



**Women Leadership Nation™**  
*Creating a Unified Workplace*

# Disrupting How We Close the Gender Gap & Increase Innovation

## WHITEPAPER

*June 2019*



# CONTENT

Executive Summary	3
The Gender Gap	4
Why Can't We Close the Gap?	7
Creating a Unified Workplace™	8
Taking a Holistic Approach to Unity	9
The 12 Building Blocks of Unity™	10
The 12 Unity Skills	11
The 12 Unity Strengths	12
Why It Matters	13
Movements Currently Underway	14
Creating the Foundation for a Unified Workplace™	15
Navigating the Labyrinth Worksheet	16
Conclusion	17
About Women Leadership Nation™	18
References	19



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has never been a better time for a paradigm shift when it comes to finding a new approach to closing the Gender Gap and increasing innovation in organizations.

It's clear, based on the hundreds of studies conducted across dozens of industries such as energy, film & television, technology, construction and finance to name a few that what we are doing today to close the gender gap isn't working!

In fact, in many industries we are moving backwards and the gap is widening. According to the World Economic Forum at the current pace it will take 170 years for women to achieve gender parity in the workplace. (Forum, 2017)

## The time has come to disrupt the way people work together!

Organizations have been trying to solve this complex problem, which is deeply ingrained in the corporate culture of organizations, by applying one off, quick fix, band-aid solutions with very little measurement or accountability.

If we want to make headway in narrowing the gap, organizations need to move away from isolated quick-fixes and towards creating **Unified Workplaces™** that support the development of the **four dimensions of unity: Inclusion, Diversity, Collaboration and Innovation**.

The time has come for a new **holistic approach** that involves the entire organization from it's senior leader champions, management, employees, teams; as well as, its suppliers, strategic partners and peers across the industry. An approach that addresses the complexity of the environment, and includes a integrated suite of unity programs, tools and resources designed to address the specific needs of each individual organization and industry.

This is an exciting opportunity for companies as closing the gender gap will have a positive impact on their overall business performance, making them more productive, innovative and profitable; while also strengthening the overall corporate culture.

**Women Leadership Nation™** has uncovered **12 foundational Unity Building Blocks™, Unity Skills** and **Unity Strengths** that must be incorporated in order to create a **Unified Workplace™**.

This paper was written to raise awareness of the current situation, present a new holistic approach to closing the Gender Gap, and offer practical steps to start building the foundation for a more **Unified Workplace™**, that embraces all **four dimensions of unity: Inclusion, Diversity, Collaboration and Innovation**.

# THE GENDER GAP

The glass ceiling metaphor arguably no longer adequately depicts the Gender Gap, as many women have successfully broken through the “glass ceiling” with companies like Facebook, FedEx, Tangerine, Indigo, and IBM where women hold top positions of authority in senior leadership.



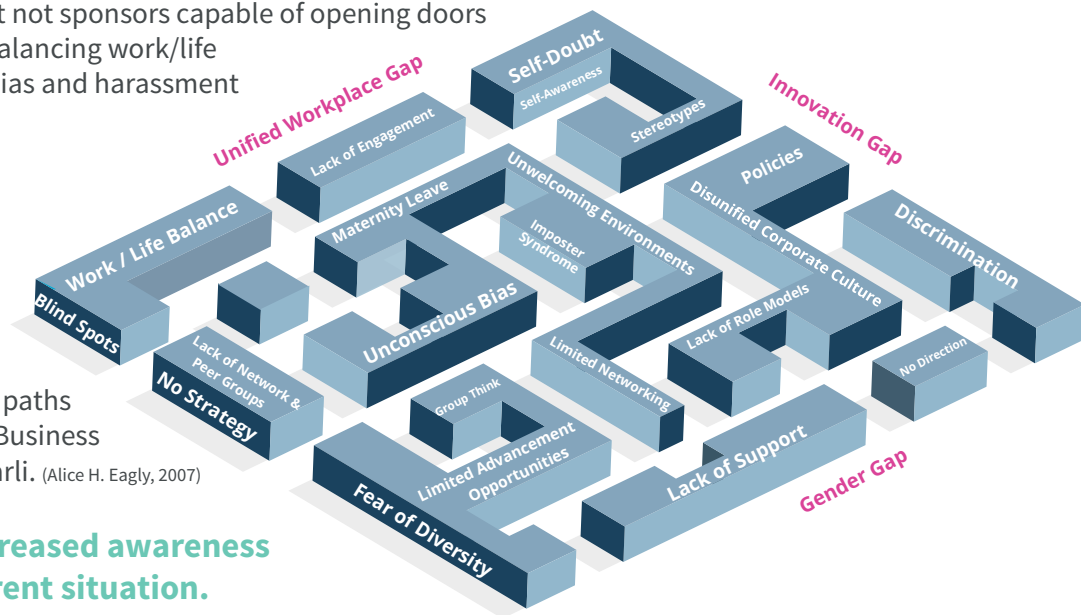
**The reality is women have broken through the glass ceiling...  
Only to find a complex labyrinth they must navigate**

