy, research, learning programs and leadership development advance women, build business and help create a better industry workplace for all.



About CCL

The Center for Creative Leadership is a top-ranked, global provider of leadership development, transforming individual leaders, teams, organizations and society. CCL's array of cutting-edge solutions is steeped in extensive research and experience gained from working with hundreds of thousands of leaders at all levels. Ranked among the world's top five providers of executive education by Financial Times and among the top 10 by Bloomberg BusinessWeek, CCL has offices in Greensboro, N.C.; Colorado Springs, Colo.; San Diego, Calif.; Brussels, Belgium; Moscow; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Johannesburg, South Africa; Singapore; Gurgaon, India; and Shanghai, China.



Foreword

Many retail and consumer goods companies are far down the road to 50/50 gender parity in their leadership. But our industry as a whole still has a long way to go. It lags behind education, healthcare and hospitality when it comes to women in senior leadership roles (while barely beating traditionally male-dominated sectors like agriculture and utilities).¹

This is ironic, since no industry has more to gain from women’s leadership than ours. Women comprise 55 percent of the total retail workforce.² They make or influence 73 percent of all consumer purchases³ and 93 percent of all food purchases.⁴

Women leaders help spur collaboration, innovation, inclusion, growth — and profit. A study of 1,800 professionals found that employees at companies with diverse leadership were 45 percent more likely to report that their company’s market share had grown in the past year (and 70 percent more likely to report that their firm had captured a new market.⁵)

NEW has teamed with the Center for Creative Leadership to publish this report on the career supports — green lights — and career barriers — stop signs — that can either accelerate women to leadership positions, stall their careers at mid-level or drive them from our industry altogether.

Our previous NEW Learning Series Report — “Accelerators: Critical Competencies for Women Leaders in Retail and Consumer Goods” — focused on the skills women leaders need to succeed in our business.

This report focuses on what organizations can do to support these women leaders and drive gender parity in our industry. We hope you will benefit from its findings and join NEW on the road to gender parity in our industry.

Best regards,

Joan Toth
President and CEO
Network of Executive Women

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1. Grant Thornton, 2015. 2. “Women in S&P 500, Retail Trade,” Catalyst, June 14, 2016. 3. “Women Want More: How to Capture Your Share of the World’s Largest, Fastest-Growing Market,” Silverstein, Sayre and Butman, 2009. 4. Greenfield Online survey for Arnold’s Women’s Insight Team. 5. “How Diversity Can Drive Innovation,” Hewlett, Marshall and Sherbin, Harvard Business Review, December 2013.

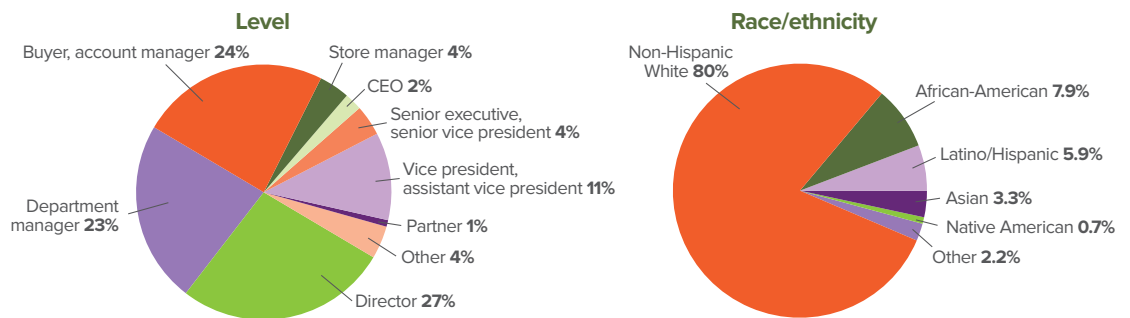
About the research

The Network of Executive Women and the Center for Creative Leadership surveyed NEW members to measure factors that can support or block women's career advancement and to better understand what women can do to advance their careers. The career factors studied were identified in previous CCL research and other published reports.

An online survey was conducted via email from August 13, 2015 to September 3, 2015. Survey invitations were sent to 25,071 NEW members, yielding 935 responses. Most respondents were female (97 percent) and the average age of respondents was 43. Respondents spanned all organizational levels; three-quarters (74 percent) held mid-level positions at the director or staff manager level.

Data was analyzed using multiple regression, controlling for age, organizational level and race to test for differences between groups.

Who responded to the survey



Key findings

- Nearly one in 10 of the women surveyed identified competing work/life priorities as a reason they have held back from pursuing leadership positions. Women perceive they must sacrifice life outside of work to hold a senior leadership position.
- Women are often overlooked, not developed for leadership positions and perceived as having less leadership potential and career commitment.
- Women of color face more career barriers and experience less career support.
- Women of all ages and career levels would benefit from greater developmental support.
- A significant percentage of women say their career goals have been undermined, intentionally and unintentionally. They report being subjected to actions that derail their careers and having their qualifications routinely questioned.
- Career barriers become minor obstacles for some and insurmountable challenges for others. Many of these obstacles can be removed when organizations and women tackle them together.
- The most predictive factors of career satisfaction are the level of an organization's developmental support and the degree to which women experience being overlooked and underappreciated.

The opportunity is clear: Organizations can directly impact women's leadership journeys in a positive way. Together, organizations and their talent can transform the industry so that both women and men thrive and reach their full potential.

