

# Report: Women in Leadership Development Program Survey

*Addressing Gender Bias and Empowering Women Through Leadership Development Programs*

## 1. Abstract

This research paper analyzes the findings of the Women's Leadership Development Program survey conducted to assess the barriers, challenges, and potential solutions for advancing women into leadership positions. The survey gathered responses regarding access to leadership programs, mentorship, gender bias, and skills gaps that hinder women's advancement, with a focus on mid-career women. The results provide insights into the structural and societal barriers women face and emphasize the need for tailored leadership programs to build skills, confidence, and networks for women's advancement.

## 2. Introduction

Women's participation in leadership roles remains significantly low in many organizations, especially in mid- and senior-level positions. Despite growing awareness of gender diversity, women face persistent barriers, including gender bias, lack of mentorship, and limitations in accessing leadership development opportunities. This research is based on a survey report aimed at understanding the challenges mid-career women face in their leadership journeys and identifying solutions to enhance their representation in senior leadership roles.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the barriers women face in accessing leadership roles.
- To explore organizations' interest in leadership development programs for women.
- To assess the effectiveness of mentorship, training, and executive coaching as tools for leadership development.
- To offer recommendations for addressing gender bias and promoting women's leadership.

## 4. Methodology

The survey report draws data from a survey on women's leadership development, where respondents were asked about their organizations' interest in leadership programs for mid-career women, current women representation in senior leadership, and the challenges faced by women in advancing to leadership positions. The survey covered various sectors, with respondents indicating both personal and organizational perspectives on the issue.

## 5. Key Findings

### 5.1. Representation of Women in Leadership

According to the survey, a significant portion of organizations still has low representation of women in senior leadership positions. The findings show that:

- **35%** of organizations reported that 0-25% of their senior leadership positions are held by women.

- **34%** reported 26-50% female representation, while only **15%** of organizations have more than 75% of senior leadership positions occupied by women

## 5.2. Challenges to Advancing Women into Leadership Roles

The key challenges reported by respondents in promoting women to leadership positions include:

- **Gender bias:** Both conscious and unconscious gender biases continue to hinder women's progression into leadership roles.
- **Lack of mentorship:** Many mid-career women lack access to strong mentorship and sponsorship relationships, making it difficult to navigate career advancement.
- **Confidence and self-promotion:** Confidence and self-doubt issues, driven by societal expectations, were frequently cited as barriers to women assuming leadership roles.
- **Work-life balance:** Balancing leadership responsibilities with home duties is seen as a significant challenge for women.

## 5.3. Interest in Leadership Development Programs

The survey revealed that there is considerable interest among organizations in offering leadership development programs tailored for mid-career women:

- **54%** of organizations expressed interest in developing such programs, while **5%** were not interested, and **41%** were unsure.

## 5.4. Preferred Elements in Leadership Development Programs

Respondents indicated the following as the most effective components for leadership development programs:

- **Skill development workshops:** Focusing on communication, strategic thinking, and decision-making.
- **Executive coaching:** Personalized guidance to enhance leadership abilities.
- **Mentorship opportunities:** Pairing women with senior leaders who can provide career guidance and professional sponsorship.
- **Networking opportunities:** Creating spaces for women to connect with other professionals in leadership positions to build strong support networks.

## 6. Discussion

The findings from the survey indicate that although there is increasing recognition of the importance of promoting women into leadership positions, significant barriers remain, particularly around gender bias, lack of mentorship, and challenges with work-life balance. Many women face societal and internal pressures that undermine their confidence in pursuing leadership roles. Moreover, organizations must actively implement leadership development programs that provide women with the skills, confidence, and networks necessary for career advancement.

The report also highlights a growing interest from organizations to invest in women's leadership programs, especially those that provide mentorship and executive coaching. Such programs not only empower individual women but also benefit organizations by creating more inclusive leadership teams that reflect a diversity of thought and experience.

## 7. Recommendations

Inspiring Leaders

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Page | 2

### **7.1. Development of Comprehensive Leadership Programs**

Organizations should create targeted leadership programs that include mentorship, executive coaching, and networking opportunities. These programs should address both technical skills, such as strategic thinking and decision-making, and soft skills, such as communication and self-promotion.

### **7.2. Addressing Gender Bias in the Workplace**

Gender sensitivity training should be a key component of organizational culture. Training on unconscious bias and inclusion can help reduce the gender barriers that prevent women from advancing to senior leadership positions.

