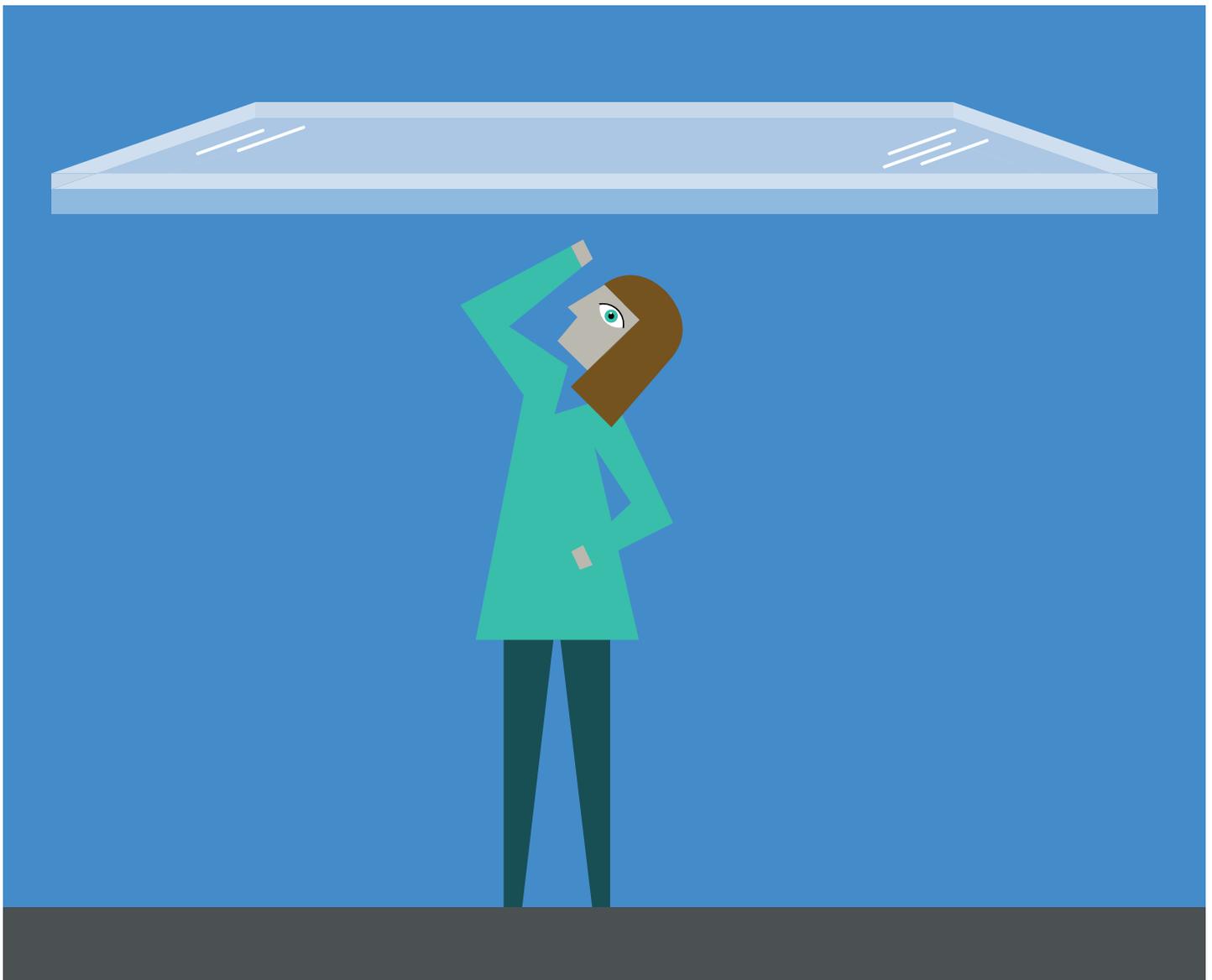


Women in Leadership: Tackling Corporate Culture from the Top



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Number of women CEOs remains stagnant, despite equal participation in the workforce

Even though women now account for 47% of the total U.S. labor force, gender inequality remains stubbornly rooted across corporate America, particularly among the upper ranks. The percentage of women CEOs at Fortune 500 companies sits at 6% and has never risen above that mark since the Fortune 500 list was first published in 1955.

