

Leadershift: Pathways to Gender Equity



About Electricity Human Resources Canada

Electricity Human Resources Canada (EHRC) is Canada's most trusted source for objective human resource and market information, with the tools to guide business planning and development for the Canadian electricity industry. We provide a platform for current industry needs, identify ways to make Canadian businesses "best in class," and forecast industry trends and issues. Our work enables the industry to map workforce supply to demand and to foster growth and innovation in employers and employees. This improves the quality of service industry provides and improves the confidence Canadians have in the industry.

EHRC's specific objectives are to:

- Conduct and disseminate valuable research about human resources in Canada's electricity industry
- Help the industry create and sustain a skilled and diverse labour force
- Promote awareness of career and employment opportunities in the industry
- Develop partnerships that better enable the industry to meet its human resources needs

Further information on EHRC is available at electricityhr.ca

Ce rapport est également disponible en français sous le titre : Le leadership en pleine évolution : voies vers l'équité des genres. This report is also available in French.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.



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Foreword

While much has been written on women's advancement into leadership roles in industries over the last 20 years, little has been done to attempt to understand the unique challenges facing their advancement in the Canadian electricity sector specifically. In the context of an industry facing dramatic shifts, integrating women into leadership positions offers a range of opportunities for addressing current and future challenges, making this report especially timely.

Leadershift: Pathways to Gender Equity offers a current snapshot of women in leadership in the sector, evidence of the challenges and opportunities for women's advancement, and examples of champions making a difference. With it, we hope to provide Canada's electricity sector stakeholders with information not only to accelerate change, but to understand more fully why these changes are necessary.

Making space for women in our sector requires coordinated efforts and multiple strategies. This report shows how it can be done. We invite you to reflect on the findings and first-person perspectives in the pages that follow and consider how you and your organization can be a part of this change.



Kathy Lerette
Senior Vice President
Business Transformation, Alectra
Chair, EHRC Board of Directors



Michelle Branigan
Chief Executive Officer
Electricity Human Resources
Canada



Lyne Parent-Garvey
Chief Human Resources Officer
Hydro Ottawa



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Executive Summary

Canada's electricity and renewable energy sector is in an unprecedented time of change. Organizations face fundamental shifts in business models, greater demands for innovation and performance, and labour market challenges within an evolving society. In this context, a focus on accelerating the advancement of women into leadership ranks is clearly gaining momentum.

Electricity Human Resources Canada (EHRC) has undertaken this research program to explore our sector's current gender inclusion status and focus our efforts toward change. In addition to reviewing extensive literature on gender diversity, we gathered new industry data through:

- *An Industry Census of Women in Leadership*
- *A study of Experiences and Perspectives from the Industry*
- *A set of Champion Case Studies*

There is a consensus now that a more gender-inclusive executive team and board of directors can reliably produce better results. Benefits include: stronger access to talent and critical skills, better compliance with regulatory requirements and stakeholder expectations, enhanced innovation and competitiveness, improved retention, an increased safety track record, and lower strategic risk.

Nonetheless, there are gaps in women's representation around the decision-making tables of the industry and this was the first focus of the research. While overall 30% of board seats in the sector are held by women, they are not evenly distributed. Among the 61 industry organizations we researched, 12% have no women on their board and an additional 11% have only one. Previous research has concluded that one woman alone on a board is insufficient; the business benefits of diversity are unlikely to be gained. Based on these numbers alone, almost one-quarter (23%) of the boards in our sector are missing out on the advantages that a more balanced perspective can bring.

The situation is more dire for executive teams. Based on a review of publicly accessible sources, almost half (46%) of the companies we researched in the sector have no women listed in C-suite positions. Of the 26% of senior executives who are women, half are in their company's corporate functions (HR, IT, etc.) or legal roles. They are likely missing the highly valued operations and technical experience that would propel them into CEO and other key decision-making roles.

Many companies have adopted formal policies and practices aimed directly at growing the numbers of women in senior ranks. A cluster of successful approaches includes: written gender diversity policies; strategic approaches to executive recruitment and talent management; intentional and active leadership of the issues; and public commitments and targets, with disclosure and reporting. Much of this direction

is aligned with the EHRC Leadership Accord on Gender Diversity, an industry-wide initiative that gives employers, educational institutions, governments and stakeholders a mechanism for articulating their commitment, focusing their efforts and establishing clear metrics to measure progress over time.

Despite good intentions and investments, the pace of change in gender inclusion is painfully slow. It has become increasingly clear that there is not one practice that will be a stand-alone solution. As the common management wisdom puts it, 'culture beats strategy.' The best policies and practices are necessary but not sufficient. They will have little sustainable effect without a workplace culture that fosters the full inclusion of women.

Culture became a second central focus of our research. Our participants revealed a stark difference in the perspectives of men and women on gender inclusion in the industry. Women are more likely to report they have faced barriers in their career and they find it hard to get the education and skills needed in the sector. They are less likely to feel they have opportunities to show their full abilities

and potential. They believe that their advancement has been held back because of others' assessment of their technical skills or of their behaviours and style such as teamwork and ambition. These views matter—the respondents who are positive about career supports and barriers are more satisfied with their jobs, more likely to recommend working in the sector, and less likely to be planning to leave the sector.

Almost 1 in every 5 men (18%) in our survey believes that it is actually easier for women to succeed in their workplace than it is for men. Women have a different perspective: 3 of every 4 women (75%) believe women have a harder time.



Women and non-management employees in our research clearly told us that they are not confident that the leadership team is conscious of the barriers faced by women. In fact, senior management respondents were much more likely to believe that equity is firmly established—that a person’s sex or ethnic background does not matter. Almost 1 in every 5 men (18%) in our survey believes that it is actually easier for women to succeed in their workplace than it is for men. Women have a different perspective: 3 of every 4 women (75%) believe women have a harder time. It starts with leadership—women are more likely to report that a lack of executive commitment limits women’s progress in their organization.

...culture must be changed throughout an organization and not everyone is ready to get involved. Some women hesitate because they fear the repercussions of ‘making waves.’ Some men don’t see that there are gender barriers, don’t feel they have the scope to make change, or are deterred by a concern that merit will be put at risk.

However, culture must be changed throughout an organization and not everyone is ready to get involved. Some women hesitate because they fear the repercussions of ‘making waves.’ Some men don’t see that there are gender barriers, don’t feel they have the scope to make change, or are deterred by a concern that merit will be put at risk.

Why and how individuals can make a difference was the third focus of our research. Our seven champion first-person interviews and their organizational

successes have shown how it can be done. These men demonstrate the impact of active, day-by-day, persistent involvement of leaders as advocates. Each of them describes the experiences that helped them become personally more aware of the challenges women face in the workplace. They have translated that awareness into behaviours that make a difference, such as: addressing unconscious bias, creating a more welcoming workplace for women, using equity and meritocracy to advance women’s careers, cascading the messaging throughout the organization, building the trust required for flexible work arrangements, navigating style differences between women and men, and sponsoring women for growth opportunities.

The findings have wide-ranging implications with courses of action for individuals and organizations across the sector. Build awareness and support by communicating on a personal level, with candor and openness to difficult discussions. Spread the discussions across the organization—everywhere and every day, if needed. Implement best practices, and then measure and report on the progress achieved and the benefits gained. Realize that change for women implies changes for men. With those changes come the challenges of confronting longstanding behaviour patterns of women and men but also the benefits of a more equitable and inclusive environment for all.

The insights from this research drive home the need to accelerate progress. To begin, it appears that we are still falling short on creating a shared understanding of our sector’s gender reality. Many of our organizations have instances of longstanding gaps in practices and in women’s representation that must be addressed. Nonetheless, we also have good momentum, pockets of great practices, and inspiring success stories to build upon.

The current dramatic shifts in our industry increase the need for change and present an opportunity for change. We must, and can, move resolutely now to more fully leverage the leadership talent of women.



About the Research

The insights in this report have been drawn from multiple perspectives and complementary lines of research.* We have been keenly aware that the advancement of women into leadership is an important issue with a wide scope.

The starting point was a review of the existing literature, with evidence of the current state, critical challenges and best practices; many informative resources are listed in the Bibliography.

The existing research confirms what is well known by most industry observers: leadership ranks do not reflect the numbers of talented women available in the labour force. To get a thorough view of the status and the opportunities for change, we undertook three parallel research initiatives.

An *Industry Census of Women in Leadership* has given a comprehensive view of the numbers and characteristics of women in senior positions in a wide-ranging sample of 61 organizations across Canada’s electricity and renewables sector. The research compiles data reported to us by the industry and supplements it with a review of publicly available information on the industry’s boards of directors, executive teams, and 224 women leaders.

A study of *Experiences and Perspectives from the Industry* examined the viewpoints of men and women who work in the sector. They described their workplace experiences, they reported on their own willingness to be champions, and they assessed their managers’ and leaders’ commitment to creating a more inclusive environment for women. Their voices were heard through a national online survey, as well as comments drawn from two industry events and three webinars.

A set of *Champion First-Person Interviews* explores in some depth the factors that particularly influence male leaders’ support of women’s advancement into leadership positions. For a more personal perspective, seven industry leaders are profiled; they were selected for their demonstrated commitment to fostering change.

Themes and implications from the three studies are interwoven throughout the report.

* More detailed information on the research methodology is provided in the Technical Appendix.



1. The benefits of increasing women in leadership

The benefits of greater gender* diversity, particularly in senior levels, are well documented. Consider the consensus research findings across industries:

Access to talent

With increasing retirements among leaders, the industry faces a critical need for talent. Pools that have been previously under-utilized have become more critical.

Benefits in talent management are important in building a reputation as an 'employer of choice,' in fostering an effective and high-performing organization, and in attracting and retaining highly qualified women and men.

Other sectors are not standing still. They, too, are facing pressure to increase the representation of women in senior leadership ranks. The competition can be stiff.

Compliance with legal, regulatory and reporting requirements

Employers are subject to an array of formal, and informal, expectations to report their progress on gender diversity, particularly at executive and board levels. Among others, these include:

- Public commitments to stakeholders
- Public disclosure in investor research reports such as Bloomberg
- Employment Equity reporting (federally regulated employers)
- 'Comply or explain' reporting for publicly traded companies in several jurisdictions in Canada and abroad

* For simplicity and focus in the report, we refer to "gender" and occasionally "sex" in the binary sense of women and men. However, research participants could self-identify their gender as something other than female or male. The report highlights that increasing the participation of women will also require a more inclusive approach to all gender norms.

- New diversity disclosure requirements under the Canada Business Corporations Act (CBCA) that took effect January 1 2020

A workplace that is characterized by respectful behaviours; inclusive human resource management practices; and freedom from discrimination, harassment or bias reduces the organization's risks of human rights complaints, grievances, and other forms of litigation.

Greater innovation

People with diverse backgrounds bring diverse ideas. This is particularly relevant to the electricity sector at this point in time, as it embraces new business models and emerging technologies.

Enhanced reputation

Emphasizing the benefits of a variety of management and leadership styles can be a compelling and positive message within an industry, such as electricity, challenged by change.

Better financial returns and productivity

There is ample evidence (see below) demonstrating that companies with greater gender diversity in leadership outperform their peers.

Lower risk in corporate initiatives

When effectively used, diverse perspectives improve decision-making. Particularly in leadership roles such as executive teams and boards, there is research evidence of the benefits of greater diversity (see below).

Improved safety

Greater gender balance throughout an organization, including in operating roles, leads to a culture that enhances safety.

A comprehensive review has summarized findings that "the participation of women on company boards and in upper management has been shown to have a **direct positive impact on revenue.**"

A number of the resources listed in the Bibliography address the increasing pool of evidence for these benefits, often across a range of industries and countries. For example, in terms of the financial benefits of women's representation at executive or board levels:

- A comprehensive review has summarized findings that "the participation of women on company boards and in upper management has been shown to have a direct positive impact on revenue."¹
- In 2016, research by the Peterson Institute for International Economics of 22,000 publicly-traded companies in 91 countries showed that companies with at least a third of their executive positions filled by women enjoyed, on average, an extra 6% in profits. Improvements in profits could be attributed to the inclusion of a range of skill sets and perspectives, resulting in better decision making.²
- Leadership roles matter. Companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform on profitability and 27% more likely to have superior value creation. The highest-performing companies on both profitability and diversity had more women in line (i.e., typically revenue-generating) roles than in staff roles on their executive teams.³
- Over an eight-year period, S&P/TSX companies with at least one woman on their board produced an annual 11% compound return – outperforming their peers by more than 3%.⁴

The evidence that greater gender diversity leads to better decision making includes the following:⁵

- In a recent survey of Canadian board directors, over half of respondents (51%) stated that a lack of diverse thinking on senior executive teams and boards of directors is a barrier to innovation in the Canadian economy.
- Evidence shows that greater boardroom diversity lowers the risk of group think and increases the quality of strategic decisions. Organizations with more women on their boards scored higher on corporate governance indicators. Meaningful improvements to gender diversity on boards relate

to enterprise risk mitigation, opportunity identification and cultural benefits. Gender diverse teams result in increased innovation and better decision making in complex situations.

Several resources are directly relevant to the electricity sector, in particular as it undergoes a significant transformation from traditional utilities to renewables, with corresponding new business models and stakeholder relationships. As the organizations undertake complex and strategic decisions unlike those of the past, strong decision-making processes become central to success.