Women must confront numerous obstacles, roadblocks and dead ends on their path to leadership. Obstacles that in many cases are not solvable by leadership training alone and require changes to the entire ecosystem support network and corporate culture.

Women navigate the workplace differently from men, typically experiencing indirect pathways towards achieving their desired professional and personal goals. Some of the obstacles and roadblocks women must navigate on the leadership journey include:

- Unwelcoming environments and challenging corporate cultures
- Limited advancement opportunities
- Limited access to mentors, but not sponsors capable of opening doors
- Family obligations, pressure balancing work/life
- Discrimination, unconscious bias and harassment

“The obstacles that women face have become more surmountable, at least by some women some of the time. Paths to the top exist, and some women find them. The successful routes can be difficult to discover, however, and therefore we label these circuitous paths a labyrinth”, according to Harvard Business professors Alice Eagly and Linda Carli. (Alice H. Eagly, 2007)




**Real change begins with increased awareness and acknowledging the current situation.**

The first step in closing the Gender Gap involves a **Unity Review**, where leaders define and gain a greater understanding of their individual and unique labyrinths. Progress requires being able to identify potential barriers to growth and opportunities for advancement.

**“Ideally, there would be no labyrinth, and women and men would have the same paths to leadership. But, currently, the male path is more direct, and the female one more labyrinthine.”**

(Alice H. Eagly, 2007)

Women represent over **47%** of the labour force in Canada, **LESS THAN 5%** of CEO's are women.




(Status of Women Canada, 2017-18)

**50%** of companies indicated that **they have NOT taken action** to increase employees' awareness of **Gender BIAS**



(McKinsey & Company and LeanIn Org., 2017)

On average **women** are **promoted** at a **LOWER RATE** than men



(McKinsey & Company and LeanIn Org., 2017)

We have some **BLIND SPOTS** when it comes to diversity, and **we can't solve problems** that we don't see or **understand clearly**



(McKinsey & Company and LeanIn Org., 2017)

**65%** of men and women see company **Culture** as a barrier to **Women in Leadership**

(The Rockefeller Foundation, 2017)

**50%** of Canadian Women **have been Sexually Harassed** in the Workplace



(Carr, 2017)

We can't unlock the **FULL potential of our Workplace** until we see how far from **equality we really are**




(McKinsey & Company and LeanIn Org., 2017)

**1 in 5** people say there is **NO WOMEN** in leadership positions at all at their current company




(The Rockefeller Foundation, 2017)

The **percentage of companies** without any **Women on the Board FELL** to **37%** in 2017




(Osler, 2017)

We must bring **MEN and WOMEN** together as opposed to further apart to address this important topic



(The Globe and Mail, 2018)

Women still do a **disproportionate** amount of **housework, child and elder care**



(McKinsey & Company, 2016)

It is important to measure **Gender Diversity** and **establish targets** for more gender balance to identify **pain points** **focus their efforts,** and **drive accountability**



(McKinsey & Company and LeanIn Org., 2017)



**The Gender Gap is widening  
despite efforts to close it!**

**Women continue to be underutilized and significantly under-represented in many industries including:**

**Science, Technology, Engineering,  
and Mathematics (STEM)**

**Business & Financial Services**

**Sports & Entertainment**

**Energy and Resources**

**Film & Television**

**Manufacturing**

**Construction**

**Law**



## WHY CAN'T WE CLOSE THE GAP?

### So, what's the problem?

Women Leadership Nation has identified that a **lack of unity** and an over reliance on **quick fixes** is contributing to the **Gender Gap** and stifling innovation.