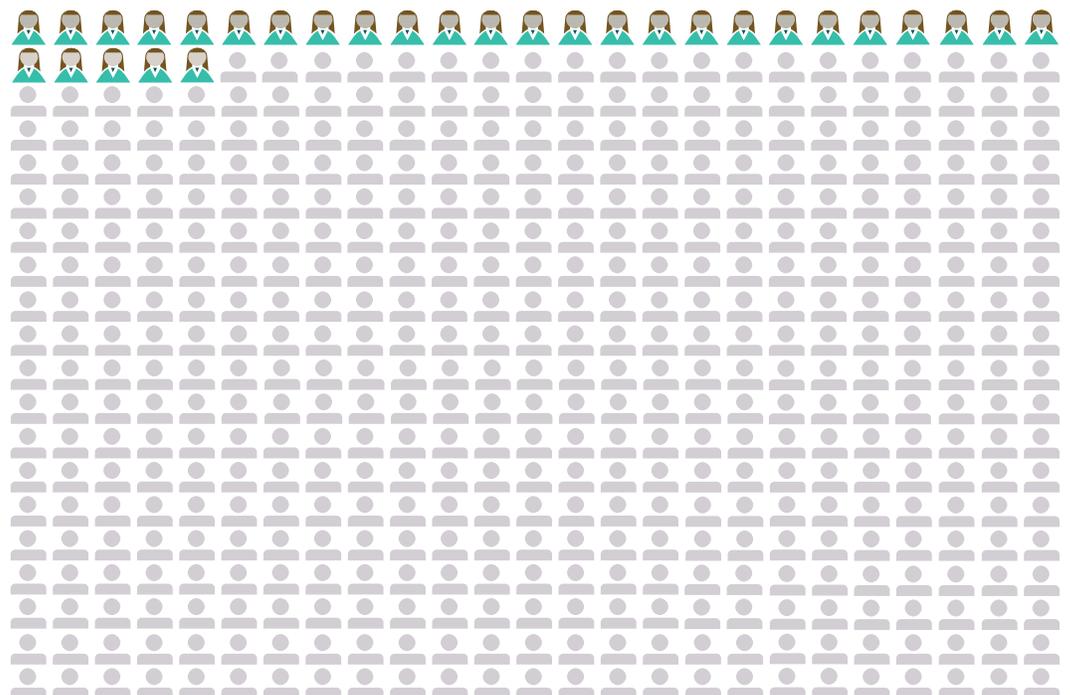
To understand how Americans view gender equality in the workplace and what can be done to achieve gender parity in leadership, The Rockefeller Foundation funded its second annual study as part of its 100x25 campaign to increase the number of women CEOs of Fortune 500 companies to 100 by 2025. Global Strategy Group conducted a national poll of 1,010 adults age 18 and older from May 19-26, 2017.

Last year, our study showed that Americans support workplace equality, but they see businesses falling short in terms of women’s representation in positions of influence. This year, building off these findings, we hear Americans asking for CEOs to prioritize this issue to create meaningful changes in both the attitudes of employees across the company and through investments to company-wide programs that create conditions that allow women to move up the ranks.

Yet, even as Americans see male and female CEOs as critical to driving change, there is little confidence that they are actively taking steps to do so.

Women remain just 6% of the CEOs of Fortune 500 Companies

Number of female CEOs of Fortune 500 companies (2017)



Americans see easier path to the top for men; few believe women have a “great deal” of opportunity

Women’s lack of representation in leadership in the business world is seen as widely problematic. One in five (21%) Americans say there are no women in leadership positions at all at their current company. And only one-quarter (25%) say women have a “great deal” of opportunity to serve in leadership positions in the American workplace.

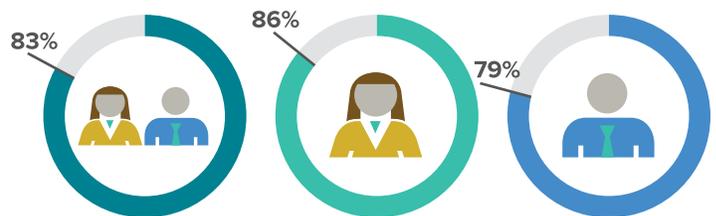
The problem is even more pronounced when it comes to certain fields. Americans say corporate America has the fewest opportunities for women to serve in leadership positions (57% fewer), behind government (52%), start-ups (34%), and the media (29%).