Consider the evidence specific to the electricity sector – in Canada and internationally

An Ernst and Young study confirms that having greater numbers of women on boards translates into higher returns on equity and investment, with the top 20 most diverse utilities outperforming the less diverse ones—a difference that can constitute millions of dollars in profit.⁶

Financial analysis of the top 200 utilities strongly indicates a correlation between higher gender diversity and higher business performance. Cleantech female leadership has proven links to improved business gains through increased profitability, return on equity, and innovation.⁷

With diverse experiences and backgrounds, Cleantech female leaders offer insights that can create significant growth, greater profit margins, trickle-down prosperity, and strengthened communities.⁸

A study led by the Center for Responsible Business at UC-Berkeley found that companies with more women on their board of directors are more likely to *“proactively invest in renewable power generation and related services... and measure and reduce carbon emissions of their projects throughout the value chain, and implement programs with their suppliers to reduce carbon footprint.”*⁹

The complex changes within the industry call for new leadership approaches. *“The leadership styles more frequently used by women are also considered to be the most effective in addressing the global challenges of the future.”*¹⁰

A lack of diversity in renewable energy company leadership is seen by some to extend to a disconnect with communities at the site of renewable energy technologies. These gender imbalances are viewed by some as potentially holding back the expansion potential of the renewable energy sector.¹¹

Catherine Mitchell, professor of energy policy at the University of Exeter, argues that governance processes need diverse input. *“I absolutely do think that the fact that the industry is so dominated by men – and particularly older white men – is slowing down the energy transition.”* said Mitchell.¹²

2. The reality of women’s representation in leadership in the industry

In reviewing existing research, it quickly became clear that a gap exists in data on women’s representation in leadership roles across the electricity sector in Canada.

Finding reliable evidence about the current situation is a challenge: results vary across studies because datasets and methodologies are not directly comparable; the definition of the sector is seldom a direct match to today’s full industry scope; and smaller organizations, in particular, are not well captured in reports of women on boards and in executive positions. Widely reported findings consistently show that the number of women on boards and in executive suites has grown, but slowly.¹³ Words like ‘glacial’ and ‘stagnant’ are used to describe the rate of change.¹⁴ Encouragingly, there have been some indications that large utility companies have a better than average record. The Canadian Board Diversity Council has reported¹⁵ that the 23 companies listed in the FP 500 Gas/Electrical Utilities & Pipelines sector had 30.1% women board members in 2018 – only the second industry sector to have achieved the Council’s 30% benchmark.

What did our new research reveal?

Our research extended and deepened the analysis of companies in the electricity sector. We identified a sample of 61 organizations—including renewables, traditional utilities, and specialized services, ranging in size from small / local to very large utilities, and from all provinces and territories. From this sample, we analyzed their publicly reported data – their board members and their executive teams – to assess the level of gender diversity. We collected information on 224 women leaders. In addition, 20 organizations provided input to our online industry census exploring corporate gender diversity practices in the sector.

Women on Boards: The Numbers

Public information was available for a board of directors in 52 of the 61 organizations.

88% of the boards have at least one woman—which means that **12% of the boards still have no women.**

77% of the boards have 2 or more women—which means that **almost one quarter (23%) of boards have no women, or an ‘only one’ woman member.** Research¹⁸ suggests that members who are ‘only one’ can face challenges in getting their voice heard and may sometimes be seen as a ‘token.’

Of course, it is important to take into account the size of the boards. Having two women on a four-person board is not the same as having two women on a ten-person board.

Figure 1 shows the percentages of boards that have varying levels of gender diversity.

- The largest percentage (63%) of the boards have from 25% to 49% of their seats held by women.
- A very few boards (3 of the 52, or 6%) had half or more of their seats held by women.
- Overall, 30% of board seats (145 of 484) are held by women. Within individual boards, 58% of the boards have met or exceeded the 30% ‘critical mass’ benchmark.

Research suggests that members who are ‘only one’ can face challenges in getting their voice heard and may sometimes be seen as a ‘token.’

Gender Diversity on Boards in the Sector

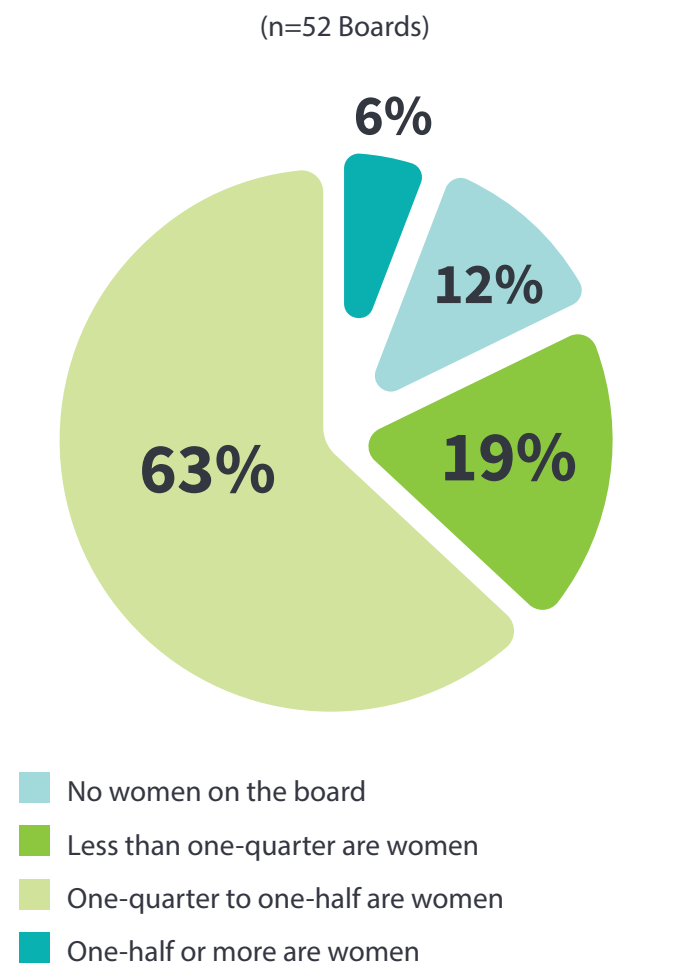


Figure 1: Distribution of women's representation on boards



Women on Executive Teams: The Numbers

Public information was available for the executive teams in 53 of the 61 organizations. We found that the sector's track record in executive ranks is not quite as positive as at the board level. For example, one-quarter of the companies we researched have no women publicly listed on their executive teams. Almost half (46%) of the companies have no women listed in C-suite positions.

- Overall, 26% (90 of 345) of the senior executives named on company information sources are women.

- Figure 2 shows the levels of gender diversity in the 53 executive teams. While it might seem encouraging that the executive teams of 15% of the companies are comprised of half or more women, these organizations are not typical of the industry overall. Four of the eight organizations report very small executive teams, with 1 or 2 women out of 2 or 3 named executives.

The most common executive roles held by women are in corporate functions (HR, IT, etc.) and in legal roles – together these categories account for more than half of the women executives in the study.

Gender Diversity in Executive Teams in the Sector

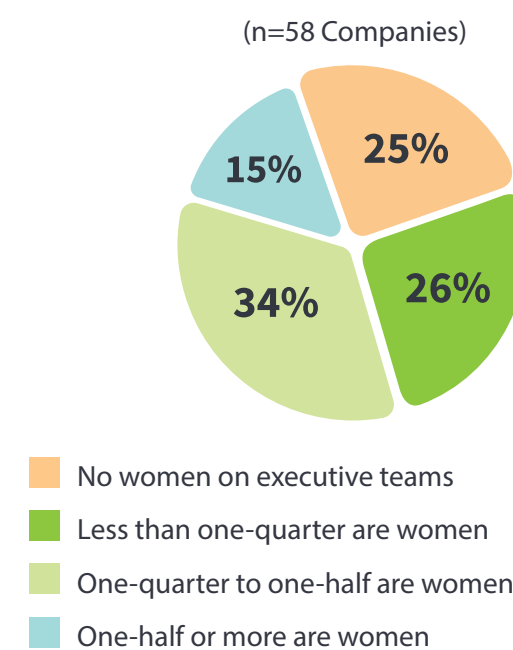


Figure 2: Distribution of women's representation on executive teams

Executive Roles held by Women

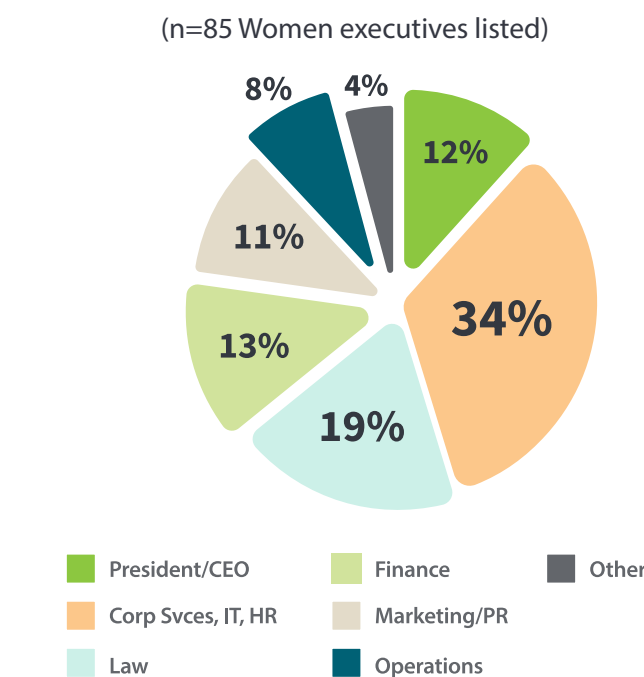


Figure 3: Distribution of executive roles held by women within the sector

Roles in corporate functions rarely lead to CEO positions. As a result, a large gender-related pay gap has been found among Canadian executives. Referring to this as a ‘double pane glass ceiling,’ a 2019 study¹⁶ reported that women top executives make \$0.68 for every dollar that their male col-

leagues earn, with most of the difference being in bonus pay. Industry sector makes a difference. The research found that sectors (including energy and utilities) that employ a relatively large number of female top executives also have among the largest pay gaps.

A profile of the women in board and executive roles – beyond the numbers

A unique feature of this research is its exploration of the characteristics of the women in board and executive leadership roles in the industry. We drew a sample of 223 women from the boards and executive teams of the 61 companies in our sample. Accessing publicly available information,¹⁷ we were

able to construct a profile* of the diverse backgrounds and qualifications they bring to the table. It is clear that these are competent, qualified women. Almost all have a university degree and/or a professional designation. The most common fields of study are Commerce, STEM fields, and Law.

Characteristics of the Women on Boards and Executive Teams

(n=223)

Age	Over one-third (36%) are aged 55+ – they are ‘boomers’ or older
Ethnicity	93% are Caucasian 4% are members of a visible minority 3% are of Indigenous background
Educational Level	3% have a college diploma 52% have a Bachelor’s degree 45% have a Masters or Doctorate degree
Field of Study	26% have a Bachelor’s degree in Commerce 24% have a degree in a Science or Engineering field 22% have an MBA 21% have a degree in Law
Professional Certifications	23% have a corporate director’s designation 16% have an accounting designation 6% have other professional designations

Table 1: Profile of women leaders within the sector

The board diversity policies that we reviewed consistently emphasized the overall requirement for filling vacancies based on merit and qualifications. The message that gender diversity does not imply a trade-off of merit vs. representation is gradually resonating. As we report next, it is still a concern expressed by male employees, so there remains work to be done.

* Note that percentages are based on those for whom the relevant information was available. Sample sizes range from 190 to 202.



3. The drivers of change

With the challenges facing our industry, organizations will need to gain the full benefits of greater diversity in their leadership levels.

To achieve that goal, employers and stakeholders must refocus their attention on attracting, retaining and developing talented women at all levels. In this section we look at multiple strategies for greater gender inclusion – at the board, executive and day-to-day working level. Taken together, they can make the difference. The first-person interviews give a ‘deep dive’ into the personal experiences of seven men who are recognized industry change agents. Each of the seven male leaders described the personal experiences that shaped their understanding of gender issues.

Interviewee 1 Being a Champion: In his own words

“I’m seeing more and more interest in gender diversity in our sector. Society’s influence pushed us at first, but now generational change is having an impact, and technology can be an equalizer. It is time for us take advantage of the technological advances in our sector to look for ways to lead.”

Why It’s Personal for Me

I started my career in a job that took me often to energy industry events, where I would regularly meet the same people. Then I left the sector for several years. When I returned, I was struck by the fact that I was still seeing the same, predominantly male, faces at events. Over the course of my career, I have had the privilege of reporting to two highly qualified and extremely well-respected female leaders. This gave me a wider perspective on what leadership could look like. My wife is a capable professional and we have young daughters. I think a lot about my children’s future and what small things I can do to help improve their experiences of the world—both personal and professional.

How It Takes Leadership

As a senior leader, it can be harder for me to meet staff as much as I would like, due to a busy schedule. However, I see it as an imperative and a responsibility to actively listen to staff at all levels of the organization, and be willing to talk to everyone.

Providing informal mentorship—through simply sitting down with an employee and talking about their aspirations—can be extremely helpful. This little bit of time benefits everyone involved—it helps the employee feel more included, and provides the leader with invaluable insights into the experiences and needs of different generations and other groups in the workplace.

To encourage novel ideas, people need to feel safe about speaking up—especially if their perspective differs from the majority in the room. When chairing a meeting, encourage open discussion, and give everyone an opportunity to speak. Even if you feel someone is reticent, in a supportive way help them have their voice be heard.

If someone dominates the meeting, take them aside afterwards to provide specific actionable feedback. If they're a leader, make them aware of the benefits of encouraging those who report to them to speak up too.

Leaders may say they're interested but they may not have the appropriate tools in order to deliver. Good training can help build their awareness, knowledge and competencies to fill this gap.