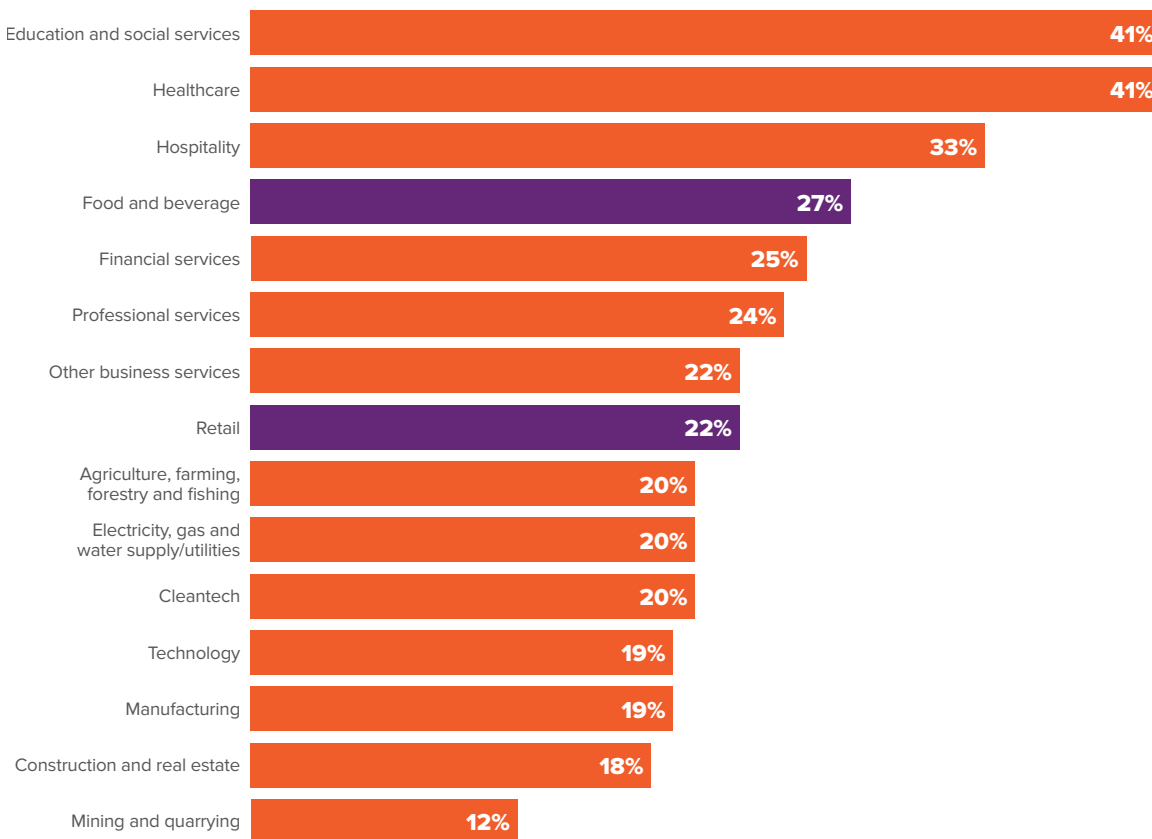
The challenge (and opportunity) of gender parity

Gender parity and the lack of women in leadership is an enduring and thorny issue that's not easily tackled. Globally, just 24 percent of senior roles are held by women — a percentage unchanged for the last decade.¹ While 55 percent of the global labor force is female,² only 4.2 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are women.³

Despite strong evidence that women's leadership improves bottom-line performance, there's been little progress advancing women in the retail and consumer goods industry.

Women make 64 percent of all retail shopping trips⁴ and make up 55 percent of the retail industry's workforce.⁵ But women comprise only 27 percent of senior management in food and beverage — and only 22 percent in retail.⁶ Three percent of CEOs in retail are women.⁷

Global senior management roles held by women



Less than 30 percent of senior leaders in the food and beverage industry and less than one-quarter of senior leaders in the retail industry are women. Globally the retail and food and beverage industries lag behind other key sectors.

Source: Grant Thornton 2015

Societal expectations, corporate culture and women’s individual choices and career goals combine to hold women back in ways that may sometimes feel insurmountable. Yet advancing women leaders is not just the smart thing to do, it’s competitively advantageous.

Women control or influence 73 percent of all consumer purchases.⁸ They make or influence 93 percent of all food purchases. Yet 59 percent of women say food marketers do not understand them.⁹ Companies in the retail, consumer goods and services sector who understand their buyers and have greater consumer insights stand to gain a larger share of household spending.

Organizations must answer these questions: What hurdles do women encounter on the path to reaching the top? What types of organizational support factors lead to success? Which gender diversity initiatives and barriers are the best predictors of women’s career satisfaction or dissatisfaction?

“Our collective future depends on gender diversity and taking steps to improve it.”

Jennifer Martineau, Ph.D.
Vice President,
Research, Innovation
and Product Development
CCL



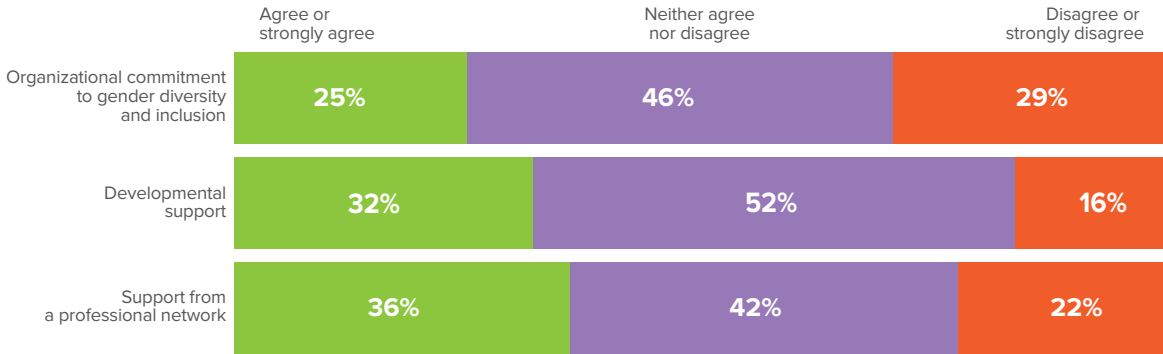
Green lights: Factors that advance women leaders and gender parity

The survey and research conducted by CCL and NEW reveal three main factors that can drive women’s career advancement and increase gender diversity:

- 1. Organizational commitment to gender diversity
- 2. Developmental support through business relationships and company initiatives that advance women
- 3. Support from a professional network

The vast majority of women surveyed do not report receiving organizational commitment to gender diversity and inclusion, developmental career support or support from a professional network.