And while American men (91% agree) and women (97% agree) believe that women are just as qualified as men to lead businesses, they see systemic stumbling blocks to equality. There is widespread agreement that it is easier for men to reach top leadership positions than equally qualified women (83% agree, 44% strongly agree). This belief is felt even more strongly by women (86% agree), particularly Baby Boomer women (90% agree) who have seen first-hand the difficulties of climbing the corporate ladder.

Americans believe that it is easier for men to reach top leadership positions than equally qualified women

% agree:

■ Total ■ Women ■ Men



Americans believe certain fields offer fewer opportunities for women leaders than others

% fewer opportunities:

Corporate America



Government



Start-ups



Your field



Media



Americans see attitudes of men as a barrier to female leadership

Despite the fact that Americans believe women are just as qualified as men, there remain barriers to more women in leadership positions. Perceptions of women in the workplace are one significant hurdle. One in three (33%) Americans continue to believe that women are less interested in top leadership roles; 42% say women lack the confidence to pursue top positions and 46% assert that there are just not enough women with the appropriate qualifications.

Additionally, Americans view hurdles to female leadership as driven by company culture and the attitudes of men in the workplace. This “boys club” sentiment is widely felt. Over six in ten Americans say the attitudes of men in top leadership positions (65%), attitudes of men across a company (61%), and company culture (63%) play a major role in the struggling number of women in top leadership positions. And even more Americans see company culture making it hard for women to get ahead (79%).

These beliefs are particularly intense for women. Fully 90% of women say the attitudes of men across a company play a role in how many women make it to the top, including 72% who say these attitudes play a major role. Men are less likely to share this sentiment — only 49% say the attitudes of men across a company play a major role. Baby Boomer men (57% major role) who have more work experience and have perhaps grown up in less diverse corporate environments are more likely than their younger peers (44% major role) to acknowledge such limitations.

Another barrier to leadership is the persistent perception that women prioritize family over career advancement (75%). And women who are mid-career feel this most acutely: 83% agree that women are seen this way.

Company culture and leadership attitudes are perceived as major hurdles to leadership roles

% major role:

■ Total ■ Men ■ Women

Attitudes of men in top leadership positions

61 65 68

Company culture

58 63 67

Attitudes of men across a company

49 61 72

Views about traditional gender roles

50 58 65

Lack of willingness to address the problem

53 58

55

Lack of advocates for women in the workplace

46 54 61

Lack of women pursuing careers that would lead to top positions

45

45

45

Lack of younger women pursuing careers that would lead to top positions

42 45

43

Lack of qualified women for top positions

36 39

37

0

100

Americans perceive hurdles for women as a result of both policy and personal experiences

Americans see obstacles for women to get ahead on both the micro and macro level. First, Americans believe that women are less likely to be promoted to mid- and senior level positions (72%) and that men in leadership positions do not prioritize hiring or promoting women to top positions (81%).

Second, American women are all too familiar with day-to-day biases at their workplaces. Nearly two in five women say they feel they have been judged more harshly (39%), discriminated against (39%), and interrupted more often (40%) because of their gender. Most troublingly, one in three women (33%) have felt verbally or physically harassed based on gender in a professional setting.

Women of color report facing discrimination at work even more widely. Black (45%) and Hispanic (49%) women are more likely to have felt judged more harshly at work as a result of their gender than White women (37%). And even higher numbers of Black women (48%) and Hispanic women (51%) have felt interrupted more often because of their gender compared with White women (36%).