Why It Takes Both Awareness and Action

I'm a firm believer in education. People are generally well-intentioned, but we don't realize the influence our unconscious biases have on us. Biases lead us to make faulty assumptions, and then we make decisions that don't fully mirror what our views are.

Within our company, we've had a lot of initiatives to build awareness of gender diversity, and communicate broadly to the organization its importance to who we are and what we do. We've hosted webinars, lunch 'n learns, networking and speed mentoring events, and took part in the Bring your Daughter to Work initiative. We partner with industry groups to support women in STEM. I'm the chair of our committee and I'm proud of the variety of events and initiatives we've organized. Our work is fully, and actively, supported by the CEO and board.

Education and other individual Diversity & Inclusion initiatives are important, but they're just one piece. Your efforts have to be integrated and intentional, and be tied to the strategies the organization wants to take.

Our organization has signed the EHRC Leadership Accord on Gender Diversity. It formalizes a public commitment to promote the values of diversity, equality and inclusion through all our practices, from recruitment to procurement. Taking part sends a strong message, internally and externally, about how important gender diversity is to our work. It helps us sustain momentum.

Improving, and being able to benefit from, gender diversity cannot be achieved in a piecemeal way. It takes time—be prepared to make structural adjustments for real change.

Perhaps at one point there was an optimistic view that a single program or initiative would be enough—a mentoring initiative, a gender bias training course, or a women's leadership development program.

We believe that there is increasing recognition that stand-alone programs and initiatives are not sufficient. A comprehensive commitment, like The Accord,¹⁹ emphasizes that each organization will need to adopt multiple strategies.

The good news, however, is that it is becoming clearer that multiple strategies will bring synergy—the overall impact being much more than the sum of the individual initiatives. For example, we report elsewhere that recent research shows a reciprocal relationship between CEO experience and board appointments for women—success in either will lead to success in the other.²⁰ Similarly, mentoring and more importantly sponsorship of women²¹ creates more opportunities to demonstrate women's potential, thus building support for more gender balance in senior roles. Women who can be role models in male-dominated occupations will encourage younger women to enter new fields, creating a larger talent pool and shifting the number balance.

Most interestingly, recent thinking is more inclusive of men, too. There is a realization that culture change

will be more sustainable when men take parental leave,²² when they feel it is okay to show vulnerability,²³ and when they take ownership for helping to create inclusive workplaces. Societal norms create expectations for both men and women. Any significant change in gender inclusion within traditionally male industries implies a fundamental shift toward a more balanced and modernized view of gender roles. Particularly in safety-sensitive industries, there is recent research highlighting the impact of hyper-masculinity. Doing "masculine" differently brings many benefits at all levels of the organization, from technical operations to senior leadership.²⁴

The Leadership Accord on Gender Diversity (The Accord) developed by Electricity Human Resources Canada, is a public commitment by Canadian employers, educators, unions and governments to promote gender diversity within their organizations. Different types of commitments based on the type of organization focus on the united action required to ensure the support and advancement of women in the workforce.

If parental leave is acceptable for women, it has to be acceptable for men, too. If more 'feminine' leadership styles are to be appreciated within the workplace, then it has to be acceptable for men, too, to show vulnerability, to be more collaborative, to be more open to alternative perspectives, and more focused on people management. This in turn would lead not only to more gender balance, but to greater opportunities for skilled male leaders and more effective organizations, too.²⁵

Board practices that make a difference

A strong consensus²⁶ has developed regarding the practices that foster greater gender diversity at the board level. Simultaneously, the public, investors, and other stakeholders are increasing their scrutiny of the gender composition of boards. As a result, more and more organizations are adopting approaches such as:

Board Practice: A written policy related to diversity and/or gender diversity, more specifically

Industry Examples: Fortis has adopted a Board and Executive Diversity policy. It outlines a target, four commitments to practices, and a clear statement of annual reporting.²⁷ The company has made the policy available on its website.

Board Practice: Targets for gender diversity

Industry Examples: Several organizations in the sector have adopted formal targets for gender diversity on the board, including Fortis (33%), Capital Power (30%) and Emera (25%, a target established over 25 years ago, in 1994).

Board Practice: A strategic approach to recruitment

Industry Examples: Capital Power specifies in its Board Diversity Policy that the slate of candidates in every search for new Directors must include at least 50% women.²⁸

Board Practice: Clear and intentional leadership

Industry Examples: The Leadership Accord on Gender Diversity is a mechanism for sharpening an organization's focus on women's representation at all levels, including within the board. It has attracted a wide array of signatories and advocates—employers, industry associations, educational institutions, advocacy and research groups, unions, governments, and others. This type of public commitment within a broad industry initiative strengthens an organization's resolve for taking action. Since signing The Accord, Burlington Hydro has surpassed gender parity to achieve a majority of women on their board—putting it in the top 5.5% of companies in Canada for representation of women directors.

“A discussion on quotas is likely a conversation we'll have at our next D&I workgroup meeting, and it may eventually be proposed to the executive team. For me it should be a broader discussion than women, and include, for example, Indigenous representation. I try to get my head around how it works—I'm open to the conversation, and am trying to think outside the box to get to that place.”

— Senior industry leader (male)

Board Practice: Public disclosure and reporting

Industry Examples: Osler's fifth annual report on disclosure practices of publicly traded companies highlights two examples from the electricity sector.

Hydro One was recognized for its disclosure that focuses on a strategic perspective resulting from a company-wide diversity and inclusion effectiveness review.²⁹

TransAlta was commended for its 'thoughtful and more fulsome' explanation of why it has not adopted a target for women.³⁰ After a thorough review, the board concluded that its current good practices, its stated commitment, and its track record of having at least 30% women makes additional targets unnecessary.

“I continue to encourage conversations around the disclosure of D&I stats in my organization. I am encouraged at how as a country we are progressing—on January 1, 2020, new diversity disclosure requirements under the Canada Business Corporations Act (CBCA) took effect.”

— Senior industry leader (male)

Talent management practices that make a difference

We asked company representatives about the women in the talent pool who could be considered eventual successors to leadership positions. They were split in their assessment of how well the current qualifications (skills, experience and educational backgrounds) meet their organization's upcoming needs (within 5 years) at the leadership level. One-third responded that there is a good match, one-third said there are 'some gaps,' and one-third didn't know. No one suggested that there are 'large gaps.' The most common gap is 'experience.' We also asked which types of roles are considered to give the most critical experience for advancement to leadership positions in their organization. The most critical roles are Operations and Engineering /Science, as shown in Figure 4.

Operations and STEM experience are most important for advancing to leadership

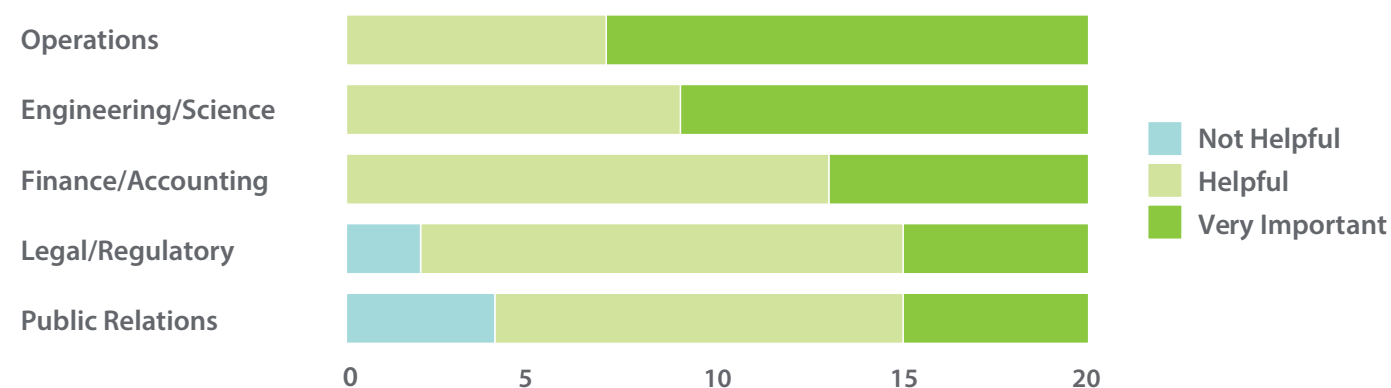


Figure 4: Important roles for advancement into leadership

As we reported in Figure 4, only 9% of the executive women we profiled are working in Operations roles. Throughout the industry, women are under-represented in the STEM fields that are natural stepping stones to management and leadership positions with operational and P&L responsibilities. A major shift is needed at early career stages—unless we start recruiting more women into these feeder STEM positions, the roles most valued for leadership in companies will continue to go to men.

Interviewee 2 Being a Champion: In his own words

"I see two impacts from the unprecedented numbers of senior leader retirements. (1) We need to turn our mind to the non-traditional labour pools that have not really been looked at in a great way so far—such as women, new Canadians and Indigenous peoples. (2) I see that increasingly progressive leaders are entering the landscape. There is a clear upswing in conferences and special initiatives about including more women in the sector. We now have so many invaluable opportunities for sharing and learning among gender champions."

Why It's Personal for Me

I was in middle school when the École Polytechnique massacre happened in Montreal in 1991. As an impressionable grade seven student, it was a harsh awakening to the concept of gender. Our teacher, who was ahead of her time, helped us navigate it. We had conversations about bias, and why a group of young women engineers could have been targeted. This event shaped me.

Over time, I got involved in the White Ribbon campaign. I have convinced executives in my company to wear high heels and walk down Toronto's Bay Street during the annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event. This experience has sparked an amazing depth and breadth of gender conversations among leaders. Hearing those conversations further drives me to support women and encourage their fuller participation in the workplace.

What I Suggest to Other Leaders

I have three pieces of advice:

1. Put gender diversity on the leadership agenda as an imperative.
2. Start somewhere and do something tangible.
3. If you don't know where to start, call someone in your network. Many people will open their door to you—we're lucky to be in an industry open to sharing what they've done.

How We're Shifting the Day-to-Day Experience

We cannot just expect the workplace to be very open and welcoming. I must admit, from my comfortable downtown office, I did not pay as much attention as I should have to how important that is. I had to hear some hard stories of isolation to be able to put myself in the shoes of newcomers to our workplace.

Most large utilities have a code of ethics that outlines respectful behaviours, but does everyone read that? In our organization, we're working to help our people bring our values to life. We're rolling out a new initiative—and the managers of crews will be the on-the-ground drivers of it. They'll have a quick reference guide that they'll use to set expectations, such as for calling out concerning behaviours in safety meetings. There will be lots of ongoing communications, and customized bystander and supervisory training. We'll be partnering more with our unions to resolve issues. We want to make it the norm to "see something, say something."

As leaders, our role will be to communicate and show visible support for the value of a positive workplace. HR has equipped us with "five-minute discussion" guides with strong messaging to generate momentum.

Many leaders are vocal about creating opportunities for talented women to start a fulfilling career in non-traditional jobs in our sector. As a result, organizations are making great strides in getting the ball rolling through bias-aware recruitment. But what happens when the new female linesperson shows up to work and is the "only one" on the crew? What supports are we providing to ensure she doesn't feel isolated? The fact that women are regularly self-selecting out is telling. We were hearing the same sentiment from many women: "I got parachuted in and then everyone bounced—they were there when I was recruited but then the support went away." We listened, and as a result we're putting more careful thought into our buddy system. Instead of simply pairing new female hires with an available co-worker, we're pairing them up with another woman. In some cases, the best match may result in a female engineer mentoring and guiding a woman new to the trades. They share stories, challenges, and strategies for handling common workplace challenges. We realize that we need to continue efforts by sponsoring women, so they remain, and we get good stories told about integration and support in our sector.

Within our Experiences & Perspectives online survey sample (n=101), we similarly found that women were over-represented (compared to men) in corporate services roles such as HR, training, administration and finance. Over one-third (36%) of the women respondents were in these roles, compared to only 5% of the men. The rest were evenly divided between Operations / Technical roles (32% of the women; 48% of the men) and unspecified 'management' roles (32% and 48%)*.