Career support factors



More than one-third of NEW members surveyed say they receive career support from a professional network.

Base: 937 NEW members

Factor 1: Organizational commitment

Diversity and inclusion is a hot talent management topic, and companies are increasingly taking actions and enacting policies and procedures designed to create a more inclusive workplace.

A climate that encourages openness, equality and inclusion — sustained by well-conceived diversity policies — is a powerful contributor to organizational performance. In these workplaces, women and men are seen as having equal leadership potential and have equal access to career opportunities, developmental assignments and income.

Organizational commitment to gender diversity is apparent to women and men when top management is clearly communicating performance and productivity measures that are identical for both genders and when policies that help manage work/life demands are in place.

Benefits of a diverse, inclusive workplace include higher-performing employees, greater job satisfaction, lower turnover and more innovation.¹⁰

Still, most industry organizations haven't achieved true diversity and inclusion. Only one-fourth of NEW members surveyed “agree” or “strongly agree” their organizations are committed to gender diversity and inclusion. Nearly three in 10 (29 percent) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” their organizations are committed to gender diversity and inclusion. These organizations lack commitment to diversity and inclusion and frequently pay lip service to their own diversity practices.

Factor 2: Developmental support

Developmental support in organizations comes in many forms — some structural, some relational and some rooted in the power of positive self-belief. Targeted work-based initiatives, strategic professional relationships and believing in one's own potential all facilitate careers in a multitude of ways.

The women in our survey who say their organizations are committed to gender diversity report they have access to formal mentoring programs, training programs designed to advance their careers and high-visibility assignments. These formal, on-the-job developmental opportunities offer the challenge and support necessary for profound leadership development.

In organizations committed to gender diversity, women also say they get significant support by learning from others, as male and female role models share knowledge and offer inspiration. They have mentors and sponsors who advance their careers and have access to senior leaders who offer helpful career feedback and coaching. Sponsors and other senior leaders in the organization provide encouragement to stretch and seek out advancement.

Women leaders from NEW participating in focus groups conducted by CCL repeatedly mentioned the importance of developing strong relationships across the organization and throughout the industry to advance their careers. These include peer-to-peer relationships with senior leaders and with colleagues who serve as coaches. These relationships help women develop their own career paths and understand their development needs and strengths, provide a push when needed and help identify new work opportunities.

CCL's “Lessons of Experience” research — the origin of the 70/20/10 approach to development — reveals the impact of on-the-job experience and learning from others (especially managers) on senior leaders' career trajectories. Organizations that combine experience-based learning (70 percent of all learning) with learning from others (20 percent of learning) are best able to maximize the impact of formal leadership development activities (10 percent of learning) and create purposeful leadership journeys for individuals.

Factor 3: Network support

More than one third – 36 percent — of women in our sample agree their professional network is a key pillar supporting their advancement.

Professional networking keeps women informed about career opportunities, encourages them to accept new career challenges, provides them access to senior leaders and offers them a sounding board for making decisions.

Professional associations provide opportunities to build social capital and networks that can be leveraged when looking for new opportunities. Such groups also provide continuous professional development opportunities, an area of growing importance as the era of the stable workforce vanishes due to changing industries and economies.

Company and individual efforts focused on commitment to gender diversity and inclusion, developmental support and nurturing of professional networks would result in significant benefits to women and organizations and ultimately benefit the retail and consumer goods industry.

3 drivers of women’s career success

These three career support factors will drive women’s career advancement.



Beyond the boss relationship

CCL’s “Careers in the 21st Century” research highlights the importance of strong developmental relationships to an individual’s career. In most cases, an individual’s relationship with her boss is the most critical factor for intra-organizational advancement. This relationship can help — and sometimes hinder — a career.

Often women need to build a broader base of support for development and career advancement. CCL found 40 percent of people’s career-relevant relationships were outside of work.

“Developers” — individuals willing to extend time and effort to support a person in her career — can be found anywhere. They may be bosses, senior organizational leaders, peers, colleagues from the industry, friends or family members.

How “developers” can help:

- Granting access to opportunities
- Guiding and coaching to identify strengths and work on developmental needs
- Providing emotional and motivational support
- Challenging thinking and expanding perspectives
- Affirming career choices and actions

Nurturing and growing developmental relationships can foster positive support and help mitigate career barriers a woman may encounter.

