
Leading In The Wake Of #MeToo And Black Lives Matter

How have #MeToo and social equity movements changed the workplace and leadership in the United States?

January 2022

Vancouver, BC

www.blueprint.ngo

FOREWORD

"How much has really changed?" In the almost five years since #MeToo, it's one of the big questions that workplaces still grapple with. The viral social movement, along with Black Lives Matter and the Residential School tragedies, brought to light the deep biases and hurts that many live with and suppress, almost daily.

From my three decades of business leadership experience, I've learned that individuals need to feel psychological safety and a clear sense of being seen, heard and respected as a whole person; only then can they give fully to work, their families and communities. There is so much untapped human potential available to companies and societies if we can create real belonging and equality. I think of it as a prerequisite for sustainability. We can't solve the greatest challenges of the planet – environmental or societal – without building a much more inclusive and equitable world.

It is a hard and complex journey we're on. And one that is dependent on organizational leaders recognizing where more work needs to be done. That's where studies like this one can help. By understanding just how much has changed in gender relations among leaders since #MeToo, and examining the effectiveness of efforts to address bias and inequity, we have the opportunity to evolve our models of interaction and our models of leadership. We want to shrink the divide between knowing what's important (intent) and doing it (impact). My hope is that we can continue shifting our workplace cultures, and our world, to a better place.

Katie Dudtschak
Executive Vice President, Regional Banking
Personal & Commercial Banking
RBC

Recent global social movements such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter have created a sense of urgency for CEOs and business leaders worldwide to create business cultures that are free of judgment.

I was excited to sponsor this study by Dr. John Izzo and the researchers at Blueprint because the purpose of my life's work with MacKay CEO Forums is to populate the world with inspiring leaders who make a difference. I believe that business leaders who embody the characteristics of empathy and create inclusion are our best hope for making our world a more inspiring place where everyone is appreciated.

It is imperative that we accelerate inclusive behaviour and understanding in the C-Suite, which, despite the great achievements of women and people of all genders, continues to be dominated by men. It is shown that inclusion creates the space for everyone to show up as the best version of themselves. People make the biggest contribution when they have a voice. When leadership encourages and amplifies each voice, the result is exponentially accelerated business outcomes.

Leaders can be champions in sharing their stories of exclusion and inclusion and in creating safe spaces for all to participate in their own dialogue. It takes courage to "go first" and leaders are in the unique position to champion other leaders to engage in this work.

I dream of a better world where everyone is treated equally, and each person strives to love others free of judgment, starting with self-love and acceptance in themselves. I believe if we can master our egos, we can live free from old mindsets and unconscious bias. Then we can be truly inclusive in all aspects of our lives.

Nancy MacKay, PhD
Founder & Board Member
MacKay CEO Forums



INTRODUCTION

Diversity and inclusion are important and timely topics both in society and in the workplace. Movements such as #MeToo, Time's Up and Black Lives Matter have reverberated throughout society, especially in the United States and Canada. In the wake of these societal shifts, leaders and organizations have stepped up intentional efforts to create more diversity, equity, and inclusion as both a moral and a business imperative.

This study sought to examine, through both qualitative and quantitative research, how these movements over the past five to six years have re-shaped attitudes and behaviors at work. The goal was to try to understand this impact on a variety of critical attitudes and behaviors. Among the key questions this research sought to answer were:

- Have these movements changed attitudes among all genders about equity and inclusion and, if so, how?
- Are men speaking out more for equity and inclusion?
- Have these movements reduced misogynistic behaviors in the workplace?
- Have these movements changed how leaders lead and think?
- Have efforts to raise awareness about and foster gender and racial equity and inclusion been perceived as effective? What efforts have been most and least effective with different demographics?
- Have these movements helped create stronger positive attitudes and actions toward being “allies” for historically marginalized groups, especially women, racial and ethnic minorities and the LGBTQIA community?
- How are men and women leaders seen in the context of #MeToo and have these images shifted?
- How are different generations engaging on issues of gender and racial inclusion?
- What are the greatest challenges leaders experience in leading in the context of #MeToo?
- Have these movements impacted relationships between genders and, if so, how so?
- How have these movements impacted sponsorship and mentoring across genders, especially between men who are leaders and people of other genders?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our research study was conducted from June to September of 2021, with focus groups of C-suite leaders conducted from June to August and a quantitative survey conducted in September.

In summary, our study shows that the social movements related to gender and racial and ethnic inclusion have had a significant impact on workplace attitudes and behaviors as well as how leaders are both perceived and acting. While a significant portion of respondents have not seen an impact from these movements directly, there is ample evidence that the workplace has changed in meaningful ways.

Social movements including #MeToo and Black Lives Matter have changed leaders in meaningful ways. A significant number of leaders say these movements have changed their leadership attitude and behaviors. The open-ended comments and focus group data suggest that there is a heightened awareness of the need for gender and racial and ethnic equity and inclusion. The data also suggest that a smaller but significant group of leaders, men especially, believe that the impacts have led to greater cautiousness, and believe that these movements have made it more difficult to lead effectively. Overall, men in leadership are seen as slightly more empathic and inclusive as a result of these movements while also seen as less confident and more cautious. Women leaders are seen as more empathic and inclusive than men in leadership. One of the most interesting findings around leadership is that women leaders are now seen as charismatic, visionary, strategic and assertive to the same levels as men while also being seen as more empathic and inclusive.

Race is not a strong predictor of attitudes about how social movements have impacted the workplace. We were interested in exploring viewpoints across people of different races and ethnicities and found little variability in the reported views across racial groups. Women in particular showed very few differences when grouped by race, suggesting that women appear to hold very similar views and perceptions of how the workplace has changed following recent social movements. Men also hold fairly consistent views on these issues regardless of their race or ethnicity, although there was some variability on the importance of being allies to women, racialized and LGBTQIA people, and viewpoints on whether having different standards in order to address equity issues was the right thing to do when hiring or promoting.

Our study strongly suggests that men are significantly more engaged on issues of gender equity and inclusion as a result of these movements. Men at all levels in organizations strongly express a higher commitment to speak out on issues of equity and to challenge inappropriate behavior, such as sexist and misogynistic comments. Women show an even greater shift in their willingness to speak out about issues of equity and harassment. While both men and women perceive men to be more likely to speak out on these issues, our data suggest there is a gap between intention and behavior. While a large percentage of men and women say that men are more likely to be actively engaged in these issues than before these social movements, when asked if men are doing so on a day-to-day basis, agreement drops significantly. One of the interesting factors to consider is that some previous research has suggested that men believe that “while they, themselves, are not misogynistic, other men are.” That belief likely dampens men’s willingness to speak up and challenge other men. This study suggests that a clear majority of men want these behaviors to decrease which should help embolden men to speak up more.

In the United States, about 10 to 13% of men have had a very negative reaction to these social movements and hold a negative view on how they have impacted work and the workplace, even though our research suggests that these movements have had a generally positive effect on men’s likelihood to be engaged on gender and racial equity issues. From the survey and the open-ended comments, we would describe this as a backlash, in which men feel that these movements have created an environment that some men feel is toxic for them.

Commitment to allyship has grown significantly. One of issues we explored was the way these movements have changed how important leaders and team members believe it is to be allies for equity and inclusion for three key historically marginalized groups: women, racial and ethnic groups, and the LGBTQIA community. Our findings strongly suggest that these movements have greatly increased leaders' commitment to be allies for these groups among all demographic groups across gender, age, and seniority level. These trends are more pronounced for women than for men but are significant for all genders. Of the three groups we studied, commitment to gender and racial allyship is about equal and is slightly less for the LGBTQIA community. Having said that a good deal of this difference is explained by older men rating allyship to this group as less important to them than other demographic groups.

Most men don't feel strongly disadvantaged by programs to accelerate the hiring and promotion of historically underrepresented groups. One of the things we sought to explore was whether men feel disadvantaged by programs aimed at aiding other groups that have had less historic opportunity. We discovered that only about one in ten men strongly feel this way. This suggests that men recognize the need for more diversity and accept that this will impact their personal opportunities. Less senior men and less educated men are significantly more likely to feel disadvantaged than those in higher positions and at higher levels of education.

All the four major generations in the workplace agree that millennials are most engaged and aware on issues of gender and racial and ethnic inclusion. Baby boomers, Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z also agree that baby boomers are the least engaged and aware generation on these issues. Having said that, our study suggests that there are very few significant differences between the generations in terms of attitudes and behaviors on issues of gender and racial equity and inclusion. The exception to this is that baby boomer men are more hesitant following these social movements and that baby boomers and Gen Xers are less likely than their younger counterparts to express a strong commitment to allyship for LGBTQIA communities. However, these are differences in magnitude more so than direction. In other words, all generations have shifted towards a stronger commitment to allyship, inclusion and equity. As such, many of the perceived differences between generations are not supported by the data.

Efforts to create a more equitable and inclusive workplace are pervasive across organizations and generally these efforts are perceived positively in terms of their impact. In our research, we discovered that almost eight in ten workplaces have formal efforts to foster greater inclusion and diversity. We specifically measured six activities: employee resource groups, diversity training, unconscious bias training, pay equity efforts, diversity quotas and team-building efforts. We found that except for diversity quotas, there is a uniform belief that these efforts have had a positive impact on the workplace. Support for quotas is much stronger among women than among men but even among women respondents, there is far less support than for other initiatives. One of the most interesting findings is that efforts focused on building relationships and understanding between diverse groups (team-building and employee resource groups) were seen as more effective than unconscious bias and diversity training. These findings were even more pronounced for men and suggest that inclusion efforts that focus on building understanding between groups may be most effective especially with men. This suggests that efforts to build awareness rather than focus on how the majority group needs to change may be more effective at driving change.

Political affiliation is strongly associated with response to these movements. On almost every single question, there was a statistically significant and meaningful difference between the responses of Republicans, Democrats and independents, specifically in regard to their views of these movements and their impact on the workplace as well as their impressions of how the workplace has changed. On every question, independents scored between Republicans and Democrats. However, in many cases, these were differences in magnitude more than in direction.

#MeToo and social movements have impacted mentorship and sponsorship across genders, mostly in a positive direction. Both our survey and focus group data strongly suggest that the desire to mentor and sponsor people of other genders has increased as a result of these movements, while also showing that men in leadership have an increased hesitancy in terms of relationships with women reports. While a plethora of men and women leaders report a greater desire and likelihood to mentor or sponsor people of other genders, a significant number of men are less likely to do so following these movements.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research studies of this magnitude always owe thanks to many people. The core research team for this study consisted of Riya Sirkhell (MPPGA), Aynsley Wong (BA), Samantha Coronel (MPPGA), and John Izzo (PhD). Samantha Coronel coordinated the literature review and then helped shape the overall study along with Ela Bandari (MDS). Her help was critical to the launch of the study. Riya Sirkhell conducted the focus groups while serving as the able coordinator of the study; she also took the lead on interpreting the focus group data. Her insight and commitment to diversity and inclusion improved the effort at every stage. Aynsley Wong kept all the parts moving forward and was the lead writer on the final reports. As usual, her dedication, attention to detail and willingness to take on a project with enthusiasm were evident. John Izzo served as one of the principal investigators of the study and was the lead on the study throughout. Daniel Muzyka (PhD) was co-principal investigator of the study and contributed important ideas throughout the process.

When it came time to analyze the data, Jonathan Berkowitz (PhD) graciously analyzed the data while providing stellar counsel in interpreting the findings. His help was invaluable and appreciated. His keen sense of humor made the process fun as well as informative.

We would also like to acknowledge the team at YouGov who partnered with us on the quantitative survey in Canada and the United States.

Special thanks to the rest of the team at Blueprint, including David Kuhl (MD, PhD) and Duncan Shields (RCC, PhD), who helped shape the initial study, as well as Nicky Dhaliwal (MM), who engaged in leading focus groups, sourcing key staff and team members, and coordinating the final versions of these reports. Thanks to Gary Barker (PhD) of Promundo Global, who has provided wise counsel to us on many fronts including this study.

Finally, much appreciation to Nancy MacKay at MacKay CEO Forums and Katie Dudtschak and the team at RBC for their support and commitment to advancing critical thinking on this topic.



ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

This research study came out of an awareness that gender equity movements such as #MeToo and Time's Up have kickstarted important conversations around creating more equitable, more inclusive and safer workplaces for people of all genders, races and religions. This has been bolstered by recent social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter and efforts to counter anti-Asian racism. The goal of the study was to understand how the result of these social movements have affected workplace gender relations, expectations, leadership and power dynamics, and what people say has changed in recent years.

More specifically, this research aimed to investigate how the expectations held by people of all genders have changed following the emergence of the #MeToo movement, how this has impacted relationships between them and what a new model of leadership might be for leaders in the workplace. This research aimed to get a better understanding of the lived experience of people of all genders in the workplace and to learn how their expectations of leaders are changing or have already changed. However, we were unable to reach enough trans and non-binary respondents to generalize about their experience; our data sheds light only on the experiences of cis men and women. We were disappointed and hope that future studies will be able to shed light on the experiences of trans and non-binary people in the workplace.

This study was a collaborative project between Blueprint, a men's health and wellness NGO, and the University of British Columbia. A mixed-methods research methodology was employed, with both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The primary research methods included focus group discussions with business leaders in Canada and national surveys with front-line workers and business leaders in both Canada and the United States. The surveys were hosted on the global research platform YouGov, which was also our data collection partner for this study.