We asked both men and women about their experiences with ten practices for supporting employees

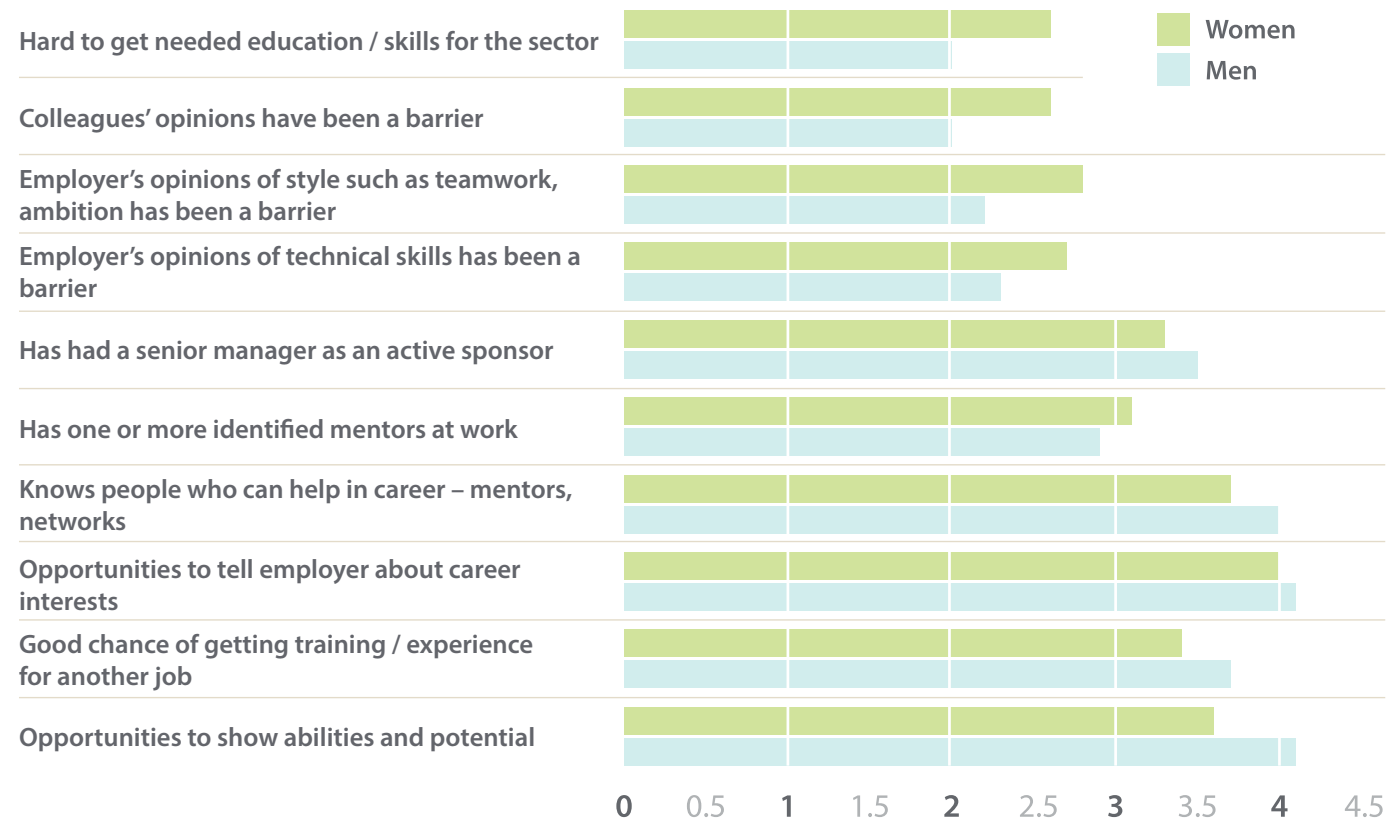
in their career development, such as having access to training, having mentors, or facing barriers because of perceived gaps in technical skills (see Figure 5). In general, across the ten dimensions, the men were more positive in their assessment, with the one exception that women were slightly more likely to agree that they have a mentor (difference not statistically significant). Women gave their highest ratings to 'having the opportunity to tell my employer about my career interests' which suggests they have equal access to the common HR practice of having formal development discussions.

* See the sample descriptions in the Technical Appendix.

Women often have a different managerial style than men do, and men are often not used to dealing with this difference. This can cause significant conflict between men and women. There are solutions to these conflicts, but they require patience and communications to get there.

— Senior industry leader (male)

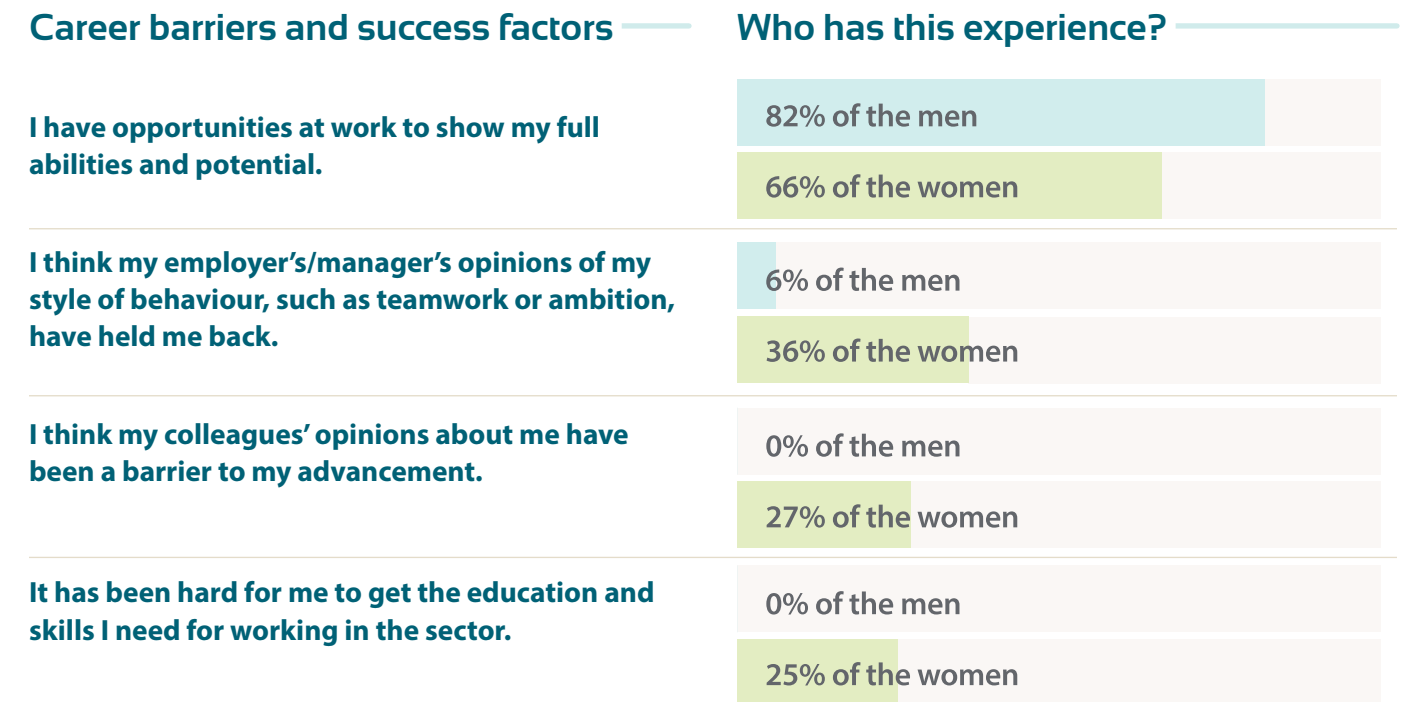
Women are more likely to report they have experienced barriers, and less likely to report success factors



Mean Scores. Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

Figure 5: Differences between men and women reporting their own experience of perceived barriers and success factors

The biggest differences were in the following four questions, where women's perspectives are significantly more negative than those of men:



Note: Reported percentages reflect the % who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement

Table 2: Differences in reported experiences of men and women

Employee perceptions of these career factors matter. The respondents who are most positive about their career supports and least negative about having experienced barriers are:

- More satisfied with their jobs so far
- More likely to recommend working in the sector
- Less likely to be planning to leave the sector



Best practices for women's career advancement have been well documented, including mentoring, targeted development, formalized promotion / development processes, gender-inclusive job descriptions, bias-aware promotion practices, and well supported work-life policies. However, employers find they have to confront some challenges when putting them in place. Some of the considerations that may be particularly timely and relevant to the electricity sector include:

Numerous studies point to the challenges faced by women and visible minorities working in a predominantly male and white company. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of mentors and sponsors of the same racial and gender make-up who can provide support and help navigate the rungs of the career ladder. For example, a recent survey by the Society of Women Engineers found that 61% of women and 68% of engineers of colour (both male and female) reported they must prove themselves repeatedly to gain the same levels of respect and recognition as their colleagues, compared to only 35% of white men reporting the same.³¹

Recent studies have confirmed that women are less likely to get direct and practical feedback. Informal mentoring processes fall prey to the unconscious preference of mentoring people "like me," creating challenges for younger women when senior women leaders are few and far between.

The "Me too" movement has had an undeniable impact. It has provided the momentum for women to speak out about unacceptable behaviour. However, it has also been widely reported³² that some male leaders are increasingly hesitant to create individual professional relationships with up-and-coming women. In a male-dominated industry, this would risk reducing women's access to experienced mentors and powerful sponsors.

At the top of the career ladder, opportunities for **career-relevant advice, feedback and coaching are increasingly outsourced to mentors or coaches.** Women at this stage receive less directly career-related advice from their manager than men by a ratio of 4:1.³³

Proactive outreach to talented women, with supportive mentoring and advocacy or sponsorship helps to address this challenge highlighted in a 2017 Ernst & Young study within the industry. "Two common career-limiting tendencies mentioned by female [Power & Utilities] executives...are **"waiting to be noticed"** and **"underestimating their capabilities."**³⁴

It can be particularly difficult to increase the numbers of women at the top of the career ladder if the numbers at the lower rungs—particularly in STEM careers—are small.

Finally, some recent research published in the Harvard Business Review in 2019 uncovered **a new link between board appointments and CEO experience.** There has been a longstanding concern that boards tend to seek out current or former CEOs when filling board vacancies, creating an unintended systemic barrier to women's entry into the boardroom. However, it also appears that gaining board experience can be an effective strategy for accessing CEO positions, creating a possible new path to the executive suite.³⁵

Interviewee 3 Being a Champion: In his own words

"It's invaluable to carve out some headspace to reflect on why you do what you do in terms of inclusion, how to respond rather than react, how to be mindful. By taking part in this EHRC project, I have gained some additional personal insights for my own learning and for when I mentor others. I'm hoping that by continuing to do my part, it will encourage others to do theirs."

Why It's Personal for Me

Equity and meritocracy are my "guiding stars." My passion stems from growing up in a society marked by a troubled history between groups. Listening to family, friends and personally experiencing discrimination gave me a perspective on what it's like to be treated differently based on prejudice and bigotry.

When I first came temporarily to Canada, I was amazed and enamored at how different people from all over the world could come together and work in harmony here, and I gravitated towards it. This was one of the many factors in my decision to immigrate. I felt that the Canadian values were my own.

Now I have a young daughter and son, and I want to ensure they grow up in an environment where they can both reach their full potential, based on equity and a meritocracy.

Throughout my career, I've continually sought for ways to contribute and promote equity in all aspects. Diversity & Inclusion and Women in Leadership were a natural fit—and I find myself at a level now where I can influence and contribute to it.

How We Can Support Womens' Careers

A few years ago, a study about gender equity in my profession found that men are more likely to be the lead executive despite equal representation of women and men in the profession. In my professional association, I am active in arranging program sessions on emerging topics for our members, so I had an opportunity to contribute to addressing that issue.

We organized a Women in Leadership session, including a panel of experienced female leaders who shared personal experiences and strategies to encourage everyone to advocate for themselves through personal branding. This session captivated the audience and resonated with everyone (women and men). A male participant opened up and talked about his experience of navigating the career aspects of taking paternity leave—this helped men in the room recognize that many of these issues touch both women and men—we're all in this together. For change to happen, men must also be involved.

Myths around diversity and inclusion can make things complicated. Men can feel that their promotion is not celebrated as much as others; and women may feel that people question whether their promotion was solely based on merit. I rely on the guiding principle of meritocracy as a way of trying to dispel such myths about D&I. I hire the best person for the role, while encouraging everyone to participate; and by ensuring an inclusive process, it will bring an outcome of equality for all. When making a hiring decision, be mindful, go through a mental checklist to make sure you're managing your bias, challenge yourself.

How I Try to Build Learning – for Others and Myself

My belief in equity goes back to my roots and aligns with my values. If you hear biased comments, you call them out—and how that is done should be situational, not in an effort to shame, but to have a productive constructive conversation to solicit their point of view and influence, with a view to having a positive outcome.

When such situations happen, I try to influence the individual, not preach. I make it personal and relatable—everyone has experienced some kind of marginalization in their lives. I encourage them to reflect and remember the feelings and emotions they experienced. It’s difficult for any of us to truly put ourselves in others’ shoes, but we must challenge ourselves to do so and acknowledge where we are unable to.

At one event I observed a generation gap in language used about diversity: a middle-aged man inadvertently said the “wrong thing” and used the “incorrect language” for the times. At that time, some individuals took the opportunity to pounce. I find that this just pushes individuals further away from engaging in the topic, and more importantly it hinders progress. We need to be more understanding of where everyone is coming from.

I had a personal learning moment about that, in a comment I received on a 360 feedback. The person said, “While I think it’s great that he’s so open and welcoming, I think he can improve on being accepting of others who are not as open and welcoming as he is.” While I am unapologetic for my progressive views on equity, it will make me mindful to be more situationally aware, as perhaps in this instance I didn’t hit the standard I set for myself. Sometimes, it’s always nice to be reminded that we all are human after all.

Last year, I was asked to attend Pride in Toronto—at first, I thought “I’m not sure if I should as I am not a representative of that community.” However, members of the community encouraged me, saying that participating showed my support to diversity and inclusion. It was a tremendous experience and I will do it again.

I also have had the opportunity to work with some of the most influential women leaders in Canada. I have a number of informal coaches that help guide me in my career and I am proud to say that I have female leaders who are among them, and who are role models to me.

I find that the video “Inclusion starts with I,” remind us of the importance of a positive, inclusive work environment. The video is very powerful and I often recommend it to others—we all need to be mindful and manage our assumptions.

Common differences in perspective:

Leaders assume the problem is nearly solved, despite little progress within their own organizations.³⁶

... And our research has confirmed:

Women in our survey are not at all confident that the senior leaders are aware of the barriers within the organization. (See Figure 6)

Our survey sample showed a clear trend across job levels – leaders are much more optimistic that gender and ethnic backgrounds don’t make a difference. (See Figure 7)

Leadership practices that make a difference

Effective, gender-inclusive policies and practices have almost become the minimum standard for a well-managed organization in today’s industry. For them to have a meaningful impact on outcomes, they must be implemented with awareness, commitment and consistent leadership behaviours to drive change.