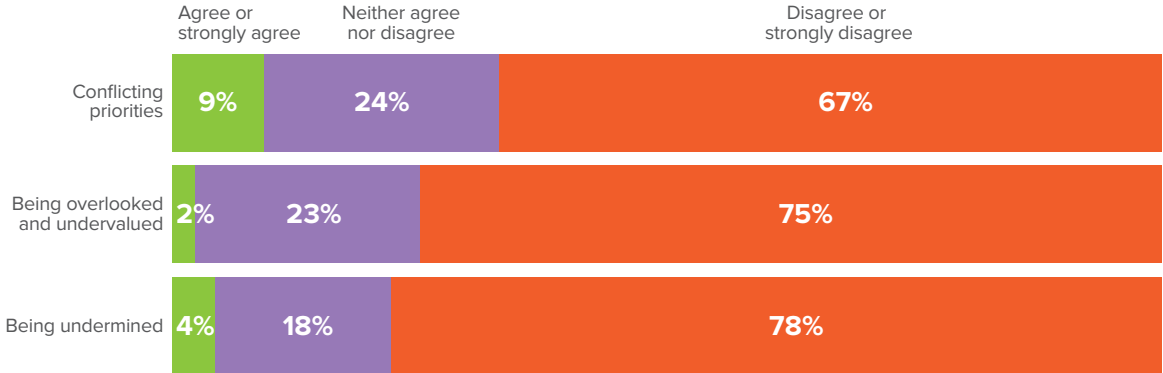
Stop signs: Factors that block women’s leadership

The majority of women surveyed say they have not experienced career barriers. But women who do encounter barriers experience negative consequences in their ability to lead and advance. Our survey uncovered three main barriers that stop women from achieving leadership positions:

- 1. **Conflicting priorities**
- 2. **Being overlooked and undervalued**
- 3. **Being undermined**

While the majority of women surveyed do not experience career barriers, such “stop signs” can be devastating for those who do.

Career barriers



Nearly one in 10 NEW members surveyed said conflicting work/life priorities have had a negative impact on their careers.

Base: 937 NEW members

Factor 1: Conflicting priorities

In our study, one in 10 women identified competing work/life priorities as a reason they have held back from pursuing leadership positions. Some women elect to not pursue leadership roles because they foresee a negative impact on their life outside of work or feel pressure to not take on roles in both domains. They perceive that a leadership role will require excessive work hours without time for a rich and rewarding life outside of work. The trade-off they would have to make for a leadership role — such as sacrificing some of their life and responsibilities outside of work — seems too big for them.

In our conversations with women, they talked about the need to plan ahead for their career and make choices about assignments to balance work and family. In their view, many organizations still take the perspective of changing the woman, rather than changing the organization, to support women's multiple priorities in life. The “fix the woman” attitude is characterized by a mix of the following:

- An expectation that women adapt to a pattern of work/life balance that is not designed to allow them the pursuit of other responsibilities, in particular primary caregiving and elder care.
- A particular view that the lack of career success for women is based on individual women's shortcomings rather than aspects of organizational culture or biased promotion and performance evaluation practices, also called second-generation bias. (See Factor 2: Being overlooked and undervalued.)
- A fundamental belief that how the organization has been successful in the past will also make it successful in the future, expecting newcomers on all levels to conform to the company culture.

One in 10 women say competing work/life priorities have deterred them from pursuing leadership positions.



Factor 2: Being overlooked and undervalued

The perception that women are not assessed and valued in the same way as men can stop some women in their tracks. A small proportion of women in our study believe they are overlooked and not groomed for leadership positions like their male counterparts.

These respondents believe they are perceived as having no leadership potential or commitment to their career. They describe being excluded from important business conversations or being told they are not ready to take on more responsibility. Further, they believe their work and contributions are not acknowledged appropriately.

Comments from focus groups reveal women are perceived as too often waiting to be tapped on the shoulder for acknowledgement, rather than sharing a vision and proactively asking for what they want. The need for women to “manage upward” was also mentioned by women. Comments like these imply second-generation bias, or practices that appear neutral or non-sexist, but discriminate against women because they reflect the values of the men who created them. For example, leaders in an organization are expected to be “aggressive,” but women who are assertive are judged “too aggressive.”

Most organizations are aware of and directly deal with first-generation bias, such as overt sexism and discrimination. Second-generation bias is more insidious and harder to recognize and address. While there are clearly many actions women can take to be empowered and in charge of their career, comments suggesting women are to blame for their own lack of progress into senior leadership roles highlights a second-generation bias.

Often the barriers women experience are not visible. There is just a sense of something “being off.” Many times women don’t realize when they are experiencing systemic discrimination, because it is subtle.

Organizations with greater awareness and gender diversity practices can lessen second-generation bias and truly level the playing field between men and women.

“Women are habitually excluded from informal networking opportunities, where influential decision-making takes place.”

“Women 2020: The Future of Women’s Leadership in Retail and Consumer Goods,”
Network of Executive Women,
2015

Factor 3: Being undermined

Women in our sample who experience being undermined describe feeling as if their qualifications are routinely questioned and they are intentionally or unintentionally subjected to actions that can damage their career. Information may be withheld from these women or they may have a boss or superior who refuses to support them in their advancement.

Being undermined impacts a woman’s confidence and potentially her future aspirations to senior-level leadership roles. Such women may hold themselves back from applying for new and challenging roles if they don’t feel “100 percent ready,” whereas men are likely to apply for new roles when they currently meet only a small percentage of the required skills and competencies.¹¹

The feeling of being undermined can create anger and frustration, impacting women’s resilience, leadership ability, job satisfaction and their own behavior toward others, particularly other women.

While being undermined by a boss or others in an organization is a real barrier to success, CCL’s research also shows that these experiences can provide tremendous learning opportunities when reframed through the lens of dealing with “obstacle people.”¹²

By reminding oneself that the obstacle is the other person (or people), rather than oneself, the negative impact on self-perception and self-efficacy is lessened. Women may feel more ready to ask for help and advice from others on how to cope with this situation or to collect data for initiating a formal complaint.