American women experience day-to-day biases at their workplaces

% felt treated differently because of their gender:

■ All Women ■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic

Felt interrupted more often

36 40 48 51

Felt judged more harshly

37 39 45 49

Felt discriminated against

33 39 40 46

Worried about being less likely to advance in career

33 36 38 50

Felt contributions were valued less

30 37 44

Felt overlooked for a promotion

32 34 45

Felt verbally or physically harassed

33 33 35

Felt uncomfortable contributing

30 31 38

0

100

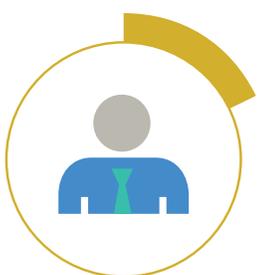
A brighter, harsher spotlight: Americans see women as less likely to get credit, more likely to get criticized

Americans are aware that women are subjected to far more scrutiny than men: 56% believe that when a company led by a female CEO performs badly, she gets more blame than a male CEO would. Conversely, only 18% say that when a female-led company performs well, she gets more credit for the company's success than a male CEO would.

These findings are consistent with the findings of last year's report: *CEOs & Gender: A Media Analysis*, which underscored the important role the media plays in shaping the perceptions of business leaders based on their gender. That study found that male and female CEOs are portrayed differently in times of crisis: female CEOs are more likely to be blamed as the source of the crisis (80% of stories), than male CEOs (31% of stories).



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Americans believe the greatest catalyst for change comes from the top

Americans look to CEOs to drive progress when it comes to increasing women leaders. Americans view CEOs as having the most responsibility to ensure that women leaders are treated fairly (65% great deal of responsibility). Over three-quarters (77%) say the CEO of their company can have influence in increasing the number of women in leadership positions — including nearly half (48%) who say they can have a great deal of influence. And nearly half (48%) also think the CEO of their company is likely to do something to help increase female leadership.

One thing is clear — change must come from within, and beyond the CEO. Americans say that other potential advocates within workplaces, such as human resources departments (70% have influence), high level executives (68%), and their direct supervisors (64%) have more influence in increasing the presence of female leaders than outside ones, such as the media (61%) and shareholders (55%).

CEOs are seen as the most accountable to increasing women in leadership

% are a great deal responsible:

CEOs

65

High level executives

61

Direct supervisors

55

Corporate boards

51

Other top leaders in an industry

49

Direct reports

36

Employees

34

The media

31

Investors

30

Corporate culture is key to progress

Americans identify a number of ways to put progress into practice. For example, company-wide leadership trainings can provide important mentorship opportunities for women. Fully two-thirds (66%) say an investment in company-wide programs to train and prepare women for leadership positions is important when it comes to increasing the number of women in leadership roles, as are mentorship programs for women (67%).

Corporate culture more broadly can also play a role in the solution, as work-life balance initiatives are considered a key to progress. Fully 74% see company-wide initiatives to promote work-life balance as important (35% very important) and majorities also think that these initiatives can have a great or good deal of impact (67%) on increasing the number of women leaders. This is particularly true for mid-career women: 83% say initiatives to promote work-life balance are important (36% very important).



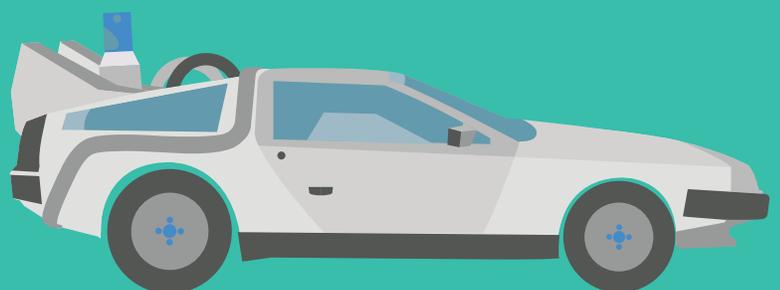
The perception around the pay gap persists

More than half (53%) of Americans think men and women are treated unequally when it comes to salary. Given this, pay equity is seen as playing a major role in increasing the number of women in leadership positions: 81% say pay equity is important (55% extremely important). This opinion is felt across all income brackets, but it's particularly acute for households making less than \$50K (62% extremely important). And 72% of Americans think it would have a great or good deal of impact on increasing the presence of female leadership.

How likely is it that we reach parity by 2025?

Skepticism persists on this issue. **One in four (25%) Americans believe it's more likely that humans will be able to travel back in time in their lifetime than half of Fortune 500 companies will be women.**

Just 18% believe half of all top leadership positions in business will be held by women. But while opinions of women leaders in business may be lagging, there is some hope. Nearly half (49%) of Americans believe we will elect a female president of the U.S. by 2025.



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