Women doubt that the executive team is aware of the barriers

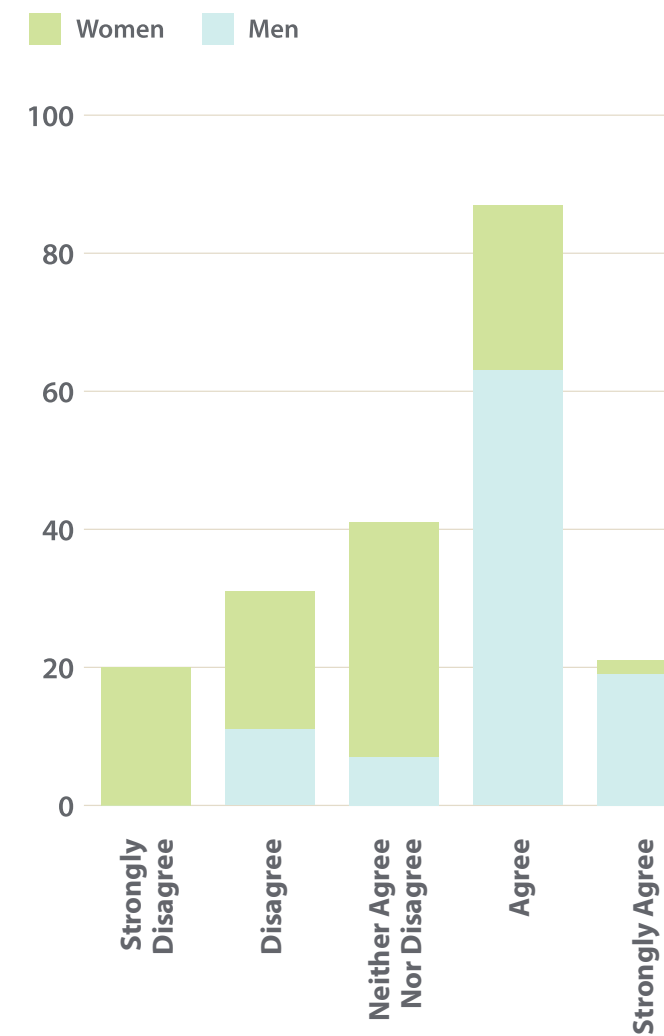


Figure 6: Gender differences in response to “The executive team is conscious of barriers that are more likely to be faced by women”

It starts with awareness and a shared understanding of the situation

Myths, misconceptions and misunderstandings create barriers to organizational leaders’ commitment to gender diversity.

Managers believe the playing field is level; non-managers do not

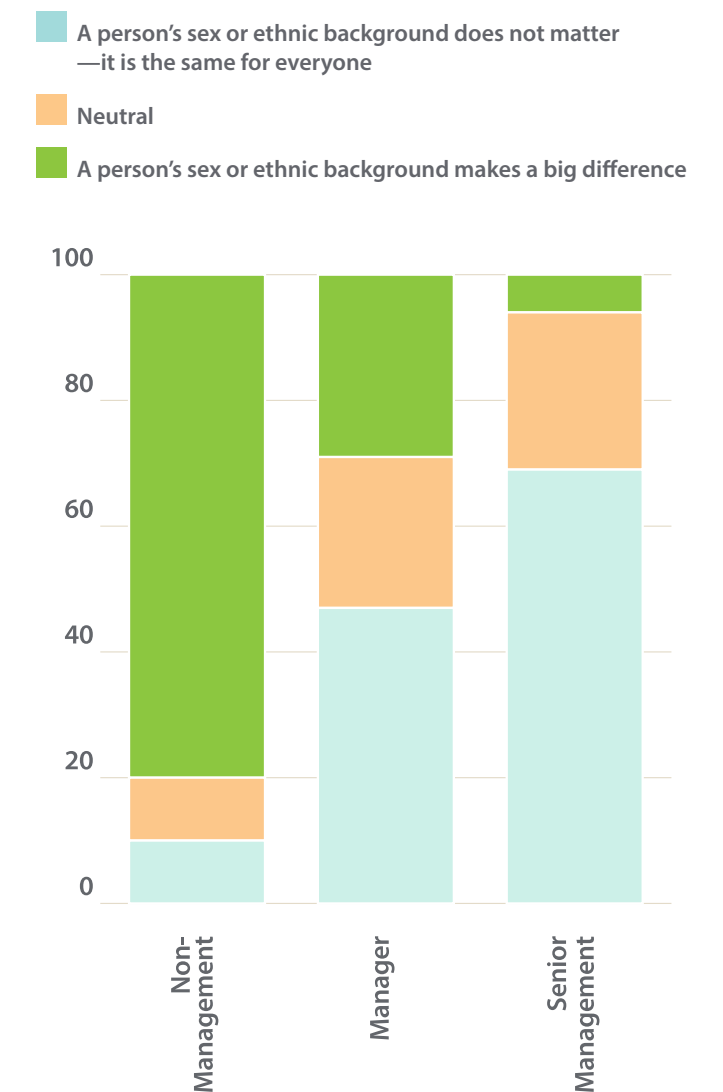


Figure 7: Management level differences in views of diversity impact

Interviewee 4 Being a Champion: In his own words

"If you're sitting in an executive leadership room dominated by males, and you have to step up and charge people to take concrete actions on gender, it takes courage to put yourself out there. But if you look in the rear-view mirror, you'll see that it's been going on for a century and we let it happen. It's undeniable in a male dominated workplace. We now have to look in the mirror and change this—and we will."

Why It's Personal for Me

I've been in the industry for many years and I thought we were ok: I believed everybody treated each other respectfully. I took a workshop four years ago and it was my awakening.

In all honesty I didn't give gender equality a lot of thought before then—I was busy doing my job. When nominated to take part, I thought: "Why me, why did I draw the short straw?" I looked at the agenda and saw two days of "fluff" I would never get back. I went in with no expectation and came out a different person. It gave me the opportunity to look at myself, what I've been doing, and how I think about my biases. Just because you don't see it doesn't mean it's not happening: gender bias is huge. I realized that egregious acts that I thought had stopped in the '80s and '90s are still happening in workplaces, but in forms that I didn't see.

How I Cascade the Awareness

I'm not sure if I'd call myself an advocate or champion now, but my eyes have opened up. After gaining this awareness, I wanted to pass it on to my direct and indirect reports. I started speaking at safety rollouts and at meetings of my direct reports and other groups. I was candid and open, which helped generate conversation. Even if it's not all positive at least people are talking about it. I've found that you have to let everyone speak and can't put a muzzle on anyone—it helps you understand what is going on out there, and establishes a starting place in terms of what we have to do on the journey.

To help get buy-in, I've asked people to stop and think about things they've said, done or witnessed, and consider if they think it would be ok if it was their wife, sister, mother or daughter being treated like that. It helps to personalize it for people. When the issue is closer to you, it hits home and makes it real, which can change your perspective on things.

In our day-to-day operational world, the focus is on doing good business, and on safe and effective execution. In a male dominated workplace, gender, gender inequality or how equality equates to good business is not necessarily top of mind. Someone has to put that in front of your nose. Being open-minded is a critical first step. We have various groups in our organization that help and support us as leaders in advocating for gender equality—Diversity & Inclusion, a group for male champions, and a women in trades group. I am a part of them as best I can be. I try to have an open mind when discussions are taking place, and to take an honest objective look at the organization I lead to gauge how well we're doing in terms of the issues raised.

How We're Making Change in Our Organization

We're starting off by getting people talking about it, e.g. encouraging women in lineperson roles to share their experiences and challenges.

This helps build awareness and understanding of conscious and unconscious biases—and helps teams be stronger. We communicate that including people from all ethnic backgrounds and genders brings greater balance. The first step we took was respect in the workplace education. In safety kickoffs, we started talking about being respectful and stepping up when you see something going on that's wrong. We built on this by cherry picking people that were considered trusted tradespersons in the field by their own crews, to go through a workshop to further elevate their awareness. Now they play a key role among "boots on the ground."

When we recruit, of 4,000 applicants for a trades job, as few as 10 could be women. This is telling: women are not looking at those roles as ones they would like to invest in. We're making a concrete effort to get out to schools and colleges to encourage females to entertain a non-traditional workplace or occupation. To achieve better representation in non-traditional disciplines where it has been totally male dominated, you have to make some accommodations—but a lot of folks need accommodation. One challenge we're faced with is washroom facilities for both males and females in the field. It would be impractical to airlift a fully heated running water washroom to every line site—but we're looking into things we can do.

At the executive level, having more women rise through the ranks to leadership in recent years has definitely given the leadership team a better view. More and more I see women in very responsible non-traditional roles—they are strong leaders, and that in itself is moving the culture.

Both men and women have misconceptions that create barriers to the changes needed to enhance gender diversity. A difference in perspective makes it difficult to reach agreement on actions for change. In our research findings, we have compared the perspectives of men and women on some of the key issues.

Common differences in perspective: —

Men and women don't see the problem the same way.³⁷

... And our research has confirmed: —

Our survey sample showed the divided perspective between the genders—with men much more likely to think that sex or ethnic backgrounds don't make a difference. (See Figure 8)

Common differences in perspective: —

Many men are unaware that it is often more difficult for women to reach top jobs than for men. Additionally, many men feel that gender-diversity measures are sometimes unfair and detrimental to their own career opportunities³⁸.

... And our research has confirmed: —

Almost 1 in every 5 men (18%) in the survey believes that it is easier for women to succeed in their workplace than it is for men. (See Figure 9)

In contrast, 3 of every 4 women (75%) believe that women have a harder time.

Men are more likely to believe the playing field is level

- A person's sex or ethnic background makes a big difference
- Neutral
- A person's sex or ethnic background does not matter — it is the same for everyone

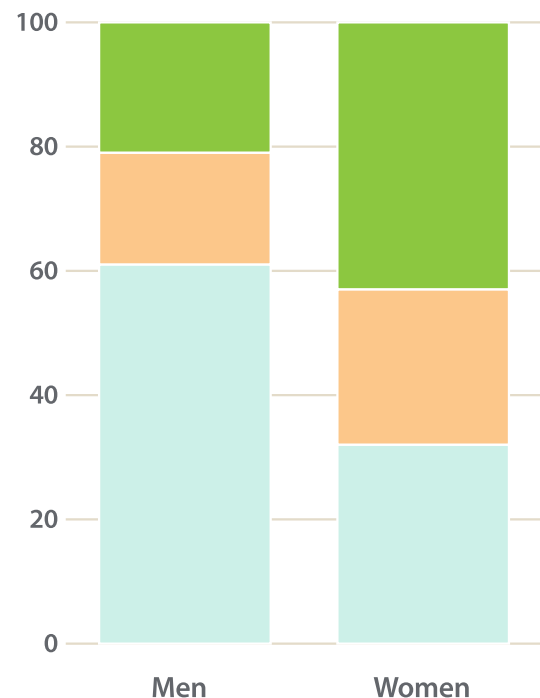


Figure 8: Men and women have different views on the impact of diverse characteristics

It is important to acknowledge that women's workplace experiences often differ from their male colleagues' experience in the same workplace. Among our survey respondents, 1 of every 5 women (20%) reported that they had personally experienced harassment, violence or bullying in their workplace—at least monthly—in the last five years. This was in stark contrast to only 1 man (3% of the men in the sample) who reported having experienced this "about once a month." Although these can be difficult issues to address, progress has to start with a strong foundation of awareness.

Most women believe that women are at a disadvantage. Many men disagree

- It is harder for women to succeed, compared to men
- Neutral
- It is easier for women to succeed, compared to men

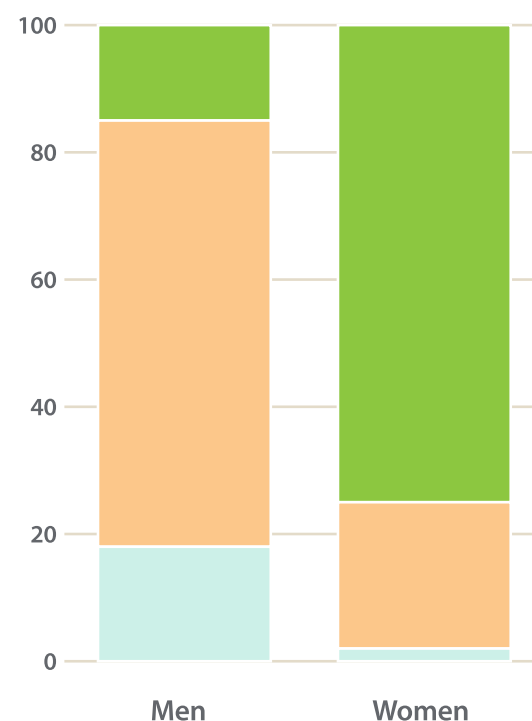


Figure 9: Men and women have different views on gender impact on success

Our social mores have evolved. There are comments and behaviours that used to be common, but now people are less likely to see them as acceptable. Nonetheless, I'm not so naïve to think it doesn't still happen.
- Senior industry leader (male)

Interviewee 5 Being a Champion: In his own words

"Practices such as flexible work arrangements are ideas whose time has come. There is a good coincidence that we have had little bits of success with informal solutions in the past, and now some open-minded people are in our organizations, ready to systematize approaches that are beneficial to everyone."

Why It's Personal for Me

First, I was raised in a family that did not have a lot of gender stereotypes. My mother had a successful career and her experience gave me some perspective on work-family challenges. Now I have children and I live some of those challenges, too.