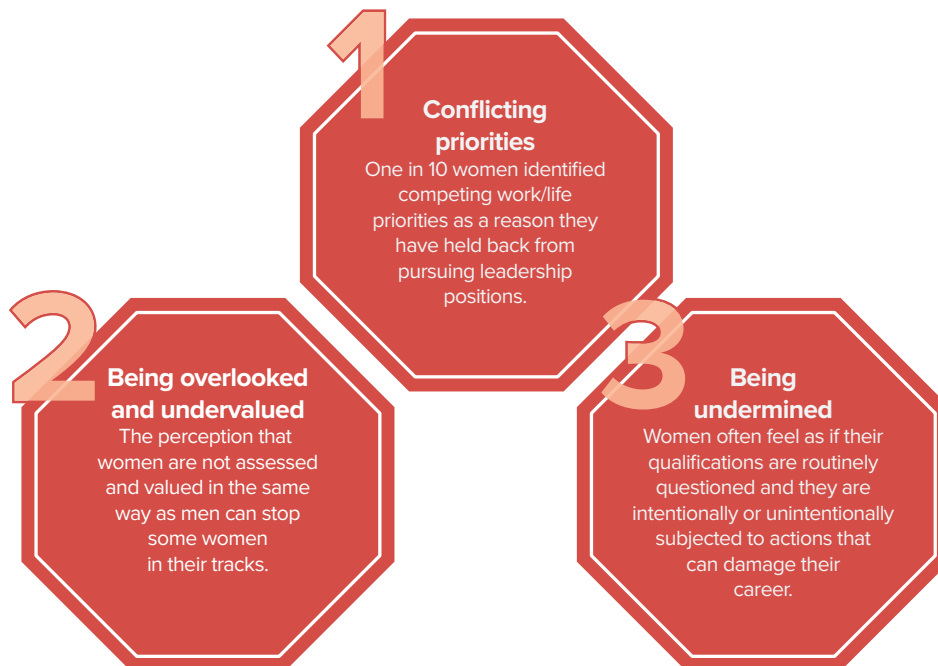
A poor relationship with a boss can be a major impediment to career growth, no doubt. But sometimes being undermined leads to new opportunities for growth and career progression by dealing with the situation directly or changing departments or organizations.

“Conscious and unconscious bias, together with bias in hiring, training, promotion and talent management, still tilt the playing field in favor of men.”

Joan Toth
President & CEO
Network of Executive Women

3 barriers to women’s career success

Women who encounter these barriers experience negative consequences in their ability to lead and advance in their careers.



Finding the route to real career satisfaction

NEW and CCL investigated how the identified support factors and career barriers impacted women's satisfaction with their career.

Career satisfaction relates to perceptions of progress on a variety of goals — for career advancement, income and the development of new skills — together with an overall subjective evaluation of career success. Career dissatisfaction relates to a variety of organizational outcomes, such as voluntary turnover, absenteeism, underperformance and other undesirable organizational behaviors. Thus, we were interested in understanding how women's career satisfaction could be increased by removing barriers and providing more support factors.

Our results indicate developmental support and being overlooked and undervalued are the best predictors of career satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

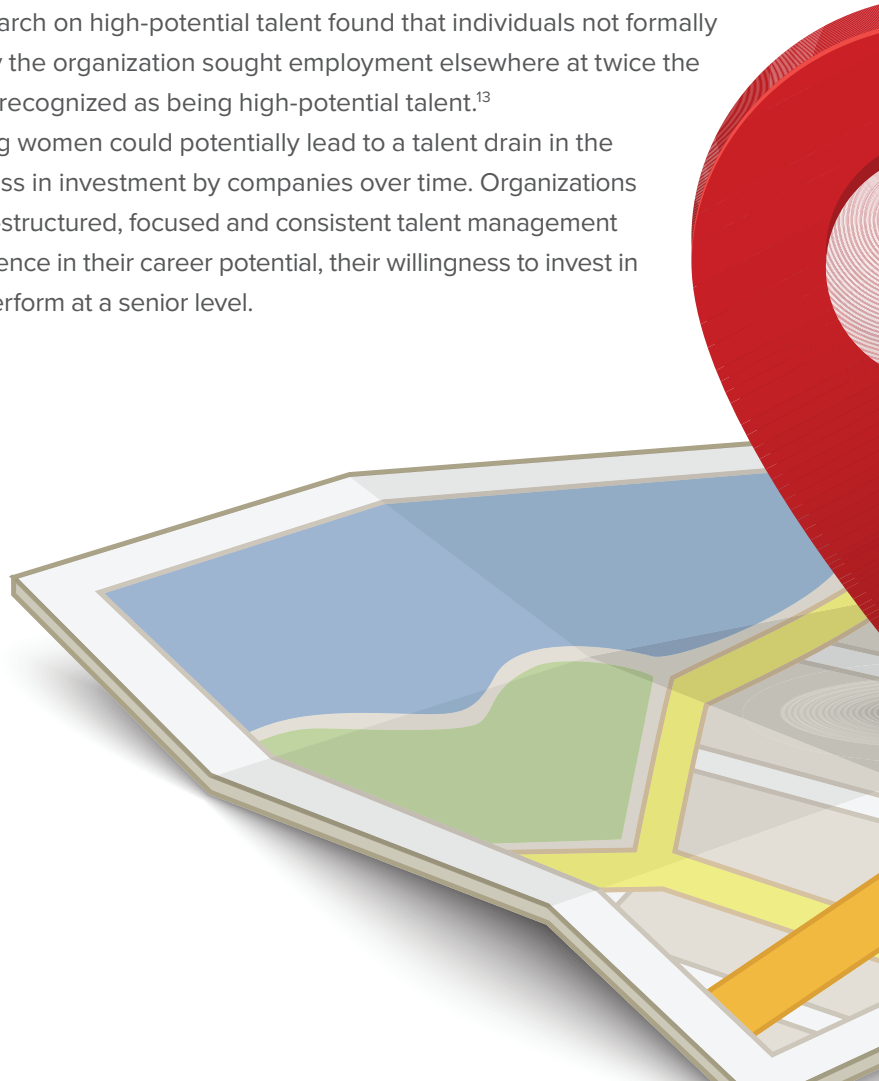
Women are most satisfied with their careers when they receive high levels of organizational and interpersonal support in advancing their career, including supportive mentors, peers and bosses and formal development opportunities, such as leadership development courses and fast-track assignments.

