3 Strategies for Developing Women Leaders in Your Organization

If your organization is like most, you’re not doing enough to develop women into leadership roles. A Skillsoft survey, *The Impact of Women in the Workforce*, reports 24% of respondents felt their organizations had a strategy in place to develop women leaders.¹

The Skillsoft survey results align with recent research that finds: “Women are 15% less likely than men to be promoted to the next level—and at the current pace, it will be more than a century before there is gender equality in the C-suite. The message for corporations: There’s a lot of work to do, and it starts at the top.”²

How can developing women leaders affect your results?
Would changing the gender balance in your organization benefit your bottom line? Yes. Companies with female leaders perform better. A study by Catalyst shows “the group of companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams experienced better financial performance than the group of companies with the lowest women’s representation,” with a 35.1% higher ‘Return on Equity’ (ROE) and 34% higher ‘Total Return to Shareholders’ (TRS).³

How can your organization develop women leaders?
According to the Skillsoft survey, an overwhelming 87% of respondents say there are more men in senior positions within their organization. Just 7% respond that their organization is “very good” and 1% state that their organization is “excellent” at addressing the challenges of the gender gap in leadership. How can your organization join the 1% making “excellent” strides in developing women as leaders?

Here are 3 strategies

**Strategy 1 – Evaluate work-life balance for employees.** According to a recent survey of more than 450 professionals, two out of three women think that work-life balance is the number one challenge for women in the workforce.⁴

Priti Shah, VP of Leadership Product Strategy and Corporate Development at Skillsoft states, “Work-life balance continues to be a struggle for women as they climb the corporate ladder.”

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¹ *Women in the Workforce* survey. Skillsoft, 2015
Having programs in place that particularly allow parents greater flexibility will keep them in the workforce in the long-run and create more opportunities for women to reach the C-suite.”

Above all, companies need to start placing emphasis on results rather than time spent in the office, Shah also notes. Creative solutions, from telecommuting and flexible hours to “job-sharing,” where two new mothers who do the same job can share the workload over the course of the day, will eventually create more balance in the boardroom and beyond.

**Strategy 2 –** Create ongoing opportunities to develop women leaders throughout their career cycle. From emerging leaders to senior-level management, consider learning programs for all experience levels in your organization. 76% of survey respondents work in organizations without a strategy in place for developing women in leadership roles. Adopting and implementing leadership training will make your organization competitive.

**Strategy 3 –** Commit to company-wide leadership programs that are relevant, time efficient and flexible. Leadership education should include both formal and informal opportunities and must focus on key competencies required for career growth at all levels. To meet the time demands of all workers - education programs must be efficient and tailored to fit the experience level of each employee.

Implementing these three strategies will help create momentum in your organization. Developing women for leadership requires continuous, ongoing education. Investing in training to develop and support women leaders will lead to better business results.

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There are unofficial women’s groups within our company but the company does not specify certain programs for women-only development.

_Survey respondent_

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Get the full, complimentary paper _The Impact of Women in the Workforce: A Skillsoft Survey Report_ here.