Second, I had some early career experiences that helped make me aware of some challenges faced by women at work. I have worked mostly with women leaders. One who is extremely effective openly shared with me some of the off-handed disparaging comments that people would make, and the impact these had on her. Those stories opened my eyes.

I probably wouldn't have described myself as a "Champion," but perhaps I am one. I'd certainly like to think that I'm not a barrier.

How Trust Supports Flexibility

A few years ago, our organization did not yet have formal policies about flexible work arrangements. One of my direct reports was a highly competent woman who was starting a family. I knew I wanted to keep her on the team and we both knew that she could contribute fully without being tied to her desk. We worked it out informally. She knew she could trust me to respect the limits – with some exceptions as needed. I knew I could trust her to remain committed, meet and even surpass my expectations, and provide good leadership to her own team.

We had to keep the arrangement 'under the radar' at that time. Now our organization has policies that help those flexible situations to be successful. The policies help to create an environment where it's easier to have that trust. There are mechanisms in place to communicate clearly about the expectations on both sides.

Today there is much more openness to accommodating flexibility for both women and men. Maybe there are still some pockets of resistance but I have seen a remarkable shift in our culture in just the last two or three years. I say that our organization has finally caught up to how she and I were thinking.

How Work-Life Issues Are Just Part of Managing

I believe it's important to be more attentive to our employees' needs to balance their personal and work lives. This matters to both men and women; flexible work policies benefit everyone. However, the challenges of having a family and a career have a disproportionate impact on women, so we get a more important benefit to women's careers when we focus on work-life solutions.

We have a few men in my organization who are taking parental leave soon. I don't see or hear about any negative impact on their long-term potential.

Certainly, it can be a management challenge to work through resourcing when people are off on leave. However, it is not just an issue with families. We also have people who are on sabbatical, educational leaves, illness and so on. Resource re-balancing is just part of managing.

I think we do have to look at whether leaves mean that the person gets less valuable experience and how that might affect careers. Sometimes we promise the person a job when they return, but not necessarily the very same position. I made a point with one of my direct reports to assure her that she would return into the same managerial role and continue her career. That assurance meant a lot to her.

What I Suggest to Other Leaders

I am generally optimistic that we will continue to improve. Attitudes and behaviours change when we get exposure to capable women and people from different backgrounds. I see that the younger demographic coming into our workforce has had that advantage—they have had more exposure to different people and different ways of thinking, and they are more comfortable with that.

I know that people at the working level believe that women do not have the same career opportunities as men. I have never heard explicit comments to discount women candidates in promotion discussions. We do not talk about gender differences. Maybe we should.



We need to move from awareness and shared understanding to commitment

Overall, our research has demonstrated that women still have some doubts about the commitment of the industry's leaders, including within their own organization. One in every seven women in our survey feel that leaders within the electricity sector are "not at all" interested in increasing the numbers of women in leadership. However, almost half of the men feel that the leaders are "very committed." It appears that men and women are hearing very different messages.

The difference is equally stark when we look at perspectives on the employee's own organization. Almost three-quarters (72%) of men believe that a lack of executive commitment does not pose a barrier to women's progress in their workplace. However, only about a third (35%) of women hold that view; almost 40% are convinced that a lack of commitment does limit progress. (See Figure 11)

Similarly, 40% of women are not convinced that 'The senior leaders in our organization support the advancement of women', and either disagree or are neutral. In contrast, only 15% of their male colleagues have the same view; 85% of men believe that the senior leaders do support women's advancement.

Women are less positive in their assessment of industry leaders' commitment

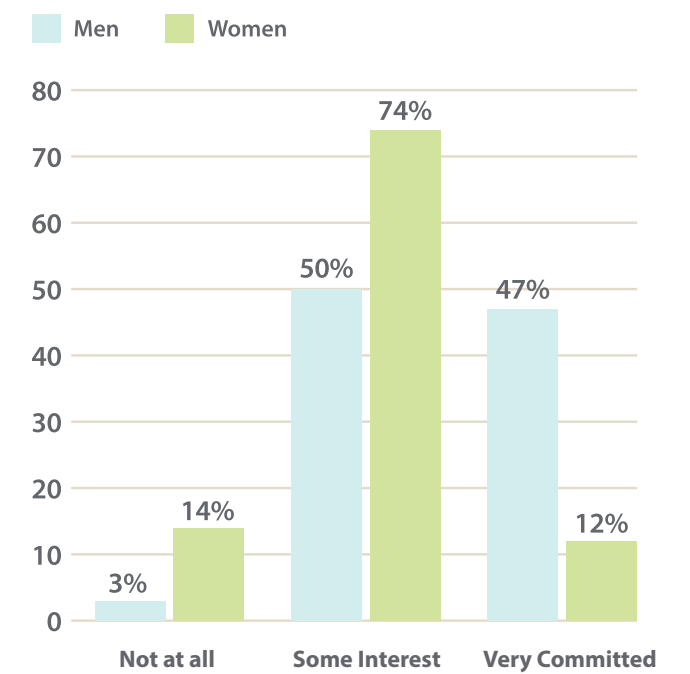


Figure 10: Male and female assessments of industry leaders' interest in increasing the numbers of women in leadership

Men do not believe that lack of executive commitment is limiting women's advancement

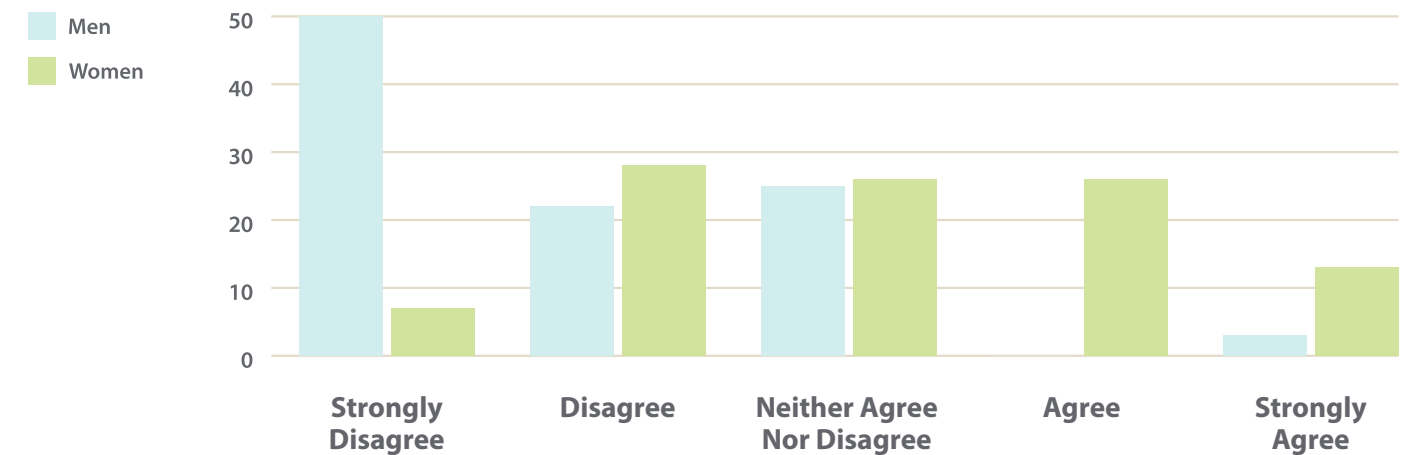


Figure 11: Men and women differ on their executive's commitment and impact

We need to move from commitment to action

Employees in most organizations, both men and women, have heard many messages about the importance of diversity, inclusion and equity, and about the company's commitment to making progress. However, it is clear that they do not always see the evidence of this commitment in their day-to-day work life.

Just over half (51%) of our survey respondents report that "all talk, no action" is a barrier to making progress toward greater gender balance in their organization. Again, there is a gender divide in perspectives—women are significantly more likely to describe this as a barrier, with 68% holding that view compared to 19% of men.

Who	What Action	Percentage of respondents who see this often or always
Organization's leaders / managers	Taking actions to create a workplace that is respectful and welcoming	62%
	Showing they value innovation and new approaches	57%
	Encouraging people to express their own ideas and personalities at work	47%
	Taking actions to have more women working here	33%
Male managers	Promoting the ability to balance work and personal life	32%
	Championing and defending gender initiatives	24%
	Celebrating and encouraging women	22%
	Calling out bias or inappropriate behaviour	17%
	Challenging gender issues in working practices	14%

Table 3: Ratings of inclusion-supportive actions

We provided survey respondents with a list of actions that leaders or male managers might take to demonstrate support for diversity in general, and gender diversity in particular. The respondents were asked to rate how often they see these behaviours in the workplace. Table 3 shows the percentage of survey respondents who said they see their leaders / managers taking these actions "often" or "always."

There is a telling pattern in the responses. The general category of "leaders / managers" receives more positive ratings than the "male managers" category. Actions that create workplaces that are generally welcoming to new ideas are the most frequently seen. Actions that require male managers to be aware of barriers and take action on difficult issues are the least frequently seen.

Overall, one-third of respondents report that 'concerns and resistance' are a barrier that limits their company's ability to progress toward greater gender balance. Male managers are not the only ones who might be hesitant to take action on gender issues: about one-third of respondents also believe that women avoid supporting the initiatives for fear of being "labelled." This was confirmed in comments made by women such as:

- I worried about being labelled if I push too hard.
- I fear backlash within my organization taking on such a role. Would be labelled a "bra burning feminist."
- Fear of being singled out.
- I have felt pressure at the beginning of my career not to speak out for fear of being blacklisted. That is a ridiculous way to live and I need to stand up for my rights and the rights of my daughters.
- It's hard to be a champion when your opinions are not heard or taken seriously. It becomes very disheartening.

"Socially we're moving on and we're seeing things through a different lens. I hope that we'll look back in the near future and think "I can't believe we treated women this way." The dial will move but it takes time—I welcome that day."
 — Senior industry leader (male)



Interviewee 6 Being a Champion: In his own words

“Across the sector now, there’s lots of interest in gender inclusion, but it’s often mainly at the surface - as conversation starters, topics on conference agendas and sector working groups. Every organization needs champions to take it from just an interesting topic to making it part of organizational culture through policies, procedures, and behaviours.”

Why It’s Personal for Me

I’ve had the benefit through both corporate and personal life of being able to look through a range of very different gender lenses.

On the corporate side, I have worked closely for several years with an inspirational female leader. I saw how others treated her differently due to her gender, and realized that it’s not a level playing field for women in the workplace. I learned a lot from seeing her successfully navigate the waters, despite those challenges.

At a personal level, I have a young daughter. My role as a leader has been guided by a goal of ensuring my child doesn’t have to deal with the same challenges I saw my colleague go through. I also have a close friend who is going through the challenges of gender reassignment, and that has further expanded my awareness of the nuances and complexities in the gender domain.

Such firsthand experiences of different individuals and characters that make up my life have really influenced me to champion gender diversity.

How We Have Embedded It in Operations

While lots of companies in the industry have an eye to gender diversity, we have taken concrete actions within a wide-ranging plan for progressive change.

We started about 5 years ago, with steps to develop policies and aspirational objectives, starting with things like gender balance in our board and executive team, and then moving towards actions to affect the culture of the organization.

A key element was a comprehensive workshop to engage men as champions. We invited 25 visible and vocal operational-focused leaders—from VP level to frontline managers—to take part. That group now continues the work by having, and encouraging others to have, open conversations about gender equality in our workplace.

What’s really had an impact is ensuring that it’s not just a HR thing. Some of the greatest champions in the organization are operational leaders, who leverage their influence to talk about respectful and inclusive workplaces.

Personally, as a senior operational leader I have taken on the executive sponsorship role. In my position I can foster discussions throughout the organization and also help to shape policy-level commitments.

How I Help to Navigate Gender Differences in Style in Our Male-Dominated Cultures

Mentorship and coaching are practical tools to address some of the challenges of being a female leader in a heavily male-dominated industry, and to give everyone a fair opportunity.

I’ve often seen gender bias creep in, in how women’s communication styles are perceived. One woman I previously worked with is very outgoing, expressive and an abstract thinker. In the more linear-thinking utilities world, sometimes that is confused with being disorganized. But if a man had the same style, rather than it being discounted as a negative, he would be seen as a strategic thinker. To counter this unconscious bias against her as a very enthusiastic leader, I supported her to see how to adjust to get her message across.

Another difference in style I’ve witnessed with women is sometimes hesitating to stand up for their ideas, and letting others come forward, even when they are right and have the answer. I’ve supported women to build their skills to be more bullish in bringing their solution forward and furthering their goals in a conversation.

I regularly support three or four high-performing women to help them navigate the waters to progress their careers. I believe that men spending time on the “softer” side of leadership can drive culture change—it says that you’re looking for that in the organization, and in future leaders.

What We’ve Learned About Helping Male Leaders to be Champions

Especially for men, gender diversity can be a bit of a daunting experience—some see it as too complicated and are hesitant to wade into the waters.

We’ve made sure it’s a relevant topic for different parts of the organization. We make sure that leaders see the connection between gender diversity and the success of the organization, such as the benefits a team of different thinkers can bring to safety, performance, profitability, etc.

Work-life flexibility is one other challenge that I tackle explicitly. In corporate cultures 20 years ago, your worth was based on the time you spent in the office—if you left at 4 pm you weren’t going to advance your career. The reality is that some people need more flexibility. I have young kids, so I help shape that norm about balancing obligations at work and home. Open conversations with staff are critical about how to work in a culture of flexibility.

Companies can do other simple operational things to support leaders—such as providing guidance and dispelling myths on how to consider gender diversity when hiring and promoting, or how to segment high performing employees in an equitable way.