They also are most satisfied when they are not overlooked and undervalued, but are perceived as a leader or potential leader and receive appropriate developmental support.

This is important: CCL's research on high-potential talent found that individuals not formally recognized as a high-potential by the organization sought employment elsewhere at twice the rate of those individuals formally recognized as being high-potential talent.¹³

Overlooking and undervaluing women could potentially lead to a talent drain in the industry and represent a major loss in investment by companies over time. Organizations have an opportunity through well-structured, focused and consistent talent management practices to raise women's confidence in their career potential, their willingness to invest in their careers and their ability to perform at a senior level.

Developmental support and being overlooked and undervalued are the best predictors of career satisfaction or dissatisfaction.



Age and career level

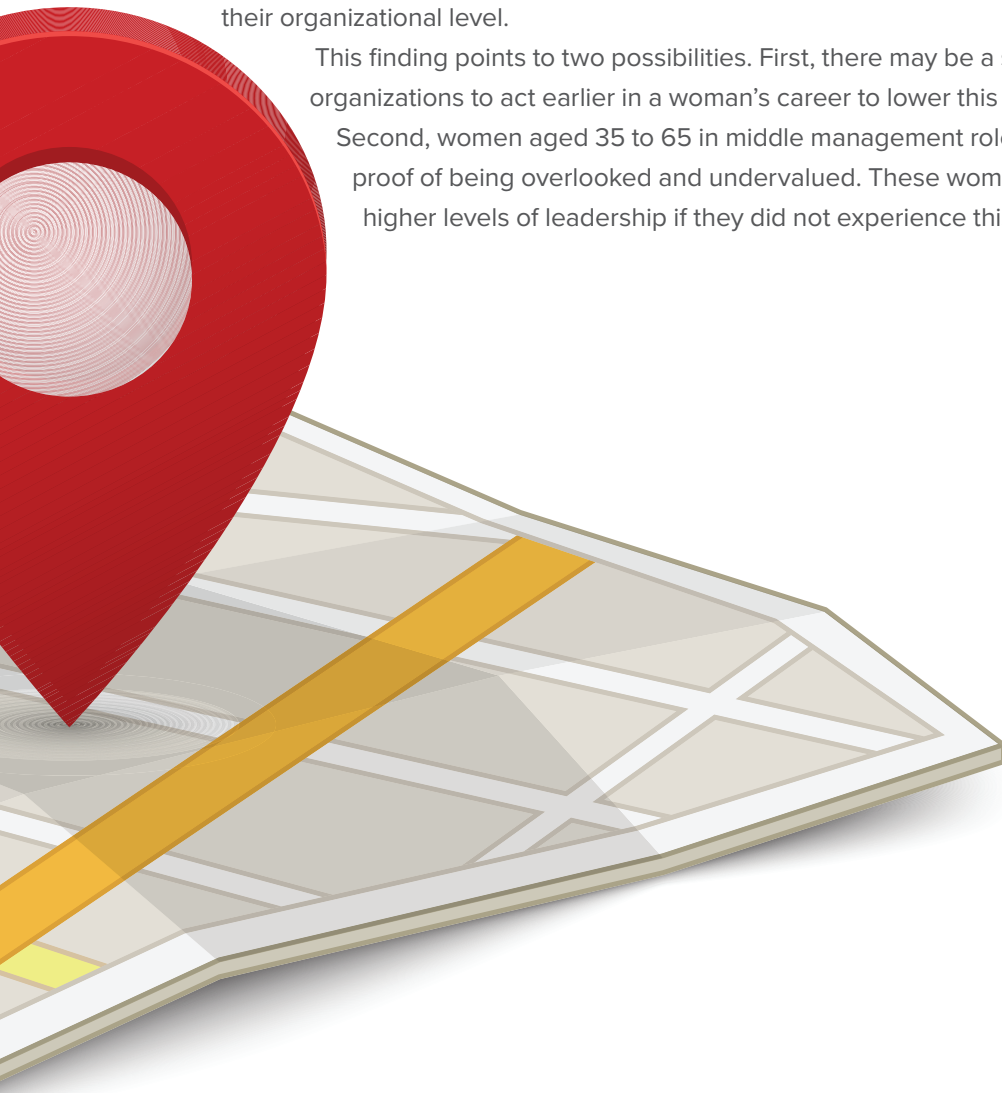
Women represent half the world's population and cannot be considered a homogenous group. With that in mind, NEW and CCL wanted to know what factors influenced the way women leaders perceived barriers and support. We found that age, career level and race each impacted these perceptions.

We looked at the relationship between a woman's age and her organizational level in understanding her experience with barriers and support factors. (Organizational level is an indication of where a position fits within a hierarchy).

In our study, store managers or associates, buyers, specialists and account managers and department managers were categorized as middle management. Directors were considered upper-middle management. Vice presidents and assistant vice presidents, principals and partners, executive vice presidents, senior vice presidents and CEOs were considered senior-level leaders.

Women at the mid-management level report suffering most frequently from being overlooked and undervalued. This finding was consistent across age groups, although young women (under 35 years old) report almost equal perceptions about being overlooked and undervalued, no matter their organizational level.

This finding points to two possibilities. First, there may be a specific need in organizations to act earlier in a woman's career to lower this perceived barrier. Second, women aged 35 to 65 in middle management roles might be living proof of being overlooked and undervalued. These women might achieve higher levels of leadership if they did not experience this barrier.