These are **complex problems that require a holistic perspective** and greater understanding of the various factors that contribute to these issues including corporate culture, human resource policies, communities of support and strategies for dealing with conscious and unconscious bias, among many other factors.

Most of the approaches used today are focused on solving specific pain points, rather than of addressing the root cause, which is a **lack of unity**.

**“Current approaches to developing diversity skills do not provide an adequate framework for individuals to learn to transform diversity issues and conflicts into opportunities for discovery, real learning and meaningful exchanges.”**

(Casey & Bown)

THE TYPICAL PROBLEM	THE TYPICAL QUICK FIX
Difficulty <b>Attracting</b> Top Talent	Corporate Re-branding, Promotion Campaigns
Stagnate Employee <b>Development &amp; Growth</b>	Career Development Plan, without Supportive Resources
Limited Employee <b>Engagement</b>	Employment Engagement Survey & Special Events
Poor Employee <b>Retention</b> Rates	Employee Recognition Program
Limited Number of <b>Women in Senior Leadership</b>	Women Only Workshops, Bias Training, New Policies
Corporate Culture Lacking <b>Agility</b> and <b>Innovation</b>	Design Thinking Workshops

***It's Time for A New Model!***

***A New Approach that focuses on Unifying the Workplace***

# CREATING A UNIFIED WORKPLACE™

The time has come to shift the focus towards achieving “Unity” in the workplace; and increasing awareness of the current situation internally and externally across the industry.

Moving away from a quick fix mentality and towards creating a **Unified Workplace™** that supports the **four dimensions of unity: Inclusion, Diversity, Collaboration and Innovation.**

This holistic approach for closing the Gender Gap requires strategic solutions that address all **12 Building Blocks of Unity™**. Employers must also embrace the **12 Unity Skills & Unity Strengths** in their corporate culture and values, ensuring leaders, employees and teams are practicing these skills and leveraging the strengths daily. **We need to focus on increasing the sense of “us” and decreasing the emotions of “them”, and moving from solely thinking of diversity to striving for unity.**



**Unity is Comprised of 4 Dimensions that Creates a Foundation for Establishing a Unified Workplace™**

## UNIFIED WORKPLACE™

A **Unified Workplace™** is strengthened by the diversity of its people.

An environment that promotes and facilitates **working together in unison regardless of age, race or gender** to contribute to the success of individuals, teams and the organization.

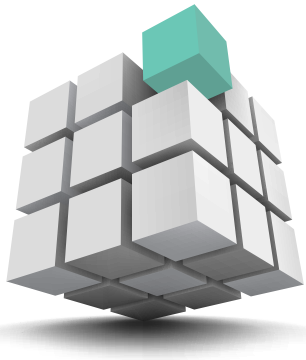
12 BUILDING BLOCKS OF UNITY™	12 UNITY SKILLS	12 UNITY STRENGTHS
Unity Champions Role Models & Two-Way Communication Community of Support Unity Awareness, Self-Discovery & Unity Benchmarks Corporate Unity Playbook Individual Unity Roadmap Unity Competencies, Leadership Behaviours & Strengths Unified Corporate Culture, Policies & Procedures Authentic Leadership Project-Based Unity Training & Development Growth Opportunities & Mindset Measurement, Reporting & Accountability	Empathy Communication Community Cooperation Creativity Negotiation Critical Thinking Decision Making Problem Solving Execution Evaluation Feedback	Trusting Supportive Caring Principled Persevering Fair Open-to-Change Tolerant Inclusive Adaptable Risk-Taking Self-Confident



# TAKING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO UNITY

After an extensive literature review of studies, reports and books written on the Gender Gap, across a wide range of industries, and conducting numerous focus groups and one-on-one interviews with leaders; **Women Leadership Nation™** has identified the top **12 Building Blocks of Unity™**, which represent the key success factors that must be part of the holistic solution to closing the gap.