I encourage male leaders in particular to approach this topic as a long journey of many small steps. Don’t get overwhelmed. Especially if you’re an operational leader, start with an open mind, be prepared for some internal soul searching, and learn tidbits along the way.

4. The importance of champions

A commonly highlighted strategy for driving change in the organization is to encourage senior leaders and managers to be champions of diversity. While it is important to have both men and women leaders committed to diversity, in male-dominated industries, male participation and commitment to gender equality is essential.

To achieve that goal, employers and stakeholders must refocus their attention on attracting, retaining and developing talented women at all levels. In this section we look at multiple strategies for greater gender inclusion—at the board, executive and day-to-day working level. Taken together, they can make the difference.

Interviewee 7 Being a Champion: In his own words

“The industry has evolved in the last 20 years. The traditional utility model is falling away, and along with that the workplace is changing, too. I see more and more women in leadership roles in our organization and across the industry. I hope this means that we’re doing better at creating environments where they can succeed and grow.”

Why It’s Personal for Me

I have a real passion for the leadership aspect of my role and I try to continually improve myself in that regard. We can all learn from current and past experiences, and from leaders we’ve known—the good and the not-so-good. I try to pay attention, observe, and learn.

I’m recognized by others as being an advocate for my staff. This is one of my strengths as a leader. I will bring someone who has a lot of potential to the attention of the executive. Those conversations lead to development opportunities and increased exposure. I love that part of my job—the chance to see my staff grow. I make an effort to be hyper-sensitive to the needs of my staff—I want to create an environment where women and men can learn and develop. It is so rewarding.

How Our Organization Creates a Culture for Everyone’s Success

In our organization, we’ve built an enabling culture—we’re creating a 2020 workplace and leaving behind the antiquated workplace of another era. We know that everyone has different needs. For example, we offer flexible benefits packages and flexible work arrangements. It’s more than flexible policies. By ‘enabling’ I mean that we respect individuals and invest in their development. We have programs where staff members train each other; and leadership development for all current and future leaders.

Our senior leaders are very accessible to our staff. They’re available to talk to any staff member. This shows a commitment to having an enabling culture. I can see the difference that good leadership makes.

The highest performer on my current team is a woman. It just makes sense for me to take every opportunity to facilitate her development. I don’t think I’ve done anything for her that’s unique—just what I would do for any staff member who has the potential to move up – based on her uniqueness.

How Women and Leadership Fit Together

We have women leaders now who have ‘got it all together.’ They have strong technical skills, they’re politically savvy, they’re managing a good work-life balance, and they’re active advocates for their staff. They are tremendous role models. They demonstrate effective leadership for 2020.

I see a big shift in the industry recently. Now, the true personalities of these women are allowed to come out and be rewarded. In the past, some women may have found it difficult to function at a leadership level that was predominantly men. I think they felt they had to adopt a certain style that may have felt unnatural. Now we have a more contemporary view.

I coach staff who have potential, telling them that there is not one model of leadership. It’s not a ‘one size fits all.’ The style has to be a natural extension of their own personalities. This approach will facilitate more meaningful interactions with their staff.

Where I’ve Seen Barriers

I’ve noticed that many women are more hesitant than men to promote their accomplishments. For example, when they draft a write-up for their performance review, it may be a cursory description. I prod them. I say, “tell me a story, talk about the great work you’ve done.” The more they give to me, the better I can advocate for them.

This issue of self-promotion may also have a cultural aspect. Some cultures are not inclined that way. When you have women with those cultural backgrounds, you can see the impact even more strongly. I don’t know if other leaders have seen that, too. We have never discussed it. We believe that our performance review process is merit-based but I admit there is always a degree of subjectivity.

What I Suggest to Other Leaders

If we want more women in leadership, we need to expand the pool of talent that we can draw from at entry levels. We've come a long way, but still our recruiting sessions and applications mostly reflect young men. I think it's important to understand the unique needs of women—and respect and leverage those differences. That will be so much better than imposing a 'one size fits all' approach.

Of course, every individual has unique needs that must be understood. However, some things are specific to women—this is not a negative; they're just unique. Some examples are the less active self-promotion; work-life balance needs that might be different; and the impact of taking maternity leaves in their early career years. We need to understand all of that and take it into consideration.

Our research explored the characteristics and motivations of gender champions in the electricity and renewables sector. Each of the interviewees described the personal experiences that shaped their understanding of gender issues and translated awareness into behaviours that make a difference. Each has his own particular emphasis, yet there were many commonalities. Several provided clear examples of actions such as educating and influencing others about unconscious bias, ensuring that workplaces are welcoming and safe environments for women, advancing women's careers as a method of ensuring equity and meritocracy, supporting work-life balance and flexible work arrangements, and navigating style differences between women and men.

The survey with over 100 respondents gives additional perspective. We asked survey respondents if they considered themselves a 'gender champion,' with three choices: (1) Yes, absolutely; (2) I'm working on it; and (3) I do not see myself as a Champion. In our survey sample, 82 people responded to the question of whether

or not they consider themselves a gender champion in their organization or in the industry. Exactly half (50%) reported "Yes, absolutely"; 30% replied "I'm working on it" and 20% chose "I do not see myself as a champion." There was not a significant difference in the responses from women and men.

We also posed a series of behavioural questions drawn from research in various sources³⁹ about being 'gender champions.' Table 4 shows that people give the most positive rating (2.7 out of 3.0) to being comfortable with addressing their own unconscious bias. They are least likely to say that they are held to account for meeting gender diversity objectives (1.5 on the 1 to 3 scale).

We also examined which behaviours were most likely to differentiate those who said they were Champions from those who said they were working on it, or were not Champions. Those behaviours are marked with an asterisk * in Table 4.

Behaviours of Gender Champions

	Mean ratings from survey sample	Predicts Self-Rating as a Champion
Yes, this is very true of me	3.0	
I am very comfortable with addressing my own unconscious biases about men and women and gender roles in our sector	2.7	*
I am clear with people about standards of acceptable and desired behaviours, and the consequences when standards are not met	2.6	
I support and role model being able to balance work and personal life	2.6	
I encourage transparency about the selection criteria for senior roles	2.4	
I have advocated for opportunities to be given to one or more specific women in our organization	2.4	*
I am very knowledgeable about the barriers faced by women within the industry and in our organization	2.3	*
I have mentored talented women in our organization or in the industry	2.3	
I readily notice the subtle systemic biases in our practices or in day-to-day interactions at work	2.3	*
I am confident that the people around me would 'call me out' on my own behaviour and biases	2.3	
I can give specific examples of how a good balance of women and men benefits our organization	2.2	*
I have advocated for opportunities to be given to one or more specific men in our organization	2.2	
I can give specific examples of how my colleagues or I also benefit from initiatives that are designed to encourage women's involvement in the industry	2.0	
Yes, somewhat	2.0	
I spend time with senior and emerging women leaders to understand their perspectives	1.9	*
I am actively involved in initiatives that will attract young women into careers in our sector	1.8	*
I often talk about what we are learning about gender equity, including our initiatives, actions and outcomes	1.8	*
Compared to other business priorities, my group has a robust process for monitoring our progress on gender inclusion	1.6	
I am held to account for gender inclusion objectives	1.5	*
No, not really	1.0	

Table 4: Self-ratings on gender champion behaviours

Those who identify themselves as Champions are more likely than others to say they are active in over half of the behaviours we listed. They pay attention and build their awareness of gender issues. They talk specifically about the business benefits of a better gender balance. They are

actively involved in encouraging women to pursue careers in the industry.

In addition to the ratings, 55 of the respondents provided written comments. Analyzing these for common themes revealed the following:

Yes, absolutely I see myself as a gender champion:

What we heard from women:

- Women who see themselves as champions are very actively involved.
- They list many actions they have taken.
- Often they were “the first” in their job.

What we heard from men:

- Men who see themselves as champions say they will speak up when they see or hear something that is unfair.
- They feel they are gender champions because they treat people equally.

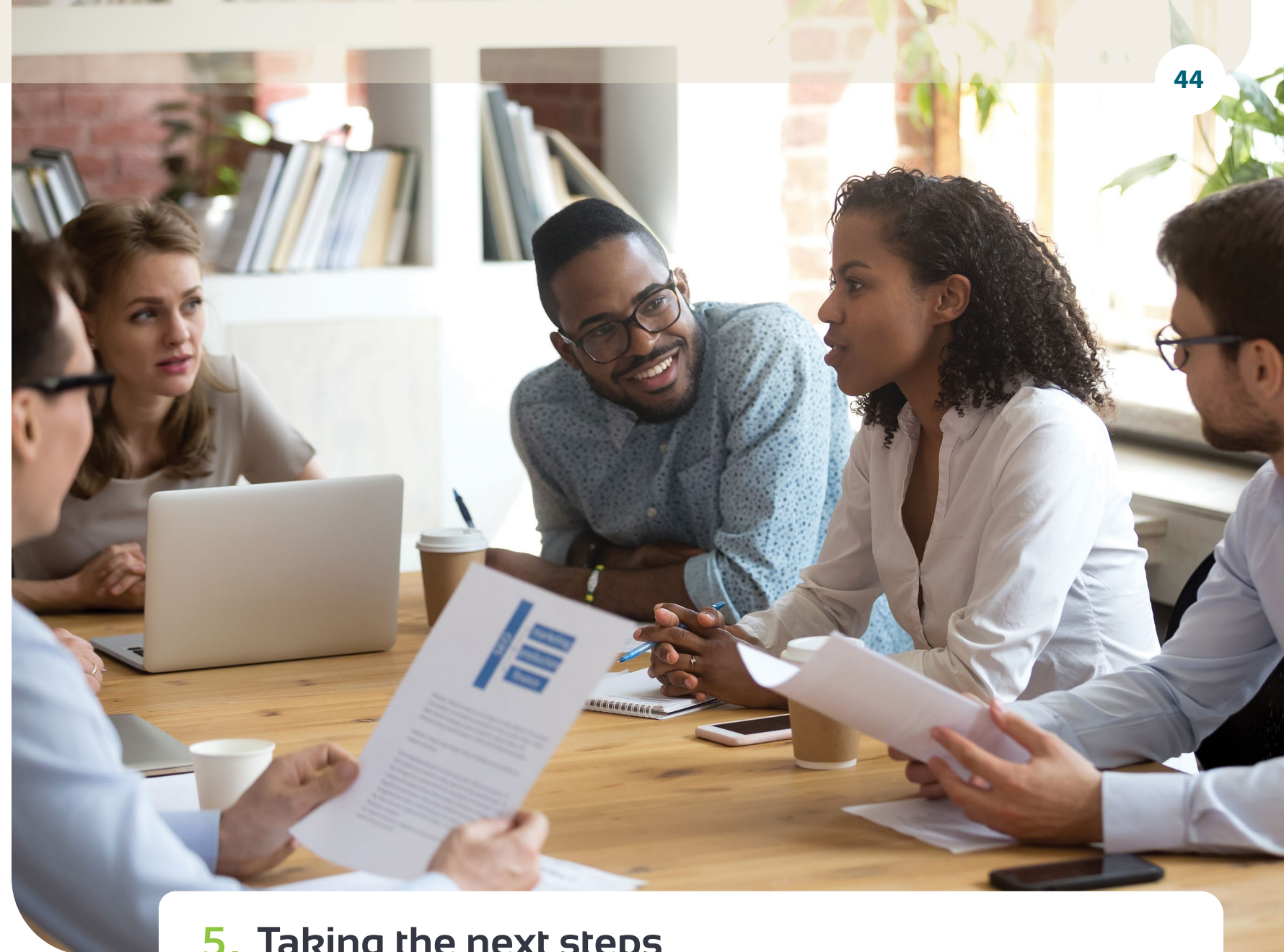
I’m not a gender champion or I’m working on it:

What we heard from women:

- Some women are not more involved as champions because:
 - They don’t think about gender – they just want to do their job and be treated fairly.
 - There are no initiatives to take part in.
 - They fear backlash; they don’t want to make waves.
 - They will participate but hesitate to take a more active role.

What we heard from men:

- Some men are not more involved as champions because:
 - They don’t see a gender bias in their organization.
 - They don’t see they have the scope to make change.
 - Hiring the most qualified person is more important.



5. Taking the next steps

There are plenty of good resources for programs and initiatives that can help to create a more inclusive workplace—one that is effective for men and for women, in all their diversity.

Best practices are important and our Bibliography can be a good starting point. Take action to increase women’s participation in the boardroom, around the executive table, and in providing leadership throughout the organization.

The revelations and implications from our research are focused on creating the context for those best practices to take hold and bring sustainable change. We make the following recommendations for individuals and organizations who want to be a part of that transition.

Communicate and educate. Measure.

Talk frankly about the progress on improving gender equity—what has been done and what challenges still remain.

- **The purpose:** Open discussion about the current status increases awareness and buy-in for what changes may need to take place. Many employees question their leaders' understanding of the barriers and therefore doubt the organization's commitment; regular communication increases transparency. Candid conversations make the challenges 'real' and also give opportunities to highlight progress.
- **The approaches:** Work group meetings and safety briefings are good occasions to connect gender equity to the day-to-day: provide operations supervisors and managers with user-friendly reference tools. Be prepared for some challenging conversations and equip people to address them in a positive manner. Provide coaching to leaders to enable them to role model productive conversations on topics that might be uncomfortable. Employee engagement surveys, focus groups, and workforce data provide important evidence and conversation starters to prompt management action.

Address the myths and misconceptions head-on.