PRESENT STUDY

Blueprint, in conjunction with faculty at the University of British Columbia, conducted this research using a quantitative survey and a series of focus groups.

About the quantitative survey

YouGov, our data collection partner, hosted a large national survey in the United States with 1,402 respondents on their platform in August and September 2021. The survey was anonymous and voluntary, and participants were recruited from YouGov's internal database. The anonymous survey was primarily conducted to understand the lived experience of both men and women at various levels in the workplace following the emergence of #MeToo and other allied social justice movements. Specifically, the questions were aimed at investigating how relationships between people of different genders at work and people's expectations of leaders have changed with increased conversations around diversity, equity and inclusion for women and racial minorities in the workplace.

The survey had twenty focused questions on the issue, mostly multiple-choice, alongside open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights and perspectives. Demographic information was collected about gender, age, industry and company size. Optional demographic questions included ethnicity, region, income bracket, level of educational attainment, marital status and political persuasion.

There were varying degrees of regional representation covering most states in the US, with the highest representation from California, New York and Texas. Of the respondents, 53% were men and 46% were women. The rest identified as non-binary or as another gender identity. 65% of the respondents identified as white, 12% as Black, 7% as Hispanic and the rest was comprised of smaller representations from Asian, Indigenous, Middle Eastern and mixed-raced individuals. The survey was conducted in English.

Statistical analysis

Throughout this report, we note where there are significant and meaningful differences across demographics, including gender, race and ethnicity, region, level within the respondent's organization, education, income and whether respondents had children. In terms of statistical significance, we used $<.001$ as our threshold for probability; wherever we say there was a difference between groups based on demographics, that threshold was applied. To establish whether a statistically significant difference was meaningful, we considered a mean difference greater than .40 on a seven-point scale.

Several of the demographic dimensions proved not to produce statistically significant differences. Those dimensions included region in the US and whether or not the respondents had children. As such, these demographic differences are not mentioned within the report. We also found there were very few differences by level, education, income and generation. Our overall conclusion is that most generations and people at all levels within organizations see these issues and impacts similarly, and that other characteristics, such as gender, are much stronger predictors of attitude and behaviors. Some significant differences emerged with regard to demographics other than gender, and these are noted in the appropriate section of the report.



About the focus groups with senior leaders

Twelve virtual focus group discussions were held with business leaders in the United States and Canada, including people of all genders, from March to September 2021.

These anonymous focus groups were primarily conducted to understand the lived experience of leaders, both men and women, in the business world following the #MeToo Movement. Specifically, the research was aimed at investigating how expectations of leaders and relationships between people of different genders at work have changed in the context of equity movements such as #MeToo, Time's Up and Black Lives Matter.

The focus groups were comprised business leaders who were C-suite executives and directors working in different industries across the US and Canada. As noted below, 52% of participants were men and the remaining 48% were women.

The participants were recruited from professional leadership communities (MacKay CEO Forums, Young President's Organization, etc.) and YouGov's database and invited using a short survey. At first, participation was voluntary and not compensated, but halfway through the study, the team switched to an incentive-based model to encourage participants to attend the focus group sessions.

Mixed, all-women, and all-men focus groups were conducted to discern differences in responses and experiences shared by participants. Each type of group was given a separate pre-set questionnaire with subtle differences designed by the research team. Occasional follow-up questions were asked to elaborate or give examples of their comments. We found no significant differences in terms of participants' perceived candor and openness in the mixed and same-gender focus groups. We found this an encouraging finding, in that at least among C-suite leaders in Canada, men and women appeared quite willing to bring up issues with people of other genders and discuss them openly.

FOCUS GROUPS

Total people interviewed:	71
Women:	34
Men:	37
All-women groups:	2
All-men groups:	4
Mixed groups:	6



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Appendix A: Quantitative sample characteristics

Men and women are speaking out more about gender equity, racial equity and workplace harassment but for many men, intention and behaviors are not aligned

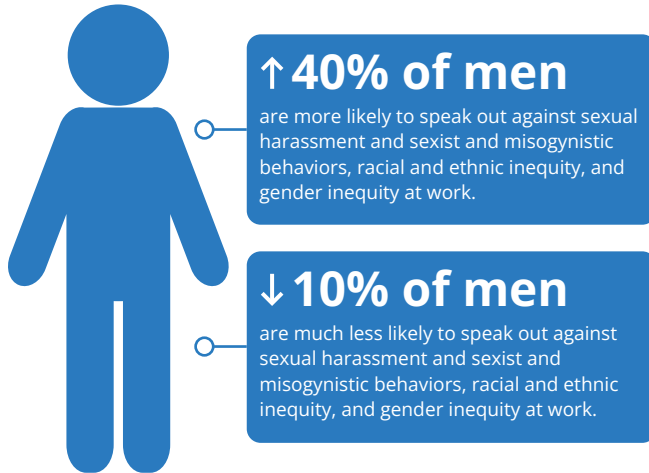
One of the things of most interest to us in this study was to ascertain whether men and women were more likely to speak out and challenge issues of racial and gender equity following the emergence of the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements. We wanted to know if these movements, and the discussions they have fostered, have motivated and emboldened people to speak out more in the workplace and challenge behaviors that might create exclusion or lack of equity.

Our results suggest that a significant number of men and an even greater percentage of women are more likely to speak out now about gender equity and racial equity as well as against sexual harassment and sexist comments.

Self-report shows a willingness to speak out at work.



Self-report on men speaking out shows general support for racial and gender equity at work.



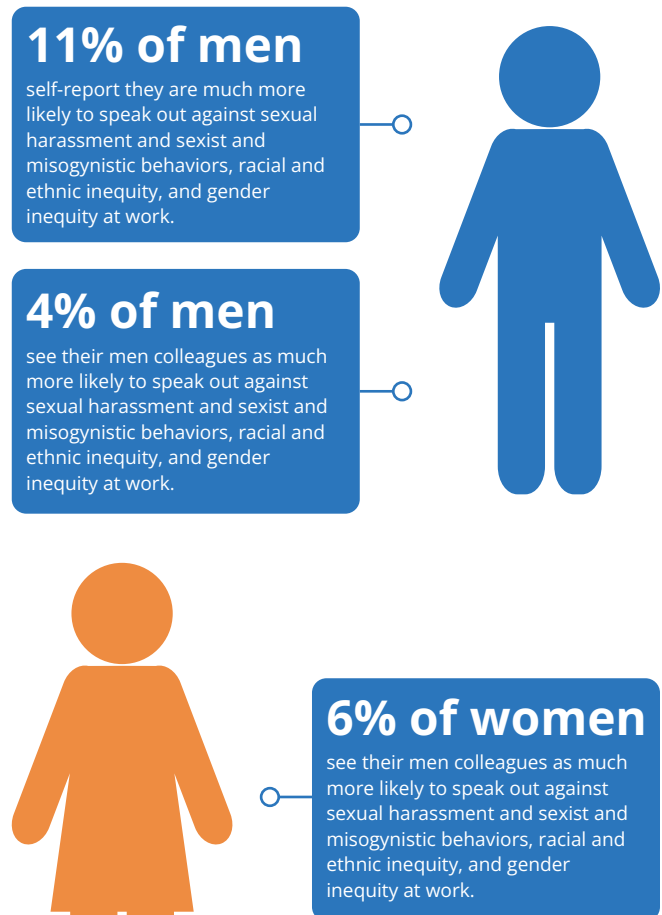
While 40% of men say they are more likely than before to speak out on these three issues, about 10% of men say they are much less likely to do so. Our research suggests that in the US, about 10% of men feel quite negative about efforts for gender and racial equity. The focus groups suggest that some of these men believe the movements have been divisive and that workplaces, and society generally, have overreacted.

Women seem to have been significantly emboldened and motivated by these movements to speak out about gender and racial issues. One in five women say they are much more likely to speak out about sexist comments and gender and racial equity issues, and over 40% agree they are generally more likely to do so. Fewer than one in ten women say they are less likely to speak out on these issues.

All respondents report being as just as likely to speak out about gender issues as they are about racial issues suggesting that the effects of the two movements on the workplace have become intertwined. This finding was also supported in the focus group data. In the focus groups, leaders said that movements for gender and racial and ethnic justice are now coming together to create a wave of awareness around inclusion and equity. Our quantitative data support the notion that the two movements are synergistic and that engagement levels for respondents are roughly similar now on both issues.

One of the disconnects in the data is that while men and women both say they are more likely to speak out about issues of gender and racial equity, when we asked men and women if they see men speaking up more on these issues in practice, a slightly different pattern emerges.

Report on men speaking out shows a difference between what men say and how they are observed.



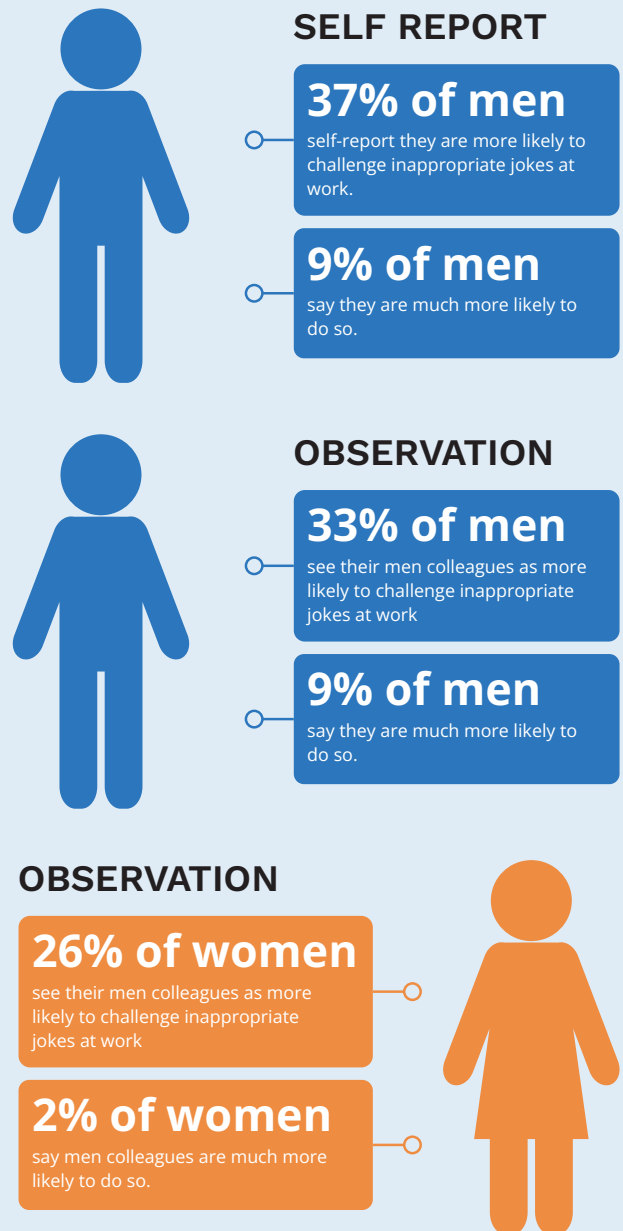
Only 4% of men and 6% of women report seeing men speak out and challenge equity issues and sexist comments much more frequently than before. Yet in terms of overall frequency, there is no significant difference between how men and women view this; about a quarter of men and women report their men colleagues speaking out more in the workplace, and fewer than one in ten people see men speaking out less than before.

Once again there seems to be a disconnect between men's intentions and the behavior as observed by both men and women in the workplace. About one in four women agree that men are now more likely to challenge inappropriate jokes.

The focus groups asked men if they felt that misogynistic and sexist comments had decreased or simply "gone underground." Generally, men said they felt it was more underground than disappeared, though many said they often find men softly encouraging each other to uphold appropriate standards. Some men said they were hesitant to be the challenger to other men. Two variables that can impact men's willingness to speak up and challenge are their seniority and education. Men who are more senior and more educated report a greater willingness to speak up. This makes sense, as men who are in more senior positions may feel more empowered to speak up and less at risk. Higher levels of education are also associated with greater likelihood to speak out on gender and racial equity issues.

The focus groups suggest that men are often hesitant to challenge each other. Previous research suggests that men often perceive other men to be more misogynistic than they are themselves. This could dampen men's willingness to speak up when they might otherwise do so because they feel out of step with their colleagues. This research strongly suggests that a majority of men want a more respectful workplace. Knowing this could embolden more men to speak up.

Report on men challenging inappropriate jokes shows a difference between what men say and how they are observed.



KEY TAKEAWAY

The overall picture, when survey data is combined with our focus group responses, suggests that men know they should speak out more on issues of sexism, racism and inappropriate jokes, but that they remain hesitant. Women appear to feel much more emboldened to speak out and challenge these behaviors at work.

How have social movements changed leaders and leadership?

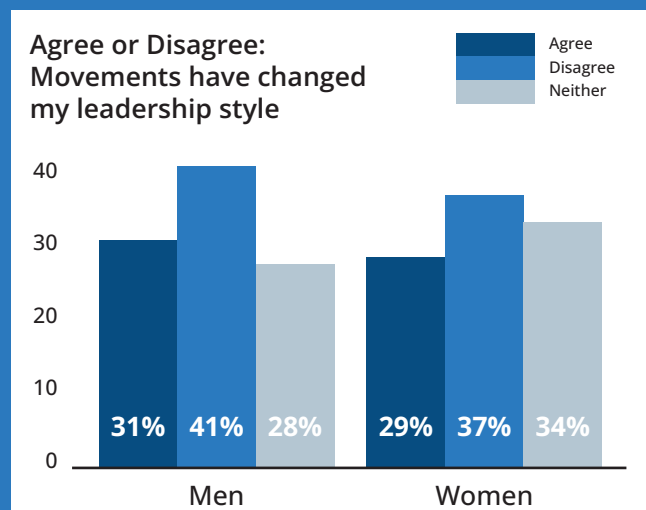
We asked leaders if the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements have changed their leadership style. About a third of men and women in leadership positions say these movements have changed their leadership, while a greater number indicate they have not (41% of men and 37% of women).