## THE 12 BUILDING BLOCKS OF UNITY™

- 1. Champions:** Ensuring new initiatives are supported by senior champions committed to creating a culture of unity and if necessary make changes to policies and procedures.
- 2. Communication:** Establishment of two-way communication channels ensuring all employees are aware of new unity initiatives and profiling inspiring role models.
- 3. Community:** Development of internal and external community support networks.
- 4. Awareness:** Increasing awareness of the organizations current situation, identification of unity barriers and growth opportunities; as well as, the establishment of unity benchmarks. Self-discovery at a individual level in an effort to help women lead authentically and leverage their strengths.
- 5. Unity Playbook:** Creation of a holistic “Unity Playbook”, strategy with an Action Plan at the corporate level, which includes top down and bottom up unity initiatives.
- 6. Unity Roadmap:** Creation of personalized “Unity Roadmap’s”, career strategies and Action Plan’s for employees.
- 7. Strengths:** Development of unity competencies, leadership behaviours and strengths employees can leverage in an effort to advance their career and create a culture of unity.
- 8. Culture:** Alignment of existing human resources policies, procedures, and performance reviews with unity goals and initiatives. Creating an environment that creates a culture of unity.
- 9. Authenticity:** Creation of a corporate culture that embraces and celebrates authentic leadership. Helping employees unlock their creativity and build confidence.
- 10. Training:** Making unity and leadership training & development available to everyone across the organization, particularly at the leadership and management levels.
- 11. Opportunities:** Establish a culture that promotes the development of new growth opportunities and offer training & development designed to help employees lead with a growth mindset.
- 12. Measurement:** Regularly track and measure unity skill sets, create progress reports on major initiatives & celebration of milestone achievements.

# THE 12 UNITY SKILLS

By focusing on learning “skills”, verses solely concentrating on learning new “knowledge” employees can make positive changes to their behaviors.

Closing the Gender Gap will not happen without changing the behavior of leadership, management and employees. It’s not enough to say that the organization values a **Unified Workplace™**, everyday interactions and responses to situations must demonstrate it with measurable action and appropriate decisions.

The critical unity skills are identified in the illustration below, along with an explanation of how these skills are observed and can be measured as habits in day-to-day interactions.

## SKILL PROGRESSION

As employees learn how to apply and master these skills in their daily lives the observable habits also change.

### Growth:

Employees achieve an increased level of self-awareness

### Perseverance:

Employees acquire new unity skills, they practice regularly

### Integration:

Employees master the unity skills, which now come naturally

## The G.P.I. Unity Skills Matrix®

Skills found in a Unified Workplace™



### THE HABITS OBSERVED

THE UNITY SKILLS TARGETED	GROWTH	PERSEVERANCE	INTEGRATION
EMPATHY	Perceive	Recognize	Support
COMMUNICATION	Listen	Relate	Exchange
COMMUNITY	Commit	Respect	Empower
COOPERATION	Intention-Set	Validate	Self-Regulate
CREATIVITY	Attend	Question	Envision
NEGOTIATION	Anticipate	Consider	Bargain
CRITICAL THINKING	Observe	Reason	Deduce
DECISION MAKING	Describe	Prioritize	Reconcile
PROBLEM SOLVING	Define	Ideate	Iterate
EXECUTION	Organize	Mentor	Facilitate
EVALUATION	Valuate	Annotate	Forecast
FEEDBACK	Distill	Debrief	Motivate

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“Current approaches to developing diversity skills do not provide an adequate framework for individuals to learn to transform diversity issues and conflicts into opportunities for discovery, real learning and meaningful exchanges.”  
(Casey & Bown)