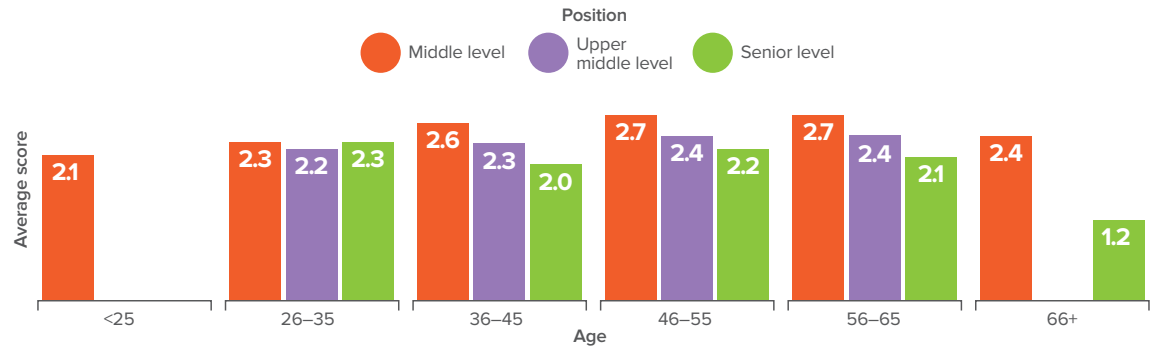
Regarding developmental support, we found that overall perceptions of women in middle-level and upper middle-level roles of such support declined as age increased. The youngest women in our sample, particularly in upper mid-level roles, reported strikingly more developmental support than older women.

Younger women report receiving higher levels of developmental support, potentially because they are earlier in their career and are seen as needing more support. Or maybe because the support they need is easier to give.

However, growth and development is a constant need throughout a leader’s career, so this could be an area where organizations and leaders are missing opportunities to continue to develop women leaders at all ages and levels.

People of all generations and at all organizational levels value development so resources should not be reserved just for younger leaders or those just entering the workforce.¹⁴

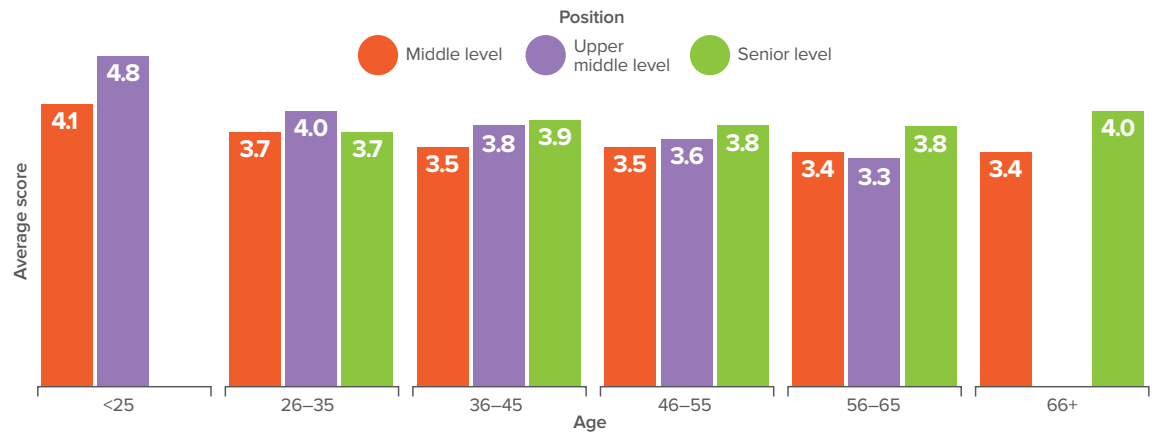
Reported experience with being overlooked and undervalued



Across all age groups, women at the mid-management level report suffering most frequently from being overlooked and undervalued.

Base: 937 NEW members. Chart values represent agreement/disagreement with statements in Appendix, Page 20.

Perception of developmental support



Perceptions of developmental support in mid-level and upper mid-level roles declined as respondents’ age increased. But employees of all ages value developmental support.

Base: 937 NEW members. Chart values represent agreement/disagreement with statements in Appendix, Page 20.

Race and ethnicity

Not all women leaders encounter the same barriers and opportunities with the same frequency. In fact, race and ethnicity shape a woman's perception of herself and her career, as well as the perception others have of her and the way organizations treat her.

Our data allowed us to compare Caucasian women and women of color across the range of support and barriers. Twenty percent of the sample indicated they were a race or ethnicity other than Caucasian. Several significant differences emerged:

- Women of color reported less overall career satisfaction than Caucasian women. As stated earlier, career satisfaction is an important predictor of a variety of outcomes, such as retention and performance.
- Women of color also report receiving less development and support compared to Caucasian women. The groups do not differ on the support they receive from professional networks or their expectations for organizational diversity and inclusion. This may indicate that women of color are less likely to receive direct developmental support from their boss or to be recognized and developed through formal opportunities in the organization.
- Women of color also are more likely than Caucasian women to report being overlooked and undervalued and being undermined. This is consistent with research highlighting the feeling of being “invisible” that many women of color experience. Women of color often suffer from the double burden of being discriminated against as a person of color and as women. Invisibility often manifests as the experience of having their ideas attributed to others and others' subtle body language dismissing the importance of communication from women of color.¹⁵
- Our research found women of color perceive fewer negative trade-offs to being a senior leader than Caucasian women do. Thus, women of color, despite experiencing more career barriers, receiving less developmental support and being less satisfied with their careers, seem to adopt a different mindset when it comes to the demands that a senior leadership role makes on their private lives and non-work responsibilities. Other studies found that women of color are more likely than Caucasian women to want a senior leadership role and say the achievement of senior roles and positions of power opens up different opportunities for them in their private life, such as financial independence, merit-based recognition and a sense of overall meaning and purpose.¹⁶

Women of color report receiving less career development and support than white women do.