Our focus groups with C-suite leaders suggest that they have a much greater awareness of the need to focus on gender and racial equity than previously and that this has become a major area of focus for them. The men in our focus groups reported being much more engaged and aware of the importance of these issues as leaders than before these movements.

The focus groups also revealed many of the struggles of men and women in leadership as they work to lead in this new environment. Many of the men expressed a strong desire to be allies and at the same time a hesitancy about saying or doing the wrong thing. Many women leaders talked about not wanting men to “walk on eggshells” and discussed the need to create a learning environment rather than one focused on blame and shame. Some leaders expressed the concern that a focus on disadvantaged groups was at times divisive if not handled carefully.

Overall, leaders felt there has been demonstrable progress toward greater gender and racial equity but that there is still a long way to go.

About a third say movements have changed their leadership style, but a greater number say they have not.



When we asked, in an open-ended way, how these movements have created change, we discovered viewpoints which illustrate how leaders are personally reacting to the movements. These open-ended comments suggest that for many leaders, these movements have led to a heightened awareness of the experiences of people of other genders.

”

“I used to try very hard to work with staff to improve their work; now, I work around their shortcomings because it's safer than potentially giving someone something to claim they're offended by. More work for me, and they may not improve as much as they could, but it's safer and less of a hassle in the long run. It's a very dishonest way to do things, but people don't want honesty, they just want mediocrity validated.”

“This is a moment of opportunity—however fleeting—to hope that you will be heard. I identify as Native American and have long been part of diversity leadership initiatives in my company and nationally. It has been frustrating because they never go anywhere. Men of a certain age are still tone deaf and dismissive. At the least, especially BLM protests got through their barriers. They knew they had to at least pretend to care about these issues. But they so far have yet to translate that into real and meaningful change. For people like me, it has been a chance to push things even more because for a very little while, some of these principles might get through the stubborn veneer of old-school white males. That said, the patriarchy still hasn't given ground and is already retreating to its comfort zone of marginalizing women and people of color. Just look at the Republican Party, which is the party of white male fascism.”

“As a white man, before BLM my approach was to ignore race and just treat everyone equally. The conversations with my Black coworkers after George Floyd was killed opened my eyes to what it's like to be Black in America, and gave me (I think) some understanding of systemic racism. It's made me think harder about hiring, employee development, culture, education... and it has direct relevance to our line of business, too. The distinction between 'not racist' and 'anti-racist' was a really important paradigm shift, too.”

“I have always been trained/raised to be aware of and sensitive to how non-white males are regarded and treated, which I have applied to my workplaces. I do feel more confident to speak out about issues I see/experience with regard to gender and racial issues, including being able to provide more formal opportunities for growth and advancement specifically for women and minorities.”

“Being more conscientious of inclusivity and elevating the voices of female, non-binary, and people of color in decision making. I also interrupt white men to ask for the viewpoints of others.”

“Became more aware of situations I previously did not notice, which allows me to incorporate more diverse points of view in directing others.”

“I pay more attention as to how I treat people. I am more careful about how I interact with others, especially men.”

“Terrified EVERY male because we are fearful we will lose our job over the rampant cancel culture and paralyzing strict political correctness that has replaced reason and friendship. These are phony movements—most sane and balanced people realize this—but leftist media and the cancel culture gestapo currently runs the country instead of intelligence and compassion. These radical ideas and indoctrination campaigns are destroying what once made the US a great nation. Totally phony movement as that make racism much worse and ‘Me Too’ is politically selective (ie, Clinton and Biden get a pass on sexual harassment while others do not). Very, very sad. The workplace has become sterile, insensitive, cold, and mean.”

“MeToo has made my workplace give me more tools (eg formal guidelines and complaint procedures in the organization) to address issues. BLM has made me more aware of this type of discrimination and aware that I need to be proactive in making my workplace inclusive.”

“I'm much more aware and empathic. I welcome feedback, and I actively seek out inclusion education. I have fought for better reporting and accountability on representation, and I want to actively show I am an ally. Before, I expected others to educate when I made mistakes; now, I do the work myself and do not put that on others. I try to find new ways to bring in more voices and give people space for their ideas to be heard and amplify when necessary.”



We also discovered viewpoints which express strong opposition to the way these movements have impacted leadership and workplace culture.

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“I used to try very hard to work with staff to improve their work; now, I work around their shortcomings because it’s safer than potentially giving someone something to claim they’re offended by. More work for me, and they may not improve as much as they could, but it’s safer and less of a hassle in the long run. It’s a very dishonest way to do things, but people don’t want honesty, they just want mediocrity validated.”

KEY TAKEAWAY

There is a much greater awareness of the need to focus on gender and racial equity than before the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements. Focus groups reported that leaders are much more engaged and aware of the importance of issues of sexism and racism, but there is general agreement that further progress still needs to be made.

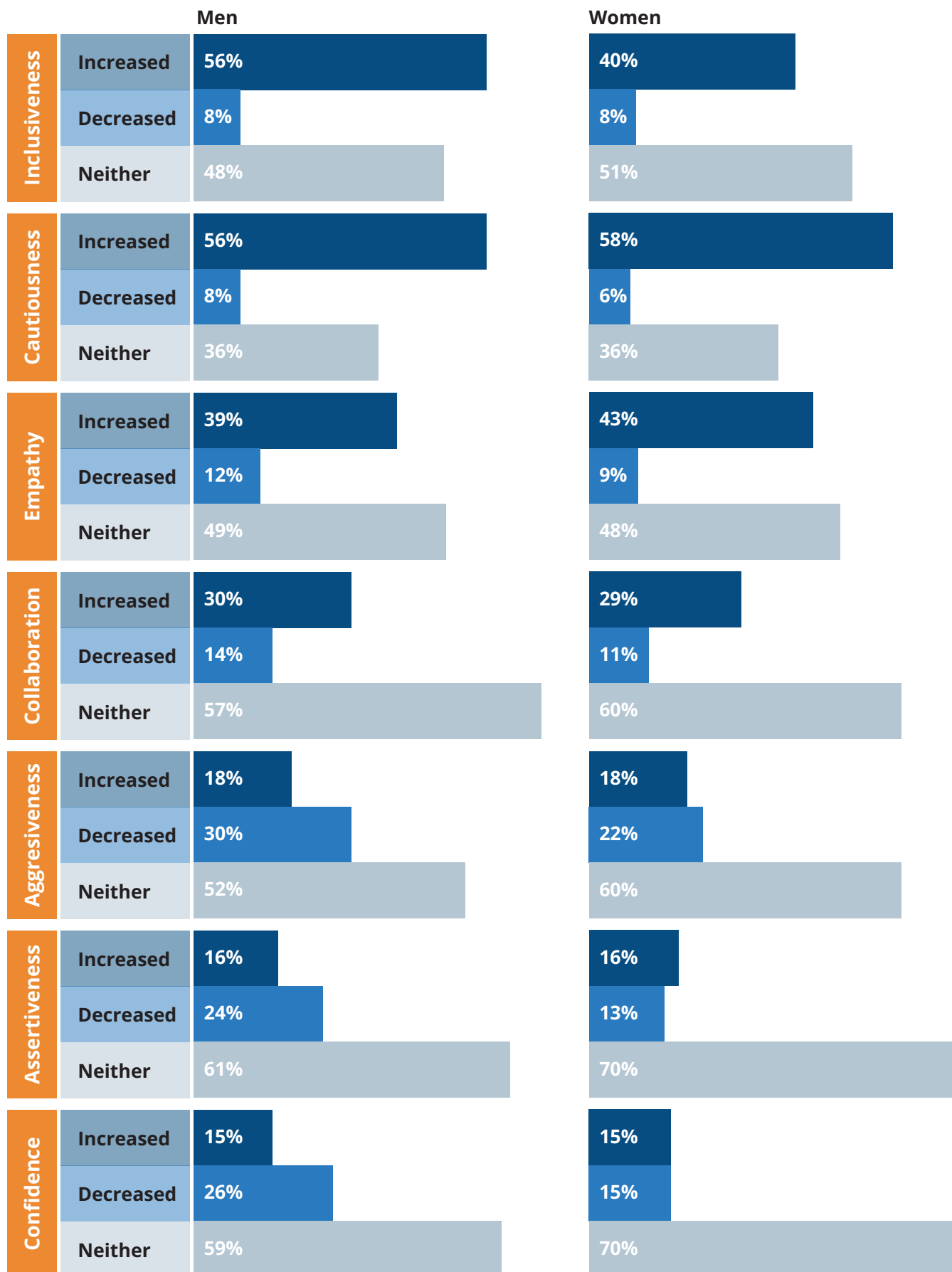
Men in leadership positions are changing and see the need for change

Much study has been done over the last decades of how men are perceived differently from women as leaders. We wanted to explore two key issues in our study. The first was whether perceptions of men's leadership has changed following the #MeToo movement, especially in regard to men being more inclusive, empathic and inclusive. We also were curious as to whether this movement had any impact on men's confidence and caution.

We asked whether men in leadership have changed in the five years since these movements began. Men said that men leaders, following #MeToo, are more inclusive, more cautious, more empathic and more collaborative than before. They also felt that men were less confident and less assertive than before. For the most part, women and saw similar changes in men's leadership, although men thought that men in leadership had increased their inclusiveness and cautiousness by 15% more than women viewed them.



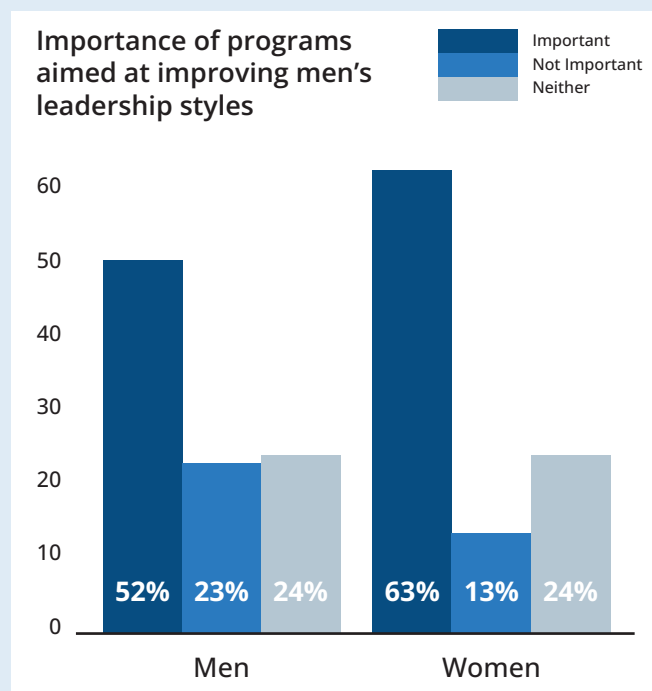
Changes in men who hold leadership positions.



In terms of men's leadership, in particular, we were also curious as to whether men and women felt that intentional efforts to develop men as leaders were important. Our focus groups had suggested that there was a strong interest among male leaders to explore what it means to be a male leader now and to gain the skills and aptitudes needed to lead in a more diverse and inclusive manner.

When asked how important it was for there to be programs to improve men's leadership, about half of men and two-thirds of women said that it is important, while 17% of men and 23% of women said it was extremely important. Still, almost one in four men (23%) and 13% of women said it was not important. The number of men who said it is not important is in alignment with the overall number of men who believe that social movements have had a negative impact on the workplace. We found it encouraging that five in ten men believe that programs aimed directly at men in leadership are important and that an even greater number, six in ten women, feel the same way. We think this should encourage organizations and those interested in leadership development to create programs specifically for men to transition to new ways of leading.

Half of men and two thirds of women say programs to improve men's leadership are important.



Focus groups helped us to understand the increased inclusivity, caution, empathy and collaboration that men in leadership are exhibiting. We heard the following viewpoints:

”

“Two of the people that I supervise are not white. I've made a concerted effort to initiate conversations about racial issues at work, microaggressions, and strategies for change. Then I listened. I let my team members speak and express their frustrations and experiences at work and in general. During my one-on-one meetings with each team member, I have added time for them to speak with me about anything on their mind. This has fostered an environment that is more open to issues and frustrations. I don't pretend that this has made everything rainbows and sunshine, but it's been a step forward to call out inappropriate comments and behaviors.”

“They have made me MUCH more cautious/reserved with female and minority colleagues. ‘Are they a diversity hire?’ Is now a common question people ask which is not fair to minority employees. This was not a question ever asked in the past.”

“They have made me more withdrawn. I no longer lead, I just follow the corporate line. These movements are destroying America and leadership and encourage people to be mediocre instead of exceptional.”

“I am slower to reach a decision, waiting for input from others. Also I am willing to change my decision if another voice offers a compelling argument.”

Our focus groups with men in leadership positions showed that they have a significant appetite to explore what it means to be a man in leadership following these movements. We think that programs for men that tackle these issues directly could be very beneficial.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Survey data and our focus group responses show that the workplace culture has changed as result of movements such #MeToo and Black Lives Matter. While individuals may deny that their leadership style has been affected, both men and women have noticed that men in leadership are more inclusive, cautious, empathic and collaborative, and less aggressive, assertive and confident.