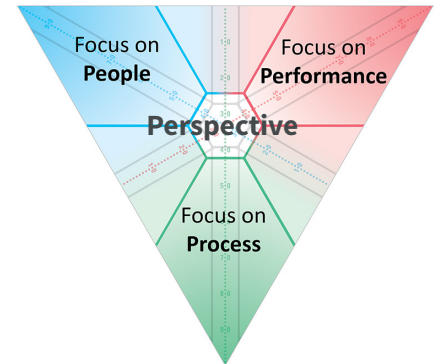
# THE 12 UNITY STRENGTHS

Being aware of your strengths and learning how to leverage and build upon them makes it possible for leaders to thrive as their authentic selves.

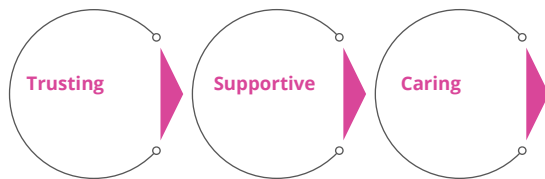
Based upon Dr. Elias Porter Strengths Deployment Inventory (SDI) and Relationship Awareness Theory identifying personal strengths and their underlying motives is key to understanding people and improving relationships with ourselves, in teams and in the community/organization.

The **Strengths Deployment Inventory (SDI)** is a powerful tool for understanding the motives and values that drive behaviours (the why).

The SDI assessment helps people to better understand themselves and others, so that they can successfully lead authentically.



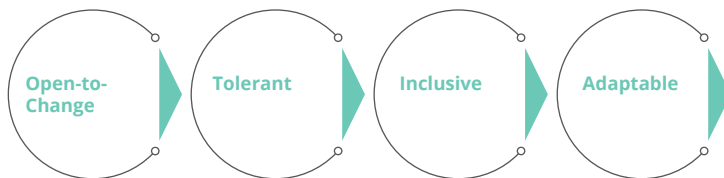
## Inclusion *People*



## Collaborative *Process*



## Diversity *Perspective*



## Innovation *Performance*



### Relationship Awareness Theory

Provides a simple, common language for people to understand the motives behind behavior, prevent and manage conflict effectively, and to engage in meaningful dialogue. When applied to teams and organizations, this language dramatically improves the quality of working relationships and workplace performance.

## WHY IT MATTERS

### Organizations benefit from:

- A **heightened awareness** of trends, gaps, and obstacles.
- Stronger teams, more **engaged employees**.
- Increased **agility** and **innovation** by leveraging diversity perspectives.
- Inclusive practices of **collaboration**, building stronger teams.
- Stronger **corporate culture** & overall public image.
- Ability to **attract top talent**, successfully develop leaders, increase **engagement** and **retention** of high performing staff.
- Stronger **financial** and **operational performance**.
- **Diverse mindsets** and new unity skill sets.

### Participants benefit from:

- An increased awareness of personal/team **strengths**.
- New **leadership development skills** necessary for taking your career and personal growth to the next level, including team building and design thinking for innovation.
- Learning how to effectively **navigate their careers** & with less stress and increased connection, **overcoming barriers** to growth.
- Ongoing support and alignment with **qualified mentors** and connections to **industry wide communities of support**.
- **Feeling fully supported**, inspired and encouraged to lead authentically and innovate.



## MOVEMENTS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

Organizations across a wide range of industry sectors have conducted studies to gain a greater understanding of the gender gaps, and have set goals for moving closer to gender parity in the workplace. Some organizations leading this change include:



### **Human Resources Professionals Association** *Closing the Gender Wage Gap Report*

“Canada estimates the wage gap to be anywhere between 12 per cent to 31.5 per cent.”  
(Human Resources Professionals Association, 2016)



### **Engineers Canada** *30 by 30*

“Increase the representation of women within the engineering field by raising the percentage of newly licensed engineers who are women to 30 percent by 2030.” (Engineers Canada, 2017)



### **Electricity Human Resources Canada** *Leadership Accord for Gender Diversity in the Canadian Electricity Industry*

“Is a public commitment by employers, educators, unions and governments to promote the values of diversity, equality and inclusion throughout their work.” (Electricity Human Resources Canada, 2017)



### **Forward Together** *A Proctor & Gamble Women Leadership Initiative*

Forward Together is a movement forged out of a vision to bring companies and professional women together to share best practices to enable best in class learning across industries.