### **7.3. Encouraging Work-Life Integration for Women Leaders**

Leadership programs should incorporate modules on work-life integration, providing women with tools and strategies to navigate leadership responsibilities while managing home duties. Organizations should also consider implementing flexible working policies to accommodate the needs of working women.

### **7.4. Sponsorship Programs for Women**

In addition to mentorship, organizations should establish sponsorship programs where senior leaders actively advocate for and support women's advancement in their careers. Sponsorship can be particularly effective in breaking through the barriers women face in male-dominated industries.

### **7.5. Involvement of Male Allies**

Gender equality in leadership is not just a women's issue. Involving men in women's leadership development initiatives can foster an inclusive culture where both men and women work together to challenge stereotypes and create more diverse leadership teams.

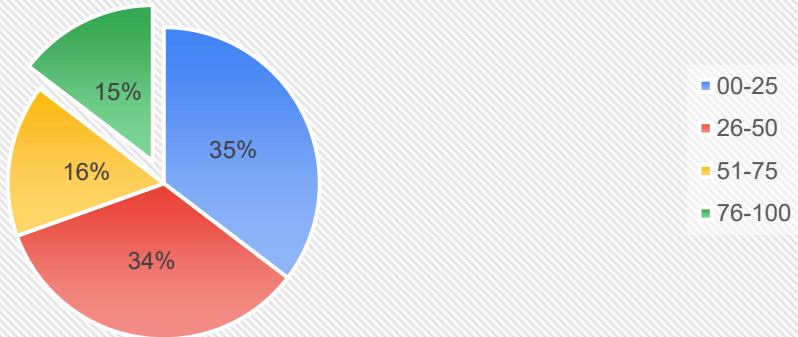
## **8. Conclusion**

The survey highlights that while there is significant interest in promoting women into leadership roles, structural barriers such as gender bias, lack of mentorship, and work-life balance challenges persist. Leadership development programs tailored to women's needs can play a pivotal role in overcoming these barriers. By addressing these challenges through comprehensive leadership initiatives, organizations can not only foster more inclusive leadership but also drive better business outcomes through diversity.