The #MeToo movement has impacted mentorship and sponsorship across genders

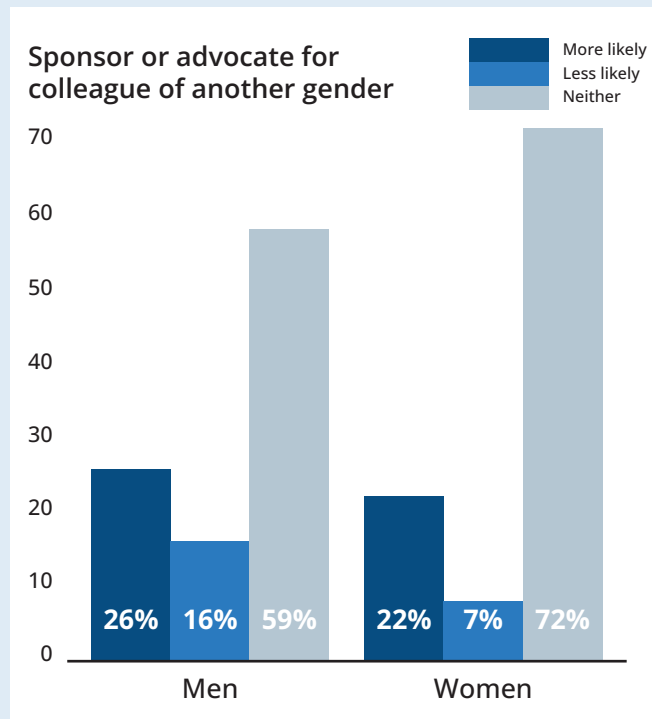
One of the areas we wanted to explore was how the #MeToo movement and related conversations have impacted mentorship and sponsorship across genders. Have men leaders in particular become more reticent to mentor, have meetings with and sponsor women team members?

We discovered a mixed picture in terms of the impact of social movements. Men in leadership positions are divided in how they interact with colleagues of other genders. About one in five men leaders say they are more likely to sponsor or advocate for a colleague of another gender, and one in four are more likely to mentor one. About one-fifth of men say they are less likely to do either.

When asked about the likelihood of one-on-one meetings with a colleague of another gender, 20% of men are more likely and 20% are less likely to have these meetings. One in ten men say they are much less likely to mentor, sponsor or have one-on-one meetings with a colleague of another gender.

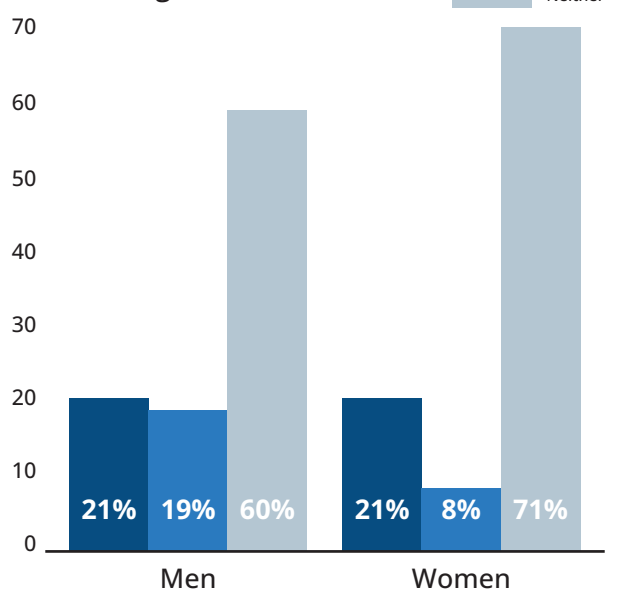
Women leaders are about as likely to engage in these activities as men, but much fewer women than men say they are less likely to do so. About one in five women leaders say they are more likely to mentor, sponsor or have one-on-one meetings with a colleague of another gender. Fewer than one in ten women are less likely.

Men in leadership positions are divided on how they interact with colleagues of other genders.

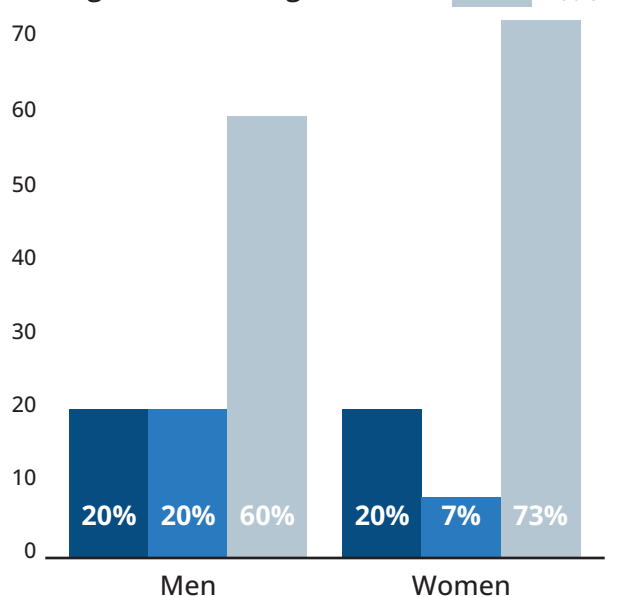


Focus groups told us there are conflicting views and feelings among men in leadership roles today. Conversations about gender equity have increased commitment to supporting women's careers. Our focus group conversations with men in leadership showed that they are more motivated to help people of other genders to achieve greater success than before the rise of recent social movements. But at the same time, men expressed seriousness in preserving the "optics" surrounding how workplace behavior can be negatively viewed by others in the current environment. A man in one of our focus groups expressed the dilemma that arose when a man in senior leadership invited a report, also a man, to attend a conference in New Orleans. "We spent evenings in the French Quarter and a female report said to me upon our return that she would like to have that kind of opportunity to spend time with me. But I thought to myself, would I be comfortable doing that in this climate? Probably not." This was indicative of the general hesitancy expressed by men in leadership. Men expressed a strong desire to mentor and sponsor while also expressing worry about being accused of unethical behavior.

Mentor a colleague of another gender



One-on-one meetings with colleague of another gender



KEY TAKEAWAY

Survey data suggests that #MeToo has impacted the willingness of men in leadership to meet with, mentor and sponsor women colleagues to some extent. However, it has also motivated a larger number of men to be more active in mentoring and sponsoring women team members. Focus groups suggest that men are supportive but hesitant in their actions.

Men don't feel their voices are welcomed on gender issues

One of the issues we sought to explore in our research was whether men felt their voices were welcomed in gender equity conversations. Our focus groups with men in leadership showed a clear hesitancy among some men to have a full voice in the conversation.

We explored whether men felt their voices were welcomed on issues of gender equity and sexual harassment, compared with their women colleagues. One in three men felt their voices were less welcomed and 15% said it was much less welcomed. Yet 18% of men say their voices were more welcomed. In our focus groups, women leaders seemed genuinely interested in how men were feeling and thinking about these issues.

We asked a similar question of women; 30% feel their voices were more welcomed and 18% report less.

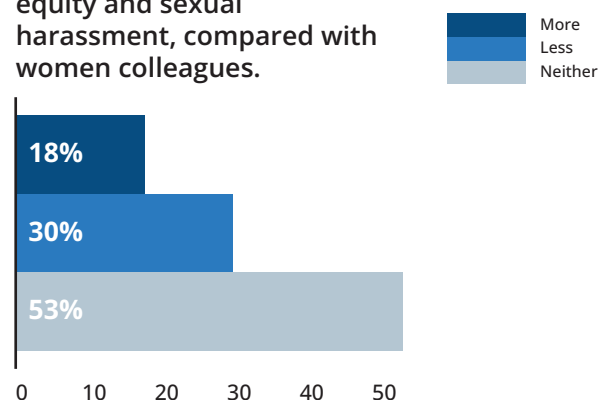
KEY TAKEAWAY

Survey data suggests that men do not feel their voices are welcomed in gender equity conversations.

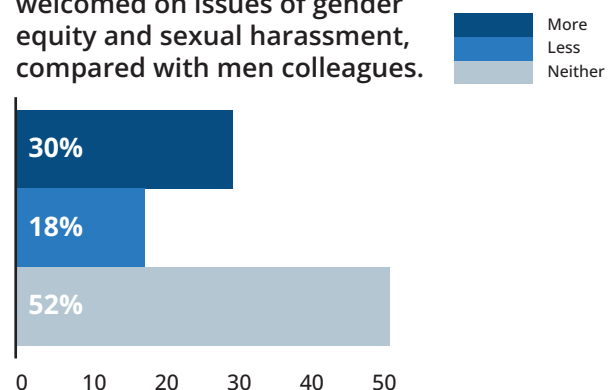
Focus groups suggest that men are hesitant to have a full voice on issues of gender equity and sexual harassment.

Men feel their voice is less welcomed on issues of gender equity and sexual harassment.

Voice as a man in leadership welcomed on issues of gender equity and sexual harassment, compared with women colleagues.



Voice as a women in leadership welcomed on issues of gender equity and sexual harassment, compared with men colleagues.

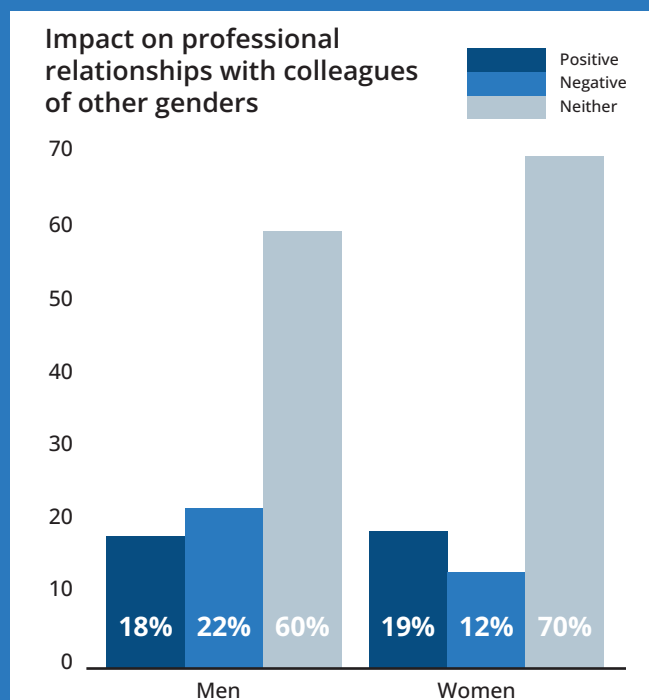


Relationships between people of different genders following #MeToo

One of the areas we explored was how the #MeToo movement has impacted relationships between people of different genders. Over two thirds of respondents (60% of men and 70% of women) say that professional relationships with colleagues of other genders have not changed because of #MeToo. Of the remaining number, men are about equally likely to report a positive or negative impact (20% each).

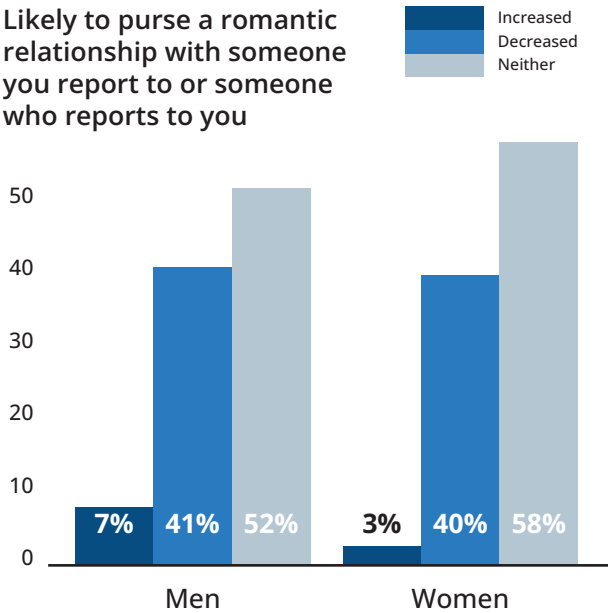
Overall, men and women agree, in that almost 20% of each group report a positive impact on relationships between people of different genders. While we cannot definitively say that these movements have improved relationships between people of different genders, we can confidently say that according to our data, for the majority of people at work, the #MeToo movement has not negatively impacted these relationships, and many feel #MeToo has improved them.

Men and women report a positive impact on professional relationships with colleagues of other genders.

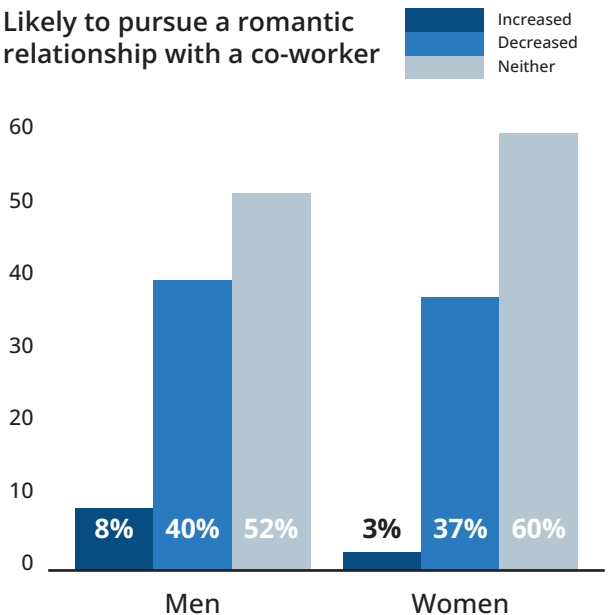


40% are less likely to pursue romantic relationships at work.