### **SheEO** *Radically Generosity, Funding for Female Entrepreneurs*

“SheEO is a radically redesigned ecosystem that supports, finances, and celebrates female innovators.” (SheEO, 2019)



### **Canadian Manufacturers Exporters** *Untapped Potential, Attracting and Engaging Women in Canadian Manufacturing*

“Women make up less than 10% of skilled production workers across Canada and less than one quarter of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workers.”  
(Canadian Manufacturers Exporters, 2017)



### **Move the Dial** *Where's the Dial, Women in Tech*

“Women comprise 13% of the average tech company's executive team, while 53% of tech companies have no female executives at all.” (Move The Dial, 2017)

# CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR A UNIFIED WORKPLACE™

Don't know where to start? You can begin by establishing a strong foundation for a Unified Workplace™ today by implementing the following four steps:



## Identify Your Current Workplace Labyrinth:

Increase awareness by brainstorming what your workplace labyrinth looks like for yourself and for women in your organization at all levels. What are some of the barriers, obstacles and roadblocks preventing employees from moving forward or making it difficult to navigate? How can you make it easier for women to navigate in your organization at all career levels and life stages?



## Embrace the Concept of a Unified Workplace™:

Explore what a Unified Workplace™ would look and feel like within your organization and within your specific department. Does the organizations vision, mission and values align with a Unified Workplace™? Answer the question: What would be possible with increased unity?



## Value Authentic Leadership:

Encourage your employees to lead authentically, beginning with supporting them in their journey of self-discovery. The first step to leading authentically is knowing yourself. Help employees identify and leverage their strengths, opportunities for growth and create personalized career plan “a Unity Roadmap”.



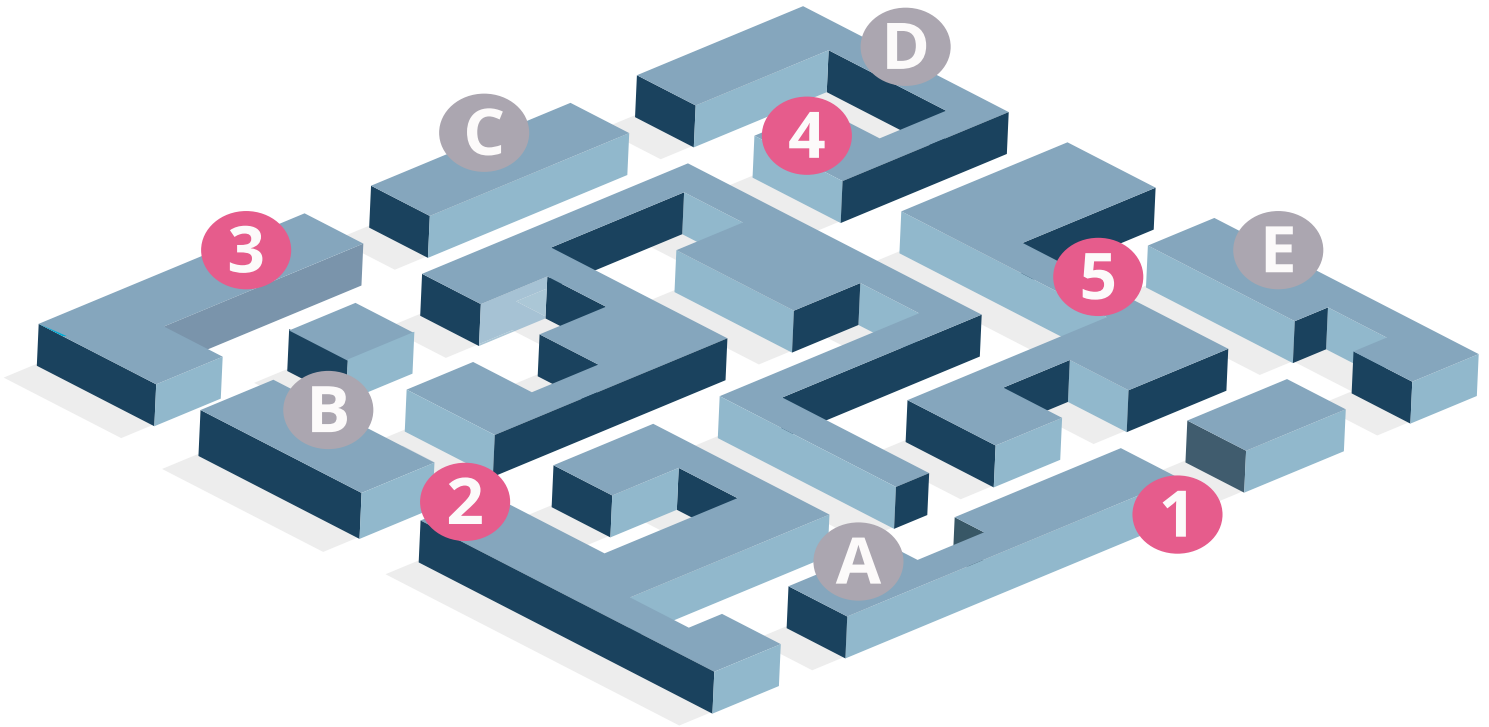
## Establish Realistic & Measurable Unity Goals:

Work with the senior level champions to create realistic and measurable unity goals. Ensure those responsible for achieving the goals are involved in the identification of the critical milestones along the way. Buy-in from all employees is essential for increasing engagement. Don't forget to celebrate the successes along the journey.





## Unified Workplace Journey Series Navigating the Labyrinth™



Identify the challenges, roadblocks, and opportunities you are currently navigating in your own professional and personal labyrinth:

Identify the challenges, roadblocks, and opportunities you are currently navigating in your own professional and personal labyrinth:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_



## CONCLUSION

**The time has come to stop trying to close the Gender Gap by focusing on quick fixes that center around “fixing women”. We need to move towards creating unity within the workplace.**

We must move towards creating **Unified Workplaces™** that embrace **Inclusion, Diversity, Collaboration** and **Innovation**. Implementing training and development solutions designed to create an environment where everyone within the organization has equal opportunities and support with leading authentically, and growing to the next level.

A **holistic approach** is needed, one that addresses all **12 Unity Building Blocks™** and encourages all employees to live the **Unity Skills** and leveraging the **Unity Strengths** daily.

It all begins with senior leaders championing a new approach that begins with achieving a stronger understand of the organizations current situation. Beginning with helping women within the organization define what the **workplace labyrinth** looks like for them today; identifying their barriers and opportunities for growth.

Gaining a greater appreciate for what women are currently navigating will make it possible to identify areas that require further support, as you can't change or improve what you don't see or understand.

With a strong understanding of where you are today it's essential to set realistic and measurable goals for the future, then provide employees with training and development, tools and resources necessary to make sustainable progress.

“We're at a tipping point of women's engagement in the workplace, and the economy. But to tip those scales we need to commit to making a real and sustained investment into owning the leadership power and potential of women.” (Krawcheck, 2017)

**Just imagine what is possible with a fully engaged workforce!**



# ABOUT WOMEN LEADERSHIP NATION™

**Women Leadership Nation™ (WLN)**, a Pozentivity Inc. Company specializes in Unity Discovery, Advisory, and Training & Development designed to help organizations create Unified Workplaces™ that **Attract, Develop, Engage** and **Retain Women Leaders**; while increasing innovation and strengthening the organization's performance and profitability.



## Creating a Unified Workplace™



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**“Being a women in the business world or in any profession is something to embrace and celebrate, not something to overcome, hide or fix.”** (Krawcheck, 2017)



**Women Leadership Nation™**

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