- **The purpose:** Resistance to gender equity initiatives increases when there are misunderstandings about the purpose and the approach. For example, our research findings are a reminder that there remains a widespread concern that staffing decisions may no longer be based on merit. This makes some employees, both men and women, hesitant to be champions for tackling inequities.
- **The approaches:** Ensure that decision-making processes are transparent and designed to provide equitable opportunities to women and men.

Address unconscious bias through training and inclusive practices. In hiring processes, reach out and encourage a diverse group of candidates to come forward, and to be short-listed, for each opportunity. Partner with educational institutions and skilled trades groups to help ensure a pipeline of women for future leadership positions. Revise skills and qualification requirements that are more specific than they need to be; they do not attract a broader talent pool. Analyze the results at each stage of the hiring and promotion processes to uncover and resolve any unintended barriers. Stay 'on message' about gender equity and inclusive practices being positive for everyone.

Give evidence of the impact on important outcomes—what difference it is making for women, for men and for the organization.

- **The purpose:** Best practices confirm that connecting gender equity to the success of the organization and its workforce will help build support. A clear definition of the desired outcomes and benefits also sharpens the focus on initiatives that will have strategic impact. A communication process that provides the evidence of benefits achieved shows that the organization considers gender equity a business priority—with the goals, management structures, and accountabilities that go along with it.
- **The approaches:** Measure and report key indicators such as promotion rates, and gender representation at various organizational levels. Consider gender-based compensation analysis to identify and close any gaps. Gather indicators of elements of the business case such as safety record, innovations, employee engagement, absenteeism, turnover in critical occupations, numbers of applicants in hard-to-fill jobs, and explore any connections to gender diversity or particular initiatives that might have had an impact.

Make it personal.

Use storytelling to engage and to make it real for people.

- **The purpose:** Storytelling is recognized as an important leadership tool for fostering change.⁴⁰ Our first-person interviews with male leaders have confirmed that these champions are open about their learning, share their experiences, and are intentional in connecting gender issues to the personal experience of others. Connecting gender issues to others' experience helps them to create their own story, develop empathy for women's experiences, recognize problematic situations and behaviours, and engage in creating an inclusive workplace.
- **The approaches:** Provide tips and coaching to champions to build their skills at using storytelling effectively as a change leadership tool. Interview women in various roles about their experience in the workplace; encourage them to share their stories through company events, newsletters and employee communications.

Go beyond 'programs'; have conversations.

- **The purpose:** Without a clear sustainability plan, even well-designed programs and initiatives run the risk of being seen as temporary, 'flavour of the month' topics. This reduces buy-in and can increase cynicism about change efforts. Ongoing conversations help to sustain a focus on gender equity over time, help to embed these issues into the 'normal workday,' and make it easier to reflect new learnings as the organization's efforts evolve. Behaviours related to conversations were among those that distinguished self-reported champions from others in our research (see Table 4). Strong champions talk about gender equity.
- **The approaches:** Engage opinion leaders at all levels in the organization and ask them to initiate

conversations. Consider using selected results from this report to kick off the process. Provide the opinion leaders with helpful tools, such as: tips for positive discussions, conversation starters, and a simple feedback process to share their learning with their work unit and the wider organization. Ask senior managers to have a certain number of short discussions each week—start with a target of one or two and gradually increase. Make it a standing item for management team meetings so that there is shared commitment to making it happen.

Highlight examples of the 'business case' at an individual, team and work unit level.

- **The purpose:** Our survey research revealed that the lowest-frequency champion behaviours were actions such as often talking about gender equity including outcomes, having a process for monitoring progress, and being held to account for gender inclusion objectives. Similar to 'making it personal' and connecting gender issues to individuals' experiences, there is a need to connect the high-level business case to the outcomes at a local work unit level. Creating that line-of-sight is critical for encouraging behaviour change and sensing that gender is an important business issue.
- **The approach:** Provide disaggregated data to the work unit level for business case indicators such as employee engagement surveys, turnover data, absenteeism, and so on. Embed gender equity objectives in leaders' and managers' annual performance plan. Include diversity and inclusion within leadership and staff competencies that are used for performance assessments and promotion decisions. Recognize staff and work units for inclusive practices and behaviours—always with a narrative that outlines the benefits.

Make it work for men.

Ensure that the culture supports work-life effectiveness for everyone—men and women.

- **The purpose:** In our research, only one-third of the survey respondents said that they see male managers “always” or “often” promoting the ability to balance work and personal life (see Table 3). Women still carry the larger share of caregiving responsibilities and will experience career barriers in workplaces where there is limited support for work-life effectiveness. Increasingly, men in today’s workforce are also looking to be able to fulfill their non-work commitments and interests. Work-life effectiveness policies and practices are a clear example of a gender inclusion initiative that will benefit all employees.
- **The approaches:** Ensure that the organization’s policies and practices are up to date—job sharing, flexible work arrangements, parental and caregiving leaves, and so on should be reviewed. Beyond policies, address the culture: senior leaders must be role models on this, as their behaviour sets the tone for the culture in the rest of the organization. Gain agreement on best practices such as not scheduling meetings at very early or very late hours, not sending emails outside of work hours, offering flexible work arrangements where possible, and seeking innovative solutions for occupations where flexibility is a greater challenge. Have leaders watch diligently for micro-messages that imply there are negative views of workers who take parental leave, avail themselves of flexible work arrangements, or have personal commitments outside of work. These micro-messages can include subtle comments by managers or co-workers, being excluded from social activities, or having fewer opportunities for learning and development.

Intentionally shift the culture away from traditional (often toxic) masculinity toward a newer model of inclusive masculinity.

- **The purpose:** Gender tensions exist within the workplaces in our sector. Some of the male champions we interviewed described how surprised and dismayed they were upon learning about some of the behaviours and situations that women confront. Among the women who participated in our research, 1 of every 5 women reported that they had personally experienced harassment, violence or bullying in their workplace—at least monthly—in the last five years. Other research⁴¹ has described the impact of toxic masculinity on safety and other organizational results. New entrants into leadership positions are seen to be more inclusive, yet they still face entrenched organizational cultures; change will not happen quickly without diligent efforts.
- **The approaches:** Senior leaders must role model the behaviours of inclusive leaders. Regularly invite input from others to demonstrate the value of diversity for innovation and stronger decision-making. Respect and support work-life demands faced by both women and men. Pay attention to ‘team building’ events and social activities that are not inclusive—find options that work for everyone on the team. Create a respectful work environment, clearly communicate behavioural standards and norms, and actively address any actions that do not reflect those norms.

Make it work for women.

Change the narrative from ‘trouble-maker’ to ‘change agent’ or ‘trailblazer.’

- **The purpose:** Some women in our research have told us that they hesitate to get more actively involved in gender inclusion efforts because they fear potential backlash or reputational risk. Such a concern suggests they don’t believe that the organization is truly committed to gender inclusion as a positive focus for the business. Employees do not hesitate to be seen as supportive of other business priorities such as safety, innovation, financial results, or service improvements.
- **The approaches:** Define ‘change agent’ competencies and recognize women who demonstrate the related skills, relationships and influence. Consider them for other initiatives within the company where they could make a similar contribution, such as problem-solving teams, innovation projects, or external outreach. If appropriate, highlight them as trailblazers who are having a positive impact. However, recognize that women are not a homogeneous group. Their other characteristics such as race and age can have an impact on what they might experience if they advocate for change or take on leadership roles. Pay close attention and ensure the environment is supportive.

Recognize positive contributions to making change – from women and also from men.

- **The purpose:** Reward systems influence behaviour in organizations. Meaningful recognition encourages individuals to be directly involved. Perhaps more importantly, it creates role models and has a ripple effect. When leaders, managers and workers at all levels see that getting involved is valued within the organization, they will feel more confident that the organization is truly committed to equity and they will become at least passive if not active supporters. It is important to get men involved, so that gender inclusion is not seen as a “women’s issue.”
- **The approaches:** Treat gender inclusion initiatives like other organizational priorities. Normalize a culture of people getting involved on important issues, such as safety, innovation and service improvement. Identify and communicate opportunities for people to make change in their day-to-day work environment. Some of the men in our research reported that they are not more involved as a champion of gender inclusion because they don’t see that they have the ability to make systemic changes in their organization. However, our champions highlighted that gender inclusion is a process of small steps and that creating a respectful workplace is a critical starting point. Make inclusion and diversity part of the organization’s values—it will provide a platform for rewarding this type of behaviour change.

To quote one of our gender champions,
“Start somewhere and do something tangible.”



Technical Appendix

Research Methodology: Industry Census of Women in Leadership

The *Industry Census of Women in Leadership* includes publicly available data from a sample of 61 organizations in Canada’s electricity and renewables sector.

Organizational census survey

An online survey was at least partially completed by 50 individuals in a range of organizations. It was made available in English and French and widely distributed by EHRC through their industry contact lists. The roles of the respondents varied. We analyzed the subset of respondents who could be identified as being a sole representative of their organization (i.e., duplicates were removed).

Online research

To gather accurate board / governance gender representation data for a larger sample of Canadian electricity employers, the online survey findings were supplemented with comprehensive online research. This comprised a review of the websites of 61 organizations, including those organizations who had partially completed the survey (to fill in any gaps). To gather information on 224 women leaders (board members and/or executives), a comprehensive search of online sources was completed, including company websites, published biographical information, LinkedIn and other social media site, company filings, and business and general media.

The online research focused on determining:

- How many of the boards include women (1, 2, or 3 or more), and the intersections of their identities (e.g. women of colour, Indigenous women)
- How many of the executive teams include women (1, 2, or 3 or more), and the intersections of their identities (e.g. women of colour, Indigenous women)

- What roles are the women in (e.g., ‘operating’ / P&L vs. ‘corporate/support’ functions).
- Board / Gender diversity practices and how this relates to number of women on the board and in exec roles, and in the pipeline for leadership, etc.

Companies were identified through various sources including: employers who responded to the online survey, employers who had participated in previous EHRC Labour Market research, online searches of industry organizations, EHRC mailing lists, researcher contacts, and industry knowledge. An attempt was made to ensure that the sample would be robust and varied, to reflect the diversity of the sector. The sample included organizations from all provinces and territories, as seen in Table 5. The final list was reviewed and validated by the Steering Committee members.

Province / Territory	# of companies
Alberta	9
British Columbia	4
Manitoba	1
New Brunswick	2
Newfoundland	3
Nova Scotia	2
Nunavut	1
North West Territories	1
Ontario	29
Prince Edward Island	1
Quebec	5
Saskatchewan	2
Yukon	1

Table 5: Geographic representation of companies in the census sample

Research Methodology: Experiences and Perspectives from the Industry

An online survey was widely distributed through EHRC communication channels. The survey was available in English and French. It was accessible during two time periods in 2019 and early 2020. In total, 101 respondents provided usable data.

Male (n=33)	32.7%
Female (n=65)	64.4%
Other (n=3)	3.0%
Member of a visible minority (n=14)	18.7%
Indigenous person (n=3)	3.9%
Immigrant to Canada (n=13)	17.1%
Age 25-34 (n=8)	10.8%
35-44 (n=30)	40.5%
45-54 (n=25)	33.8%
55-64 (n=8)	10.8%
65 or above (n=1)	1.4%
Prefer not to answer (n=2)	2.7%

Table 6: Key demographics of survey respondents

	Corp Svces (not specified)	Ops / Tech	Management
Women (n=47)	36%	32%	32%
Men (n=21)	5%	48%	48%

Table 7: Current position of survey respondents

Time in the industry	2 to 5 years (n=12)	16.0%
	6 to 10 years (n=14)	18.7%
	11 to 15 years (n=17)	22.7%
	16 to 20 years (n=11)	14.7%
	21 to 25 years (n=7)	9.3%
	More than 25 years (n=14)	18.7%
Highest level of education	Apprenticeship or trades certificate / diploma (n=4)	5.3%
	Postsecondary - college diploma or some university (n=18)	23.7%
	University - at Bachelor's level (n=31)	40.8%
	Graduate degree - above Bachelor's level (n=23)	30.3%

Table 8: Background of survey respondents

		Male	Female	Other
Highest level of education	Apprenticeship or trades certificate / diploma	2	2	
	Postsecondary - college diploma or some university	5	12	1
	University - at Bachelors level	9	21	1
	Graduate degree - above Bachelor's level	7	16	
Job title category	Non-management	3	17	
	Manager	12	20	2
	Director	4	6	
	VP	2	4	
Identifies as a Gender Champion	Yes, absolutely	13	27	1
	I'm working on it	9	16	
	I do not see myself as a Champion	6	9	1

Table 9: Key professional data for survey respondents, disaggregated by gender

Research Methodology: Champion First-Person Interviews

Senior male leaders were profiled to explore the influences and impacts of men's direct participation in diversity strategies and initiatives for the empowerment of women.

Information was gathered through a series of 45-minute semi-structured phone interviews with sector leaders who are involved in supporting the development of women towards leadership.

Seven men from four different companies took part.

Topics covered during the interview included perspectives on the level of interest of senior electricity leaders in gender diversity, good practices they have led to support the development of women, personal and professional experiences that shaped their thinking about gender diversity, and advice for other leaders.

Interview summaries were edited as needed to shield the identity of the champion as well as protect the privacy of any other persons who were mentioned. Each champion had an opportunity to review and approve their interview summary before publication.

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Learn More: Research Bibliography

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Chair of the Advisory Committee
Hydro Ottawa

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Alectra Utilities

Paul Dabrowski

Ontario Power Generation

Lindsay Miller-Branovacki

University of Windsor

Lisa Nadeau

Albera Electric System Operator

Joanna Osawe

Women in Renewable Energy

Jessica Parsons

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Michelle Branigan

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