Likely to pursue a romantic relationship with someone you report to or someone who reports to you



Likely to pursue a romantic relationship with a co-worker



One of the areas we were interested in exploring was how #MeToo and related movements have impacted people's willingness to pursue romantic relationships at work. Over the past several years, there have been some high-profile firings of men and women who had romantic relationships with colleagues at work, especially when those colleagues reported to them, even when the relationships were consensual. Therefore, we wanted to explore how these movements and related conversations have changed the picture regarding romantic and intimate relationships at work. Not surprisingly, almost 40% of our respondents said they are less likely to have romantic relationships at work. Thirty-one percent of men and 27% of women said they are much less likely to pursue a romantic relationship with a colleague, with the numbers only slightly higher for the question of dating someone who reports to them (33% and 32% respectively). Still, slightly over half of men and almost six out of ten women said the movements made them neither more nor less likely to pursue romance at work. Men and women did not differ significantly in their responses on these questions.

It appears that generation is a significant influence in terms of this issue. Millennials and Gen X were the most likely of all groups to pursue romantic relationships at work, whereas a large number of baby boomers, especially men (30% of all men), report being much less likely to do so.

When we asked survey respondents to explain in an open-ended way why the #MeToo movement had a negative or positive effect on their professional relationships with colleagues of other genders, we received a variety of viewpoints, including many negative perceptions of the #MeToo movement.

”

“#MeToo has made the topic of sexual discrimination more polarized and harder for people of both sexes to talk about in general. There’s a feeling of people being worried about saying something that is taken in an unintended way and that the opinions of men don’t matter.”

“Even as an outspoken feminist I feel I have to walk on eggshells in many cases because instead of feeling the ability to be open I fear anything I say could be taken out of context, misunderstood, or even when misstated, treated without grace and as a male I am guilty even if shown the accusation is not true.”

“Because the people who initially had the complaint were true and real... the ones who started the #MeToo movement were not—were untrustworthy, appeared to be piggybacking on the pain of those who were truly abused/used.”

“People who are part of the politically motivated butt hurt feeling #MeToo Movement have made it to where you cannot even speak to someone of the opposite gender without at least 6 witnesses for your protection.”

“I find my some of male colleagues visibly concerned about their treatment of women. Many are sincere and have never been threatened by or acted inappropriately, but a few have had to work very hard at changing behavior and attitudes. That can be awkward to navigate.”

“Because every male manager is afraid that he will be accused of sexual harassment by a female employee as a direct result of the #MeToo movement.”

KEY TAKEAWAY

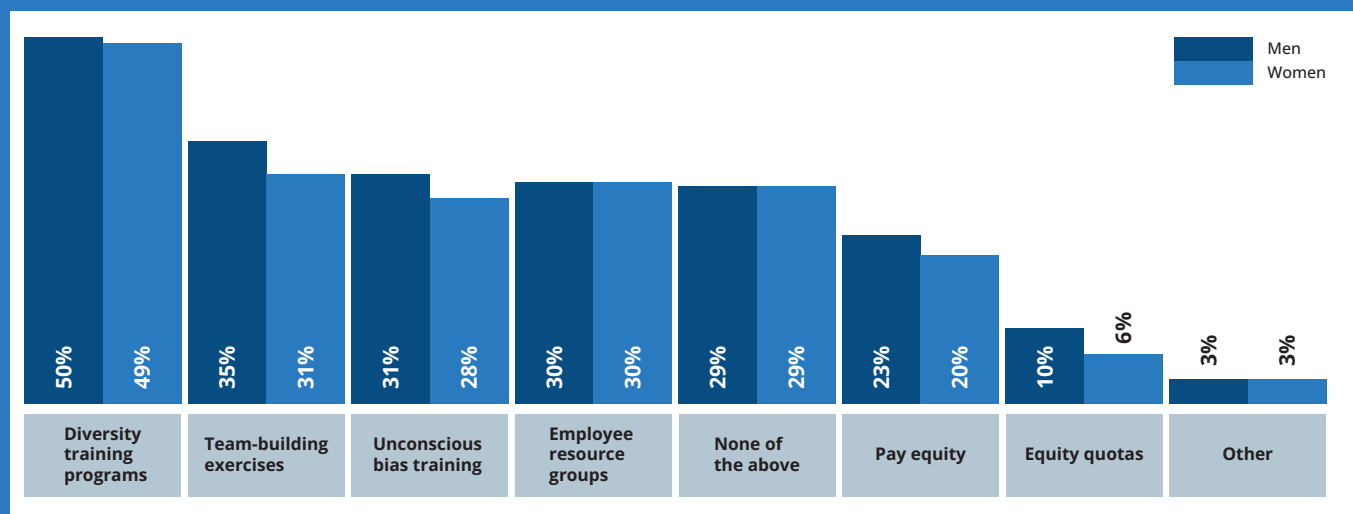
Survey data suggests that #MeToo has not negatively impacted professional relationships between people of different genders. People are less willing to have romantic relationships at work.

Workplace efforts to address gender and racial equity are working, for the most part

Over the past decade, organizations have accelerated initiatives aimed at increasing diversity and achieving greater inclusion for historically marginalized groups. Our goal in this study was to examine the pervasiveness and the perceived effectiveness of various efforts to create a more inclusive workplace. We specifically asked about six of the most common workplace efforts towards inclusion: diversity training, equity hiring quotas, pay equity, team-building exercises, unconscious bias training and employee resource groups. Only 3% of respondents chose “other” as an effort in their workplace, giving us confidence that the six types of initiatives we measured covered the majority of initiatives being implemented widely.

Only 29% of those surveyed said that their workplace had not conducted any intentional efforts to address inclusion and gender equity. The most common workplace activity was diversity training, with 50% of respondents reporting this being done in their workplace, followed by about a third saying their workplace engaged in team-building exercises, unconscious bias training and employee resource groups. About one in five reported having efforts toward pay equity and 10% or fewer had specific hiring quotas.

Workplace activities tried



We tested how respondents felt about the effectiveness of these six different workplace initiatives to address inclusion and equity. Our overall finding is that these initiatives are perceived as having a positive impact. For five of the six, more than 50% of respondents said they were effective: pay equity (73%), employee resource groups (64%), team-building exercises (64%), unconscious bias training (62%) and diversity training programs (56%). Equity quotas was the only initiative that less than 50% of respondents rated as effective (42%).

In rating effectiveness, 47% of respondents said that equity quotas were the most ineffective.

Generally, those efforts aimed at building understanding, such as team-building exercises and employee resource groups, were rated more highly than those aimed at changing attitudes more directly, such as diversity training and unconscious bias training. While the differences in the ratings may be relatively small, they are statistically significant and meaningful, especially for men. This finding suggests that perhaps when initiatives are presented as opportunities to learn about the experiences of people who are different rather than as training exercises to reduce bias, these may be more positively perceived. This appears especially true for men, the team members at whom many of these initiatives are directed for change.

While our study did not directly examine the effectiveness of various programs to engender greater inclusion, it does suggest that organizations may want to consider carefully how initiatives are framed and named since this may impact the effectiveness of these programs. This bears further exploration.

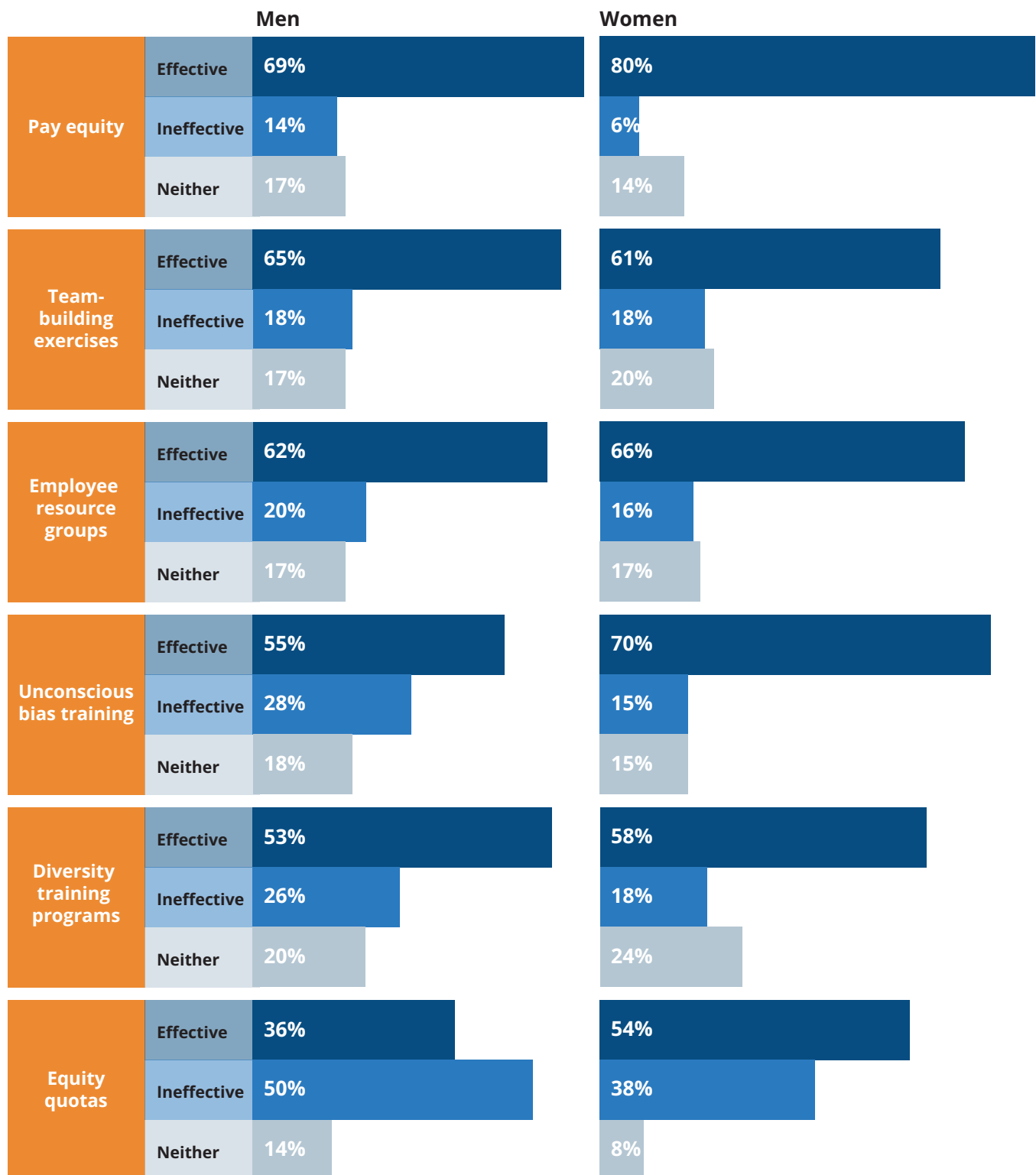
In terms of the initiatives the greatest number of people see as extremely effective, only pay equity stood out, with 40% saying it was extremely effective; men and women gave the same rating (38% of men said it was extremely effective, as did 42% of women). While one in ten men said pay equity was extremely ineffective, overall, our results suggest that men strongly support equal pay efforts for their women colleagues, with 69% of men agreeing that pay equity is effective.

Hierarchy of perceived effectiveness



Hierarchy of perceived ineffectiveness

Effectiveness of workplace activities tried



While our respondents, both men and women, tended to agree in their ratings of workplace initiatives, there were some very significant differences. With equity quotas, over half of women said they were effective (54%) while half of men said they were ineffective (50%). In fairness, almost 40% of women also rated them as ineffective (38%), which suggests that women hold some mixed feelings about quotas.

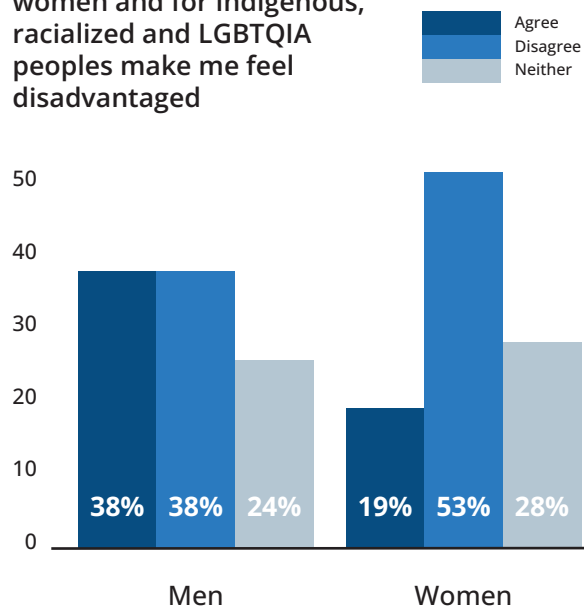
Another area of divergence regards unconscious bias training, where 70% of women said they were effective compared to 55% of men. Also, when it came to the highest and lowest ratings, 18% of men said these trainings are extremely ineffective while 18% of women said they were extremely effective—in short, the same percentage of each group held opposite opinions. This difference also appeared with regard to diversity training, but to a lesser extent.