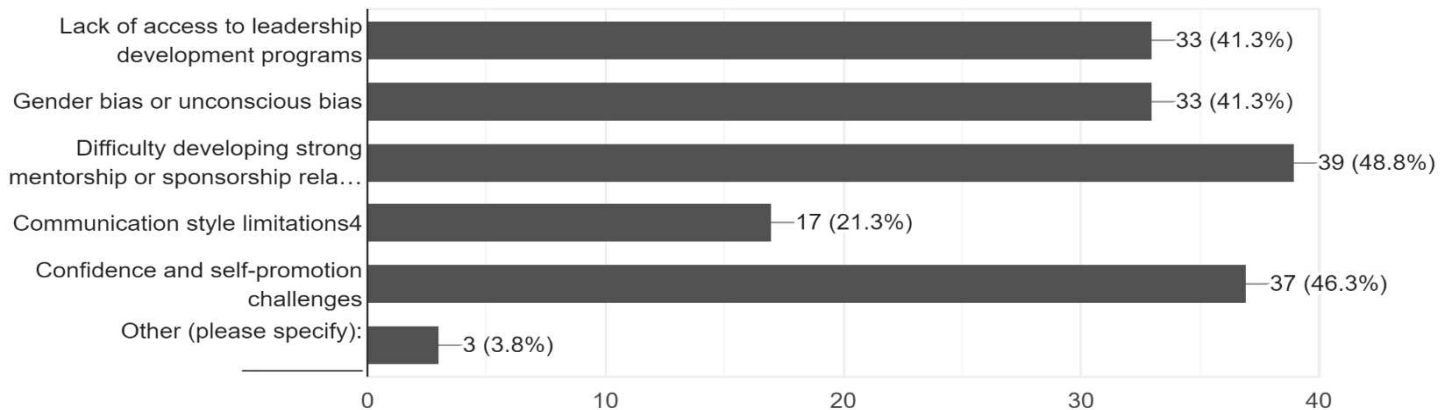
# Report

## Women in Leadership Development Program Survey

### 1 What percentage of your organization's senior leadership positions are currently held by women?

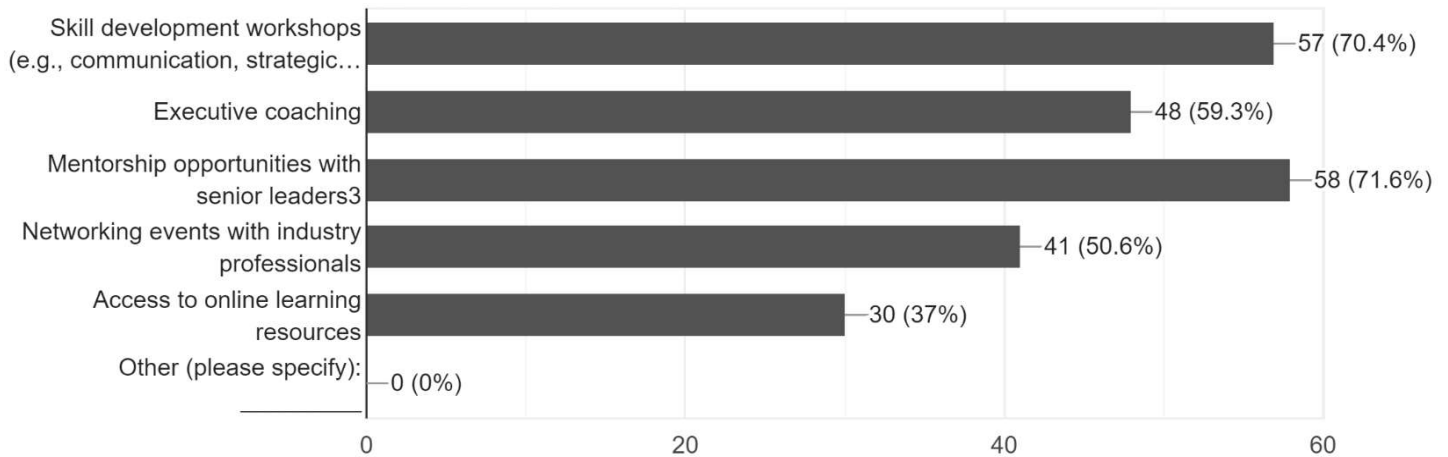


### 2 Challenges mid-career women in your organization face in advancing to senior leadership roles



### 3 Organizations' interest in a leadership development program for mid-career women



**Preferred elements in a leadership development program for mid-career women****Other areas of concern and comments raised and reported verbatim**

Women have long had the bias of emotional judgement more than professional in a sense that they will make decisions because they do not like someone or have held on to a bad experience with that person. This makes working with women exhausting. It is important to incorporate in a training the need to discern, the need to separate personal judgement from professional, the need to engage the right people to avoid making biased decisions. May this Women Leadership Training raise women who are not only empowered to grow through managerial ranks, but be the kind of boss that they recommend other roles

#### 2 Training women to develop leadership qualities is a good initiative

Women face a lot of self-doubt and lack confidence to take up the leadership roles because sometimes we fear to fail, society has tagged us weak and can't lead and because of this mindset, it has made some women believe this and made them stay comfortable where they are. Also, the ongoing home responsibilities and roles scare women to take up additional leadership roles at home because of fear of not being able to balance, if women can get coaching as well to learn how to navigate around work life balance it would be a motivation for them to take up leadership roles that will grow them in their career.

#### 4 Program needs to address women's mindset and own self-defeating beliefs as well as highlight the need for them to involve the male counterparts in this call. Men should take a forefront in advancing women leaders.

Women have the Potential to lead and when they do it's always effective and efficient. I encourage women to take on leadership positions and if possible, create their own tables.

#### 7 Starting book clubs to bring women to read and learn together

#### 8 Women's confidence in themselves needs to be boosted to pursue senior leadership positions

#### 9 Work life balance. Women are expected to fight for a place at the table and also ensure the home is catered to.

#### 10 Women's capabilities need to be considered

#### 11 Sponsorship for the same wd affect the number that benefit

#### 12 It's a good initiative that will transform both young and old women to shine in & out while sharing with the world

#### 13 The realities of work life balance, climbing the corporate ladder in a cutthroat male dominated space

#### 14 Add Training to enlighten women on the dangers of Cliquishness and jealous tendencies to their advancements

#### 15 We need more program to help women

#### 16 Finding the balance between family and leadership, the aspect of a woman dimming her light to appease her partner

#### 17 The society norm of how women are viewed, as housewives, so we're limited to a few roles.

18 Giving women equal opportunity regarding employment opportunities

It's an excellent and exciting human development initiative. It must be sold to women to buy in and believe that growth is wealth, and it must be continuous. Women must become hungry for knowledge, search for knowledge and sign.

20 Collaboration amongst women-owned companies/industries.

21 Women need to be afforded the same pay as men in similar positions.

22 I would also recommend a sponsorship program for young women. To be sponsored in going back to school or start small businesses

23 Some of the women lack confidence

24 Assess the communities where these women come to design a relevant training program