An action plan for leaders, women and organizations

As women navigate their lives and careers, they are likely to encounter a variety of support factors and barriers mentioned in this paper. Individuals, leaders and organizations can take a variety of actions that will maximize the career support factors for women, while minimizing career barriers they may experience.

Regardless of age, role, race or ethnicity, women and their organizations can take positive action to drive change.

How individuals and organizations can drive change

TACTIC	WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF	WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR OTHERS	WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO
TAKE ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume duties or positions that will help you progress professionally • Develop plans and goals for your future career • Actively design your professional future • Interact with authority figures in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct talent conversations with direct reports and mentees to explore interests and commitment to future leadership roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage succession management processes to gauge interest and aspirations, allowing women an opportunity to express their career goals and commitment • Ensure all line managers are engaging in crucial career conversations with women • Ensure that hiring and promotional practices level the playing field by addressing second-generation bias
FEEDBACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek career feedback from higher-ups • Practice reflection to learn from feedback and experience (yours and others') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freely give feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a feedback-rich culture
MENTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out mentors and sponsors who can support, develop and promote you throughout your career • Participate in formal mentoring programs offered by the organization • Develop relationship savvy when growing a developmental network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give advice on the unspoken company rules • Provide information on company policies and decision-making • Give recommendations on how to avoid explosive situations • Offer information about who is aligned to whom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start a mentoring program to help women become more successful in the workplace
CHALLENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for assignments that can advance your career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give high-visibility assignments to advance careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make experience-driven learning the linchpin of the talent development system
TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntarily participate in further education, training or other events to support your career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support others to attend relevant training at critical career junctures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access and funding for relevant development at all stages of a leader's career

TACTIC	WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF	WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR OTHERS	WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO
TAP THE KNOWLEDGE BANK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read career-related books and articles and participate in leadership webinars • Seek out others in the organization and learn important organizational knowledge from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your knowledge with others in the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build robust knowledge-management systems that level the playing field and make knowledge and experience accessible for everyone
NETWORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain contacts with people who can help you professionally • Build a diverse network of people who have influence and power in your organization • Start a group of men and women who actively promote and support each other • Don't underestimate the value of family relationships and other relationships outside of your organization or industry in providing developmental and career support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start a network in your organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor professional network memberships for women
LEARN FROM THE MASTERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with and observe highly competent men and women in your organization. What do they do that leads to success? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give advice on difficult political situations you've encountered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask politically savvy bosses to give employees insights and advice
GET COMMITMENT FROM STAKEHOLDERS AND SPONSORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your boss and higher-ups informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust and rapport with your boss by proactively sharing the good and the bad • Figure out who is critical to your success and gain their commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively sponsor other women in the organization throughout their career
BELIEVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your personal values, interests, abilities and weaknesses • Try to see yourself through others' eyes • Don't hold back — apply and go for it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and provide encouragement to other women with leadership potential • Guide other women and help them to stretch their perspectives and mindsets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish organizational policies and practices supporting the development of women leaders • Provide visible commitment to increasing the number of women at senior levels in the organization

Appendix

Survey statements

Development and support
I have received helpful career feedback from someone at a higher organizational level than me.
I have received helpful coaching on the job from someone at a higher organizational level than me.
I have had a mentor with whom I can discuss my career goals.
I have had a sponsor or advocate for the advancement of my career.
In this organization, I have had a network of people who supported my career.
I expect to reach higher leadership levels in my career.
I have had male leader role models whom I have learned from.
I have been given high-visibility assignments as part of my career development.
I have participated in at least one training and development initiative intended to advance my career.
I have had female leader role models whom I have learned from.
I have had access to formal mentoring programs in this organization.
People have encouraged me to apply for a position I would not have sought on my own.
Positive organizational expectations for and commitment to equity
Women and men are seen as having equal leadership potential in this organization.
Women and men have equal access to career opportunities (such as developmental assignments) in this organization.
Performance and productivity measures are the same for men and women in this organization.
Top management is committed to the advancement of women in this organization.
Performance and productivity measures are clearly communicated in this organization.
This organization has policies in place to help manage work/life demands.
Being overlooked and undervalued
I am not seen as having leadership potential.
I am not included in important business conversations.
I am overlooked for leadership assignments.
I have been told I am not ready to take on more responsibility.
People assume I am not committed to my career.
Other people routinely get credit for work I have done.
I have not been groomed for leadership roles.
I am stuck in a job with limited advancement opportunities.
Senior leaders in this organization don't take an interest in my career.
Career satisfaction
I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my overall career goals.
I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for advancement.
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.
I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for income.
I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for the development of new skills.

Being undermined
Information has been withheld from me in order to damage my career.
People have actively tried to derail my career.
I have had a boss refuse to support me taking on a new position.
My qualifications are routinely questioned.
Support from a professional network
My professional network has kept me informed about career opportunities.
My professional network has supported me to take on new career challenges.
My professional network has provided me with helpful feedback about what I need to do to advance my career.
My professional network has provided access to senior leaders.
Negative impact of perceived trade-offs needed to be a senior leader
It is almost impossible to be a senior leader and have a life outside of work.
I have elected to not pursue leadership roles because of the impact on my life outside of work.
Very few women are able to put in the hours needed to be a senior leader.

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About the authors

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A final word

In this study, we have highlighted what helps and hinders women leaders' progression — and how their experience of career barriers and support factors differs by age, seniority and race. There are clear implications from our findings for organizational practice in talent management, diversity and inclusion.

NEW and CCL are dedicated to the advancement of women's careers and satisfaction in the workplace. In our work through research and practice, we believe the most progress toward gender equity will be made if women and organizations work together, in a respectful way, to create workplaces that allow everyone to realize their full potential and have satisfying careers.