Employee resource groups and team-building were rated highly by both men and women. This may suggest that efforts focused on building communication, understanding, and safe places for conversation are likely to be received well by everyone, but especially men.

We also explored whether people felt disadvantaged if their company had special initiatives for women or for Indigenous, racialized, or LGBTQIA people. One in four men (38%) agreed that such initiatives make them feel disadvantaged, while only 19% of women said this. The same number of men (38%) said that such initiatives do not make them feel disadvantaged and over half of women (53%) agreed. Overall, there was close to an even split of men feeling they were or were not disadvantaged, while more than half of women do not see themselves as disadvantaged due to special initiatives.

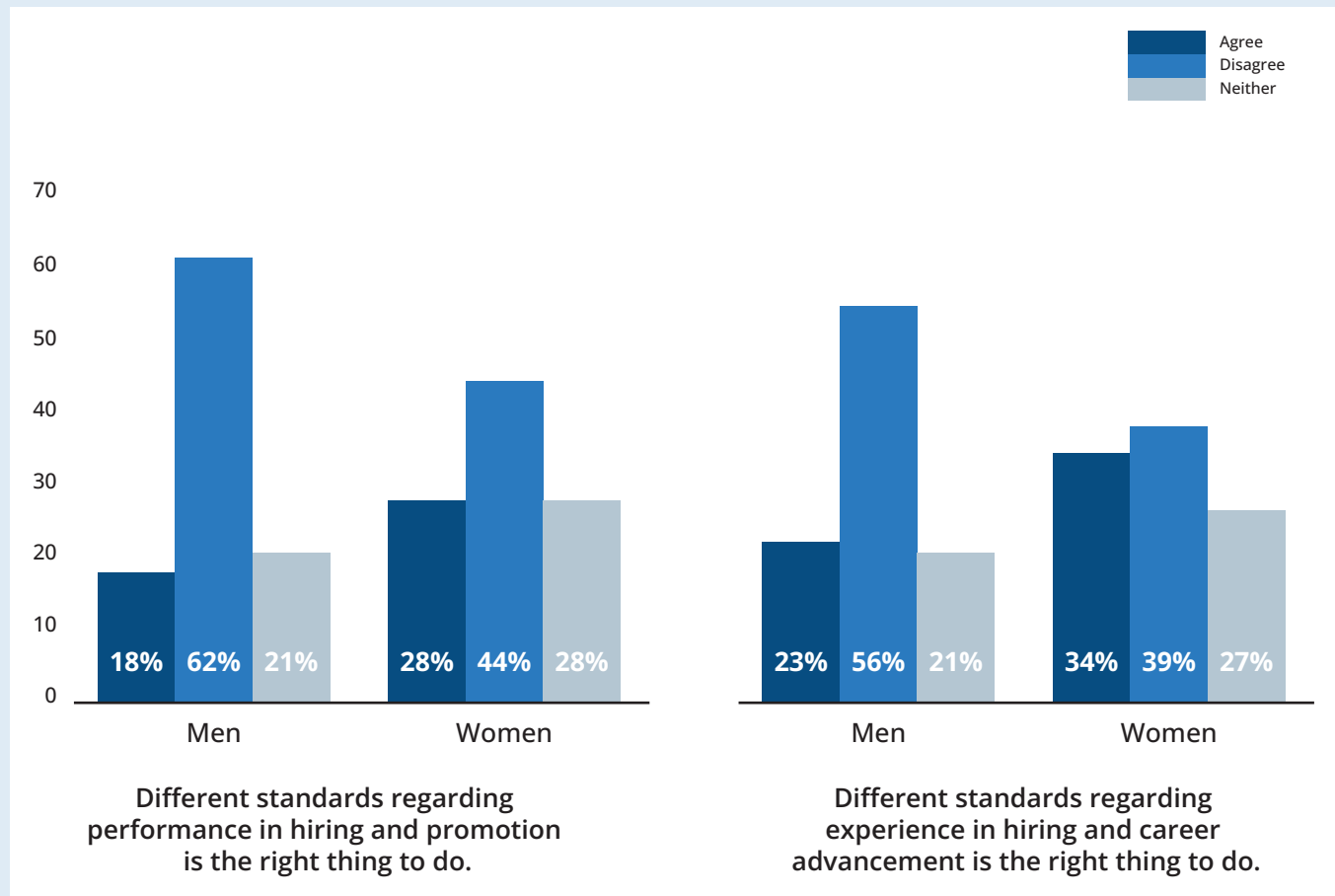
Men are divided on whether they feel disadvantaged by special initiatives. Half of women do not feel disadvantaged.

Special initiatives for women and for Indigenous, racialized and LGBTQIA peoples make me feel disadvantaged



We asked specifically how respondents felt about having different standards for experience and performance in hiring and promotions in order to achieve greater equity and diversity. Two thirds of men disagreed with these efforts: 62% disagreed with different standards of performance and 56% disagreed with different standards of experience. Four out of ten of women disagreed with these initiatives: 44% disagreed with different standards of performance and 39% disagreed with different standards of experience. The biggest difference between men and women was with regard to standards of experience, with one in three women (34%) saying it was the right thing to achieve equity while only one in five men (23%) agreed.

Mixed picture on whether different standards for performance and experience is the right thing to do. Two thirds of men say no.



KEY TAKEAWAY

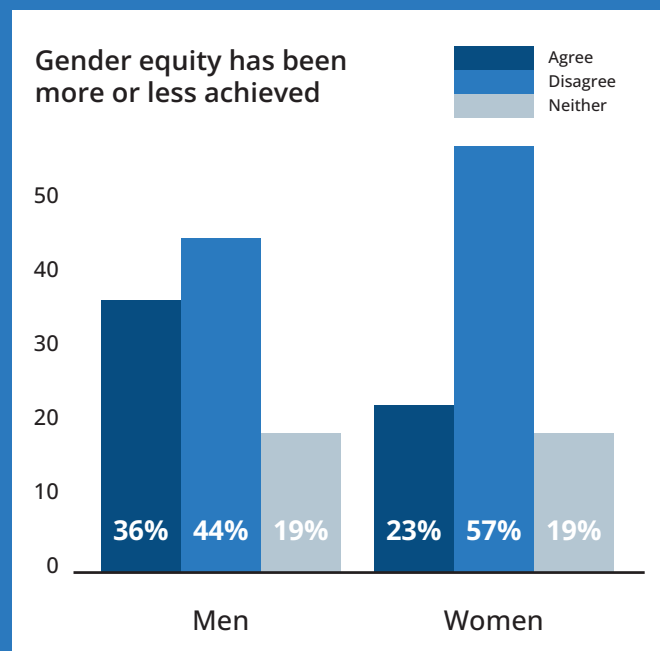
Survey findings show that workplace efforts to increase gender and racial equity are working. The most highly rated activities are those that focus on building team cohesion instead of on changing attitudes.

Men are divided on whether initiatives for women and for Indigenous, racialized and LGBTQIA people make men feel disadvantaged. In particular, men do not generally support having different standards for hiring, promotion and career advancement.

Most people think gender equity has not been achieved and that the focus on gender equity is not diminishing

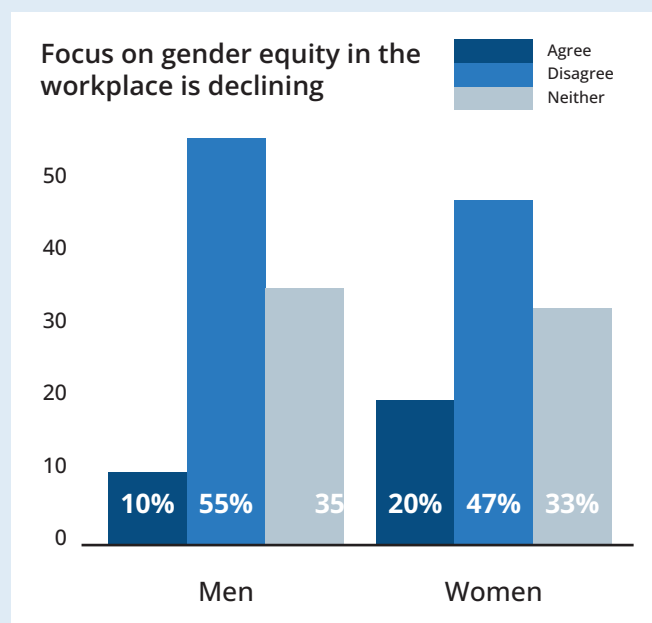
One of the issues of interest to us was whether people at work believe that gender equity has more or less been achieved or if there is a long way yet to go. As well, in our focus groups, some women leaders suggested that interest in addressing gender equity was somewhat declining and that there is now a more significant focus on racial and ethnic equity, but our survey data did not support this conclusion. Overall, 44% of men and 57% of women said that gender equity has not been achieved, while 36% of men and only 23% of women felt it has been achieved. Both men and women felt we have more ground to cover before we achieve gender equity but, not surprisingly, women felt this more strongly. Generally, men and women appear to align in thinking that more progress is needed.

44% of men and 57% of women say gender equity has not been achieved.

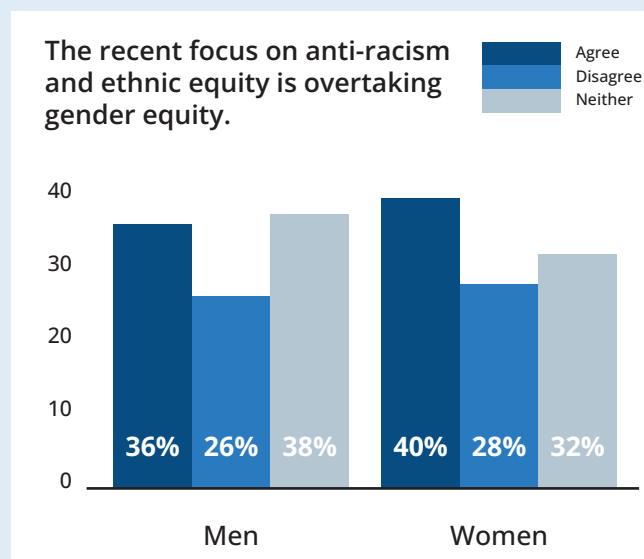


Only 10% of men and 20% of women agreed with the statement that the focus on gender equity in the workplace is declining. However, when we asked if the focus on anti-racism and racial equity was overtaking the focus on gender equity, 36% of men and 40% of women agreed. Over a quarter of men and women disagreed (men 26%; women 28%). It appears there is some feeling that the focus on gender equity is being overtaken by a broader focus on equity and inclusion in many forms. This finding was bolstered by our focus group data, where participants said that society is focusing now on equity across many areas and that gender is now a part of that larger conversation. In the focus groups of C-suite leaders, some expressed that social movements are synergistically creating progress for all historically marginalized communities.

Only 10% of men and 20% of women say the focus on gender equity in the workplace is declining.



36% of men and 40% of women say anti-racism and ethnic equity is overtaking the focus on gender.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Men and women disagree that gender equity has been achieved.

Focus group discussions showed there is some belief that the focus on gender equity has declined in favor of a focus on racial and ethnic equity, but survey data did not strongly support this belief.

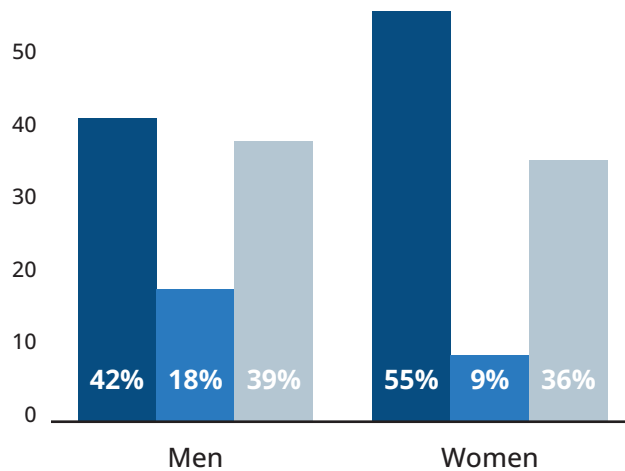
Commitment to allyship is growing among people of all genders

One of the most hopeful findings in our study was that we noted a meaningful increase in people's desire to be allies in the movement towards gender, racial and LGBTQIA equity. We asked respondents: "Compared with five years ago when these movements started, do you feel more responsible to create a respectful, inclusive workplace?" The responses showed that 43% of men and 55% of women feel more responsible to help create a more respectful and gender-inclusive work environment than they did five years ago. The desire to be an ally increased even more when we asked how responsible people feel to create a more racially and ethnically inclusive workplace, with 41% of men and 48% of women saying they do.

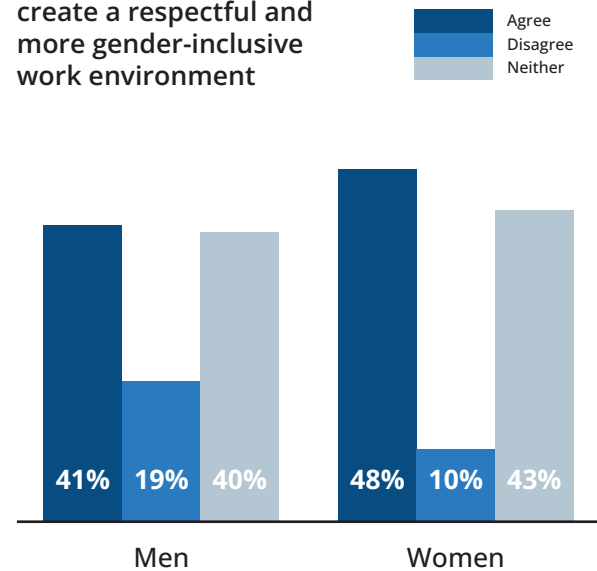


Commitment to workplace inclusion has increased compared to five years ago.

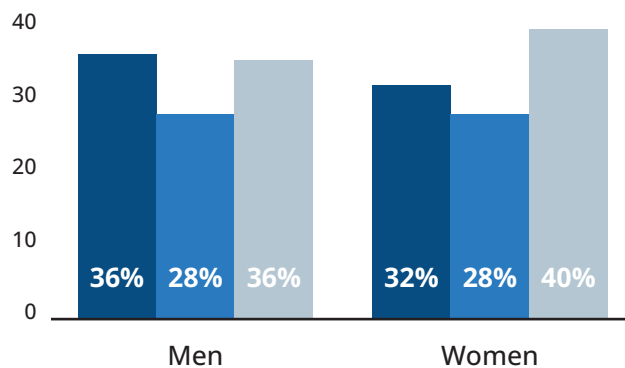
I feel more responsible to create a respectful and more racially and ethnically inclusive workplace



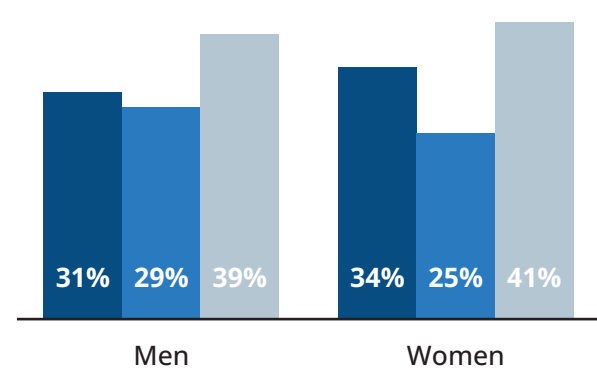
I feel more responsible to create a respectful and more gender-inclusive work environment



Among my colleagues, men are now as likely as women to rebuke sexist jokes or misogynistic comments



Among my colleagues, men are now as likely as women to speak up and share their opinions during conversation about sexual harassment in the workplace



When asked about men's behavior in standing up against sexist jokes and sexual harassment, men and women are in agreement: just over a third say that among their colleagues, men are now as likely as women to rebuke sexist jokes or misogynistic comments, and just over a third say that men are now as likely as women to speak up and share their opinions during conversations about sexual harassment in the workplace. Just under a third of men and women disagree that men are as likely as women to speak up in either case.

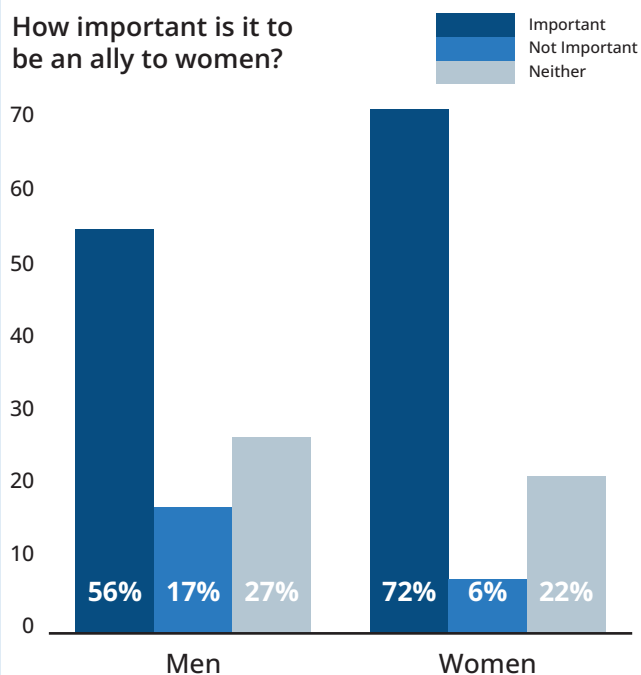
We also specifically asked how important it was for respondents to be allies to various groups in the workplace—specifically, to women, racialized minorities and LGBTQIA people. We found meaningful differences across groups in terms of allyship. Fifty-six percent of men said it was important to them to be an ally for women with 26% saying it was extremely important to them.

As far as racialized communities, 49% of men said it was important for them to be an ally and 23% said it was extremely important. Among women, 66% said this was important and 40% said it was extremely important. On the other end of the spectrum, 24% of men said it was not important to them, and 17% said it was extremely unimportant to them, compared with 12% of women who said it was not important and 7% who said it was extremely unimportant.

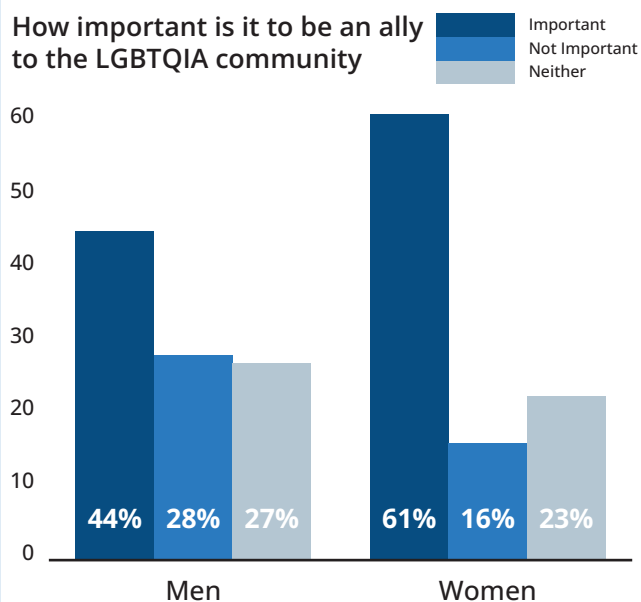
Finally, there were significant differences in how men and women are engaging as allies for the LGBTQIA community. While commitment to being an ally for LGBTQIA communities was lower for both men and women in the workplace, this was far more pronounced for men. While six of ten women (61%) said it was important to them to be allies for LGBTQIA people, slightly fewer than half of men (44%) felt similarly. Also, 22% of men said it was extremely unimportant to them and the same percentage said it was extremely important—an equivalent number on each end of the spectrum. Men seem split on allyship for this community. Meanwhile, 37% of women felt it was extremely important to be an ally to LGBTQIA people and only 11% said it was extremely unimportant to them.

Importance of being an ally

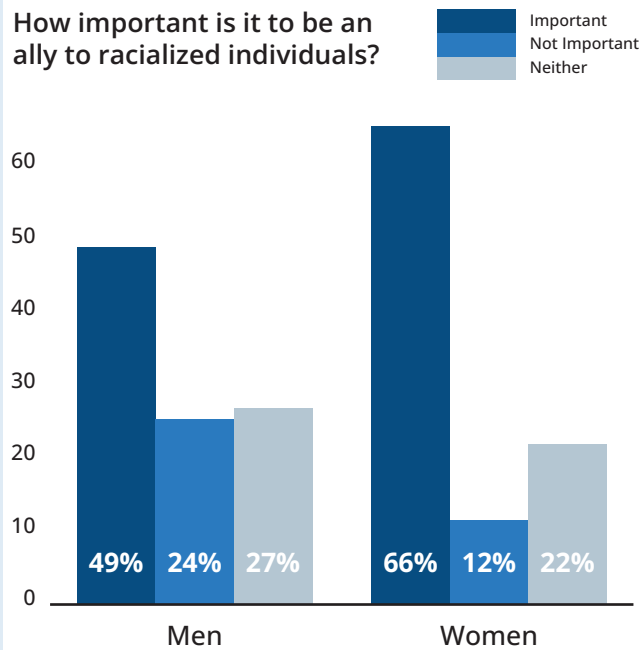
How important is it to be an ally to women?



How important is it to be an ally to the LGBTQIA community?



How important is it to be an ally to racialized individuals?



One of the most interesting findings is that commitment to being an ally for gender and racial equity are about equal now for both men and women respondents. This suggests that movements such as Black Lives Matter and other efforts for awareness are raising the bar in terms of people wanting to help.



KEY TAKEAWAY

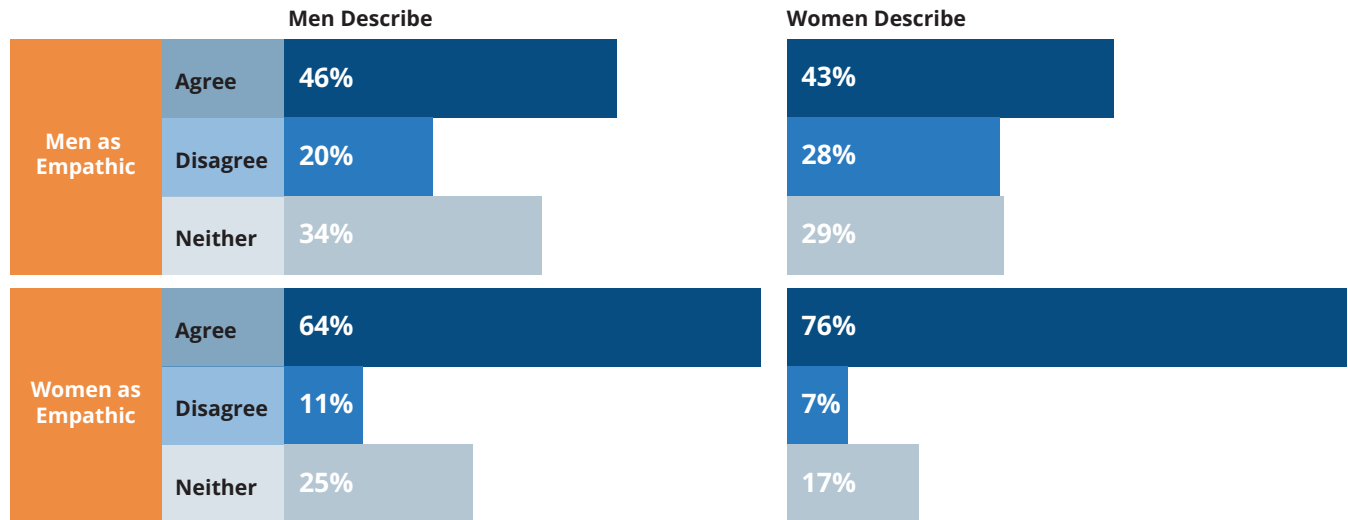
Men and women show increasing commitment to being an ally. The most support from men and women is shown towards women, followed by racialized people and LGBTQIA people. While men do support allyship for LGBTQIA people, it is far lower than their support for gender and racial inclusion.

As leaders, men and women are perceived differently, but women leaders are seen as more empathic and inclusive, while just as visionary, charismatic, strategic and assertive

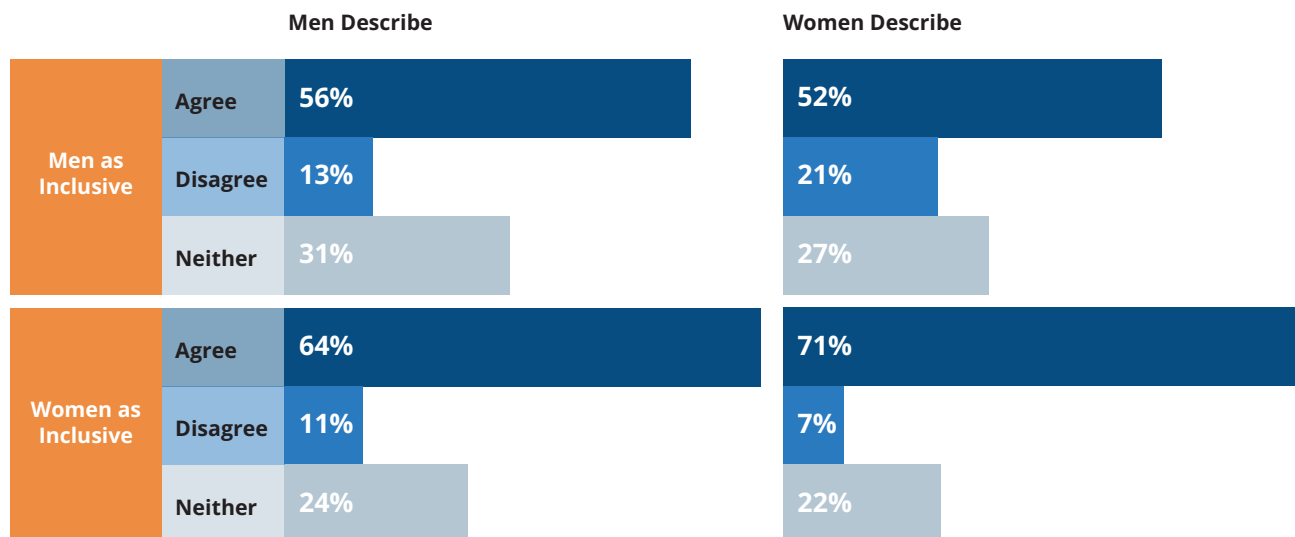
One of the areas we explored was how men and women were perceived as leaders and how perceptions of men's leadership may be changing following recent social movements. Based on previous research studies we expected that men would be seen as more strategic, charismatic and visionary leaders, while women would be seen as more empathic and inclusive leaders. Our research suggests that following #MeToo and other social movements, men are perceived to have changed in key ways as leaders, and women are now seen as positively as men when it comes to key attributes of leadership.

As leaders, women were seen as more empathic, inclusive and collaborative than men, while men were seen as more competitive, aggressive and confident. Men and women were both seen as strategic, visionary, ambitious, charismatic and assertive. In other words, men and women are seen as being about equal in these very positive leadership traits.

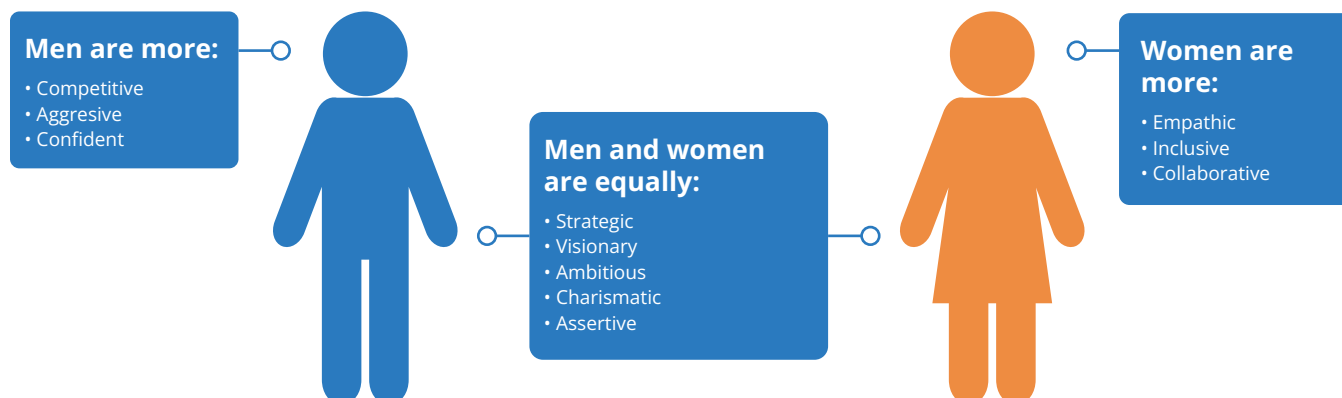
Women believe they are more empathic than men say they are.



Men believe they are more inclusive than women say they are.



Perceptions about men and women in leadership



Women saw themselves as more empathic than men saw them as being, and men saw themselves as more inclusive than women saw them as being.

In terms of different perceptions by generation, for the most part all generations have similar perceptions of men and women as leaders. Boomer and Gen X respondents were more likely to see women leaders as assertive as compared to the views of younger respondents. Boomers were most likely to see women leaders as aggressive, and younger respondents were least likely to see men as having become more empathic leaders following #MeToo. Having said that, other than these cases, the generations see men and women similarly as leaders.

This is consistent with the overall findings of our research, which is that generation and age are not strong predictors of attitudes and behaviors with regard to gender issues following #MeToo, except that the generations themselves think there is a difference between them!

When we asked how men have changed as leaders following #MeToo and related movements, we found that men were perceived as being less confident than before #MeToo as well as more cautious. Men were also seen as slightly more inclusive and empathic than before these movements.

This data fits with our focus group findings as well as the comments leaders made in open-ended questions. Men expressed being more cautious and less confident as leaders, especially on issues of gender. Men also displayed in a genuine shift toward wanting to be more inclusive and more aware of how people of other genders experience work, as well as a desire to be allies in efforts for equity.

We also asked whether it was important to have programs directly aimed at improving men in leadership. Men and women both agreed that programs to help shift men's leadership are important, though women felt this more strongly. It is encouraging that men are open to programs to help them shift towards more empathy and inclusion as leaders, a finding that was supported by our focus groups as well.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Men and women are seen as equally visionary, charismatic, strategic and assertive as leaders, while women are viewed as more empathic and inclusive. Men are seen as slightly more inclusive and empathic as leaders following recent social movements while also being seen as less confident and more cautious.

The greatest struggles for leaders following #MeToo and social equity movements

Through both our focus groups with C-suite leaders and our open-ended survey questions, we tried to understand the greatest challenges and struggles that leaders face in the wake of recent social movements. We explored this through direct questions.

Some of the themes that emerged as the greatest challenges are:

- Leaders need to be sensitive to a variety of inclusion needs while recognizing that the wide range of sensibilities means that they must be careful not to overreact.
- Leaders talked about struggling with being firm on unacceptable non-inclusionary behaviors while creating an environment for learning that leads to sustainable change.
- Men, as leaders, expressed a strong commitment to greater mentorship and sponsorship of people of other genders but also significant caution, in that they did not want to be accused of inappropriate behavior.
- Many women in the surveys and many women leaders in the focus groups expressed the concern that the current environment may be doing damage to collegial relationships between men and women.
- The open-ended comments suggest that many leaders are struggling with how best to create sustainable mindset changes rather than simple compliance or the phenomenon of behaviors going “underground” rather than changing. Leaders for the most part want to create a more inclusive and equitable culture but struggle with the best methods to do so.
- In both the focus groups and the quantitative survey, respondents expressed a strong feeling that there are meaningful generational differences and that younger leaders are leading differently in terms of being inclusive. The open-ended comments in the surveys indicate the belief that older white leaders are the main ones resistant to a new way of leading. Having said that, as previously noted in this report, the quantitative data does not support the generalized view that older leaders and workers have significantly different views or perceptions of behavior than younger leaders.
- There is a strong belief among a meaningful subset of leaders that recent social movements have had unintended consequences for them as leaders. Many feel that it is more difficult to manage performance for fear of accusations of bias, and expressed that many people feel like they are constantly worrying about doing or saying the wrong thing, leading some leaders to disengage from relationships with associates or colleagues.
- Respondents expressed a strong feeling that inclusion and equity require strong leadership from senior leaders and also expressed frustration about a perceived lack of strong leadership at the top in many cases.

Here are some of the open-ended comments that help understand the various struggles leaders are having

”

“We no longer try to hire the most qualified person, we hire the most qualified disadvantaged person which may make for less qualified teams and it more difficult to hire employees. Not that disadvantaged people can't be qualified, they absolutely can, but that limits our hiring pool significantly.”

“Everyone believes that the only way you got to the position you are in is because you are a required percentage to make the company look good, not your abilities.”

“I have never personally been sexually harassed by a male in the workplace. Men in the workplace have tended to treat me better than most female leadership in the workplace. I feel badly that the #MeToo era has put emotional distance between myself and male colleagues who could've become friends. I also feel my male leadership view me as something to be feared.”

“Always constantly thinking about what to say in meetings that may be wrongly perceived by attendees/participants.”

“Identifying the true attitude of workers and not just the ones who are outspoken”

“Ensuring that men don't feel excluded from the conversation”

“I'm extremely cautious about being in the same meeting room as a person of opposite gender if it is just two of us.”

“I still do not feel that I as a male that I can object to biased behavior by women. Sexist and racist behavior by women does exist and is directed at both men and women, straight and LGBT+, and across races and ethnicities. It is problematic for a white male to speak out on these issues.”

“Dealing with the fact that it went overboard and now everything is sanitized and everyone has to tiptoe around mentally fragile people. I, and I would hope many others, already knew that being a sleazebag is wrong, and that treating people poorly is wrong. But now, because everything has to go 10 miles past 'useful,' it's become an environment where honest debate is considered bad, and where merit-based anything is the devil. Subpar performance is accepted—but just from some people—because there's always a bucket of excuses to pull from for why performance is subpar, whereas in the 'old days,' someone could just be told that they weren't good enough to make the cut. That sentiment used to do two things: it would motivate those who really wanted it, and force those who didn't to reevaluate their choice of work. Now, people just get to be whatever they want, regardless of whether they should be.”

“Seeing past gender. You must now view every woman as a woman first, and coworker second.”

“Corporate America is still trapped in the '50s. The biggest effect of the #MeToo moment is that the real jerks have probably gone to ground. It's easy for powerful white men to distance themselves from the outrages of Harvey Weinstein, for example. No sane, decent person would say 'poor Harvey.' But that doesn't mean that there aren't lessons from all that. Unfortunately, the crony system is still intact. Until people have to include women and people of color in large numbers in finalist hiring pools, there will be no change. And until the BS about 'qualified' candidates gets shot down, nothing will happen. For decades, there has been affirmative action—for white males. They're just upset that their sense of entitlement has been shaken.”

“Professional development among the team to elevate women into positions of leadership when there are too few opportunities for advancement.”

“I am someone who in the past equated collegiality with things like hugs or other physical contact. I've had to realize the discomfort that can create with my colleagues and adjust my behavior.”

“My greatest struggle is choosing my words wisely because nowadays anything you say can be potentially misconstrued.”

“Getting the leadership at my organization to actually 'walk the walk.' They love 'talking the talk' and are great at producing 'optics' that, to me, have no real meaning because I don't see it translating into real respect and caring for their employees. There is no real incentive for people to change with upper management. Senior leadership don't demonstrate what they preach. It takes a very HONEST person to be able to truly look at themselves in the mirror and identify what they like/don't like about themselves and then work to CHANGE first, for themselves, and then to exhibit those changes in all other aspects of their lives. Saying something does not mean DOING SOMETHING.”

“Balance between respect and merits”

“It is phony and politically motivated. It is not real and is only based on power. It has separated people and made many people uneasy, afraid, and less friendly. It wants a robotic, cold world and that is what our country has become. It is socialist and totalitarian—political correctness has made cancel culture and radical left media the new KGB or Gestapo. It has ruined the beauty of the nation and e pluribus unum. It makes people unhappy and focuses on what makes us different, then assigns strange hierarchy based on color, gender, or sexual orientation. It basically has told most people to shut up.”

Big differences across political affiliations

Our research showed differences in attitude and behavior based on political affiliation. While we expected this, we were often surprised by both the magnitude and consistency of this finding. In almost all cases, Independents' responses were always between those of Republicans and Democrats. Overall, they were slightly closer to Republicans.

- Democrats (62%) are twice as likely to say they are likely to speak out about sexual harassment or sexist or misogynistic behaviors in the workplace as compared to Republicans (29%). Three times more Republicans say they are less likely to do so (14%) compared to Democrats (4%).
- Democrats (61%) are two and a half times more likely than Republicans (25%) to speak out against issues of gender equity in the workplace. Three times more Republicans (15%) say they are less likely to do so compared to Democrats (5%).
- Democrats (54%) are more than twice as likely as Republicans (21%) to challenge inappropriate jokes and comments at work. Eighteen percent of Republicans say they are less likely to do so, compared with 4% of Democrats.
- One third of Democrats (29%) are more likely to mentor a colleague of another gender—double the number of Republicans (15%) who are more likely to do so. Six percent of Democrats are less likely to mentor a colleague of another gender, compared with 20% of Republicans who are less likely to do so.
- Three times as many Republicans (17%), as compared to Democrats (6%), report being less likely to sponsor or advocate for a colleague of another gender following recent social movements. However, a quarter of both groups (Democrats 29%, Republicans 24%) say they are more likely to do so.
- Three times as many Republicans (23%) to Democrats (7%) are less likely to have one-on-one meetings with a colleague of another gender. Twenty-seven percent of Democrats and 17% of Republicans are more likely to do so.
- Forty-one percent of Democrats report that movements have changed their leadership style, compared with only 17% of Republicans.
- Two and a half times more Republicans (63%) than Democrats (25%) report that movements have not changed their leadership style.
- Of men, 35% of Republicans felt their voices were less welcomed on issues of gender equity, compared with 19% of Democrat men. In contrast, 26% of Democrat men and 17% of Republican men felt their voices were more welcomed.
- Republicans (11%) are three times more likely than Democrats (4%) to pursue a romantic relationship with a coworker. However, both groups are equally less likely (38%) to do so.

- On relationships between people of different genders, Democrats and Republicans have opposing views. A third of Democrats (29%) say that recent movements have positively impacted relationships with colleagues of other genders, and 7% say there has been a negative impact. A third of Republicans (29%) say relationships have been negatively impacted and 10% say there has been a positive impact.
- More than half of both Democrats and Republicans said that two activities were at least slightly effective: team-building exercises (Democrats 70%, Republicans 58%) and pay equity (Democrats 84%, Republicans 56%), but more than 50% of Democrats agreed that all activities were at least slightly effective.
- For equity quotas, 38% of Republicans say they are extremely ineffective, while 22% of Democrats say they are strongly effective.
- Among Republicans, 52% believe that the current focus on anti-racism and ethnic equity is overtaking the focus on gender equity, and 33% of Democrats agree.
- Sixty-five percent of Democrats say they feel more responsible to create a respectful and more gender-inclusive work environment than they did five years ago, and 6% disagree. Republicans are split, with 27% saying they feel responsible for creating this environment and 27% disagreeing.
- 70% of Democrats say they feel more responsible to create a respectful and more racially and ethnically inclusive workplace than they did five years ago, while 4% disagree. About the same proportion of Republicans say they feel responsible (30%) as not (27%).

Overall, this data suggests a few conclusions. First, there is clearly a group of respondents who identify as Republican who are expressing a negative backlash to recent social movements. We saw this both in focus groups and in the open-ended survey questions. By backlash, we mean they feel that these movements have made too much of disparities and created an environment where groups are pitted against each other. At the same time, there is some evidence of bi-modal responses among Republicans, where an equal number seem to be aligned strongly on both sides of these views. The data suggest there is more variability among Republican respondents than among Democratic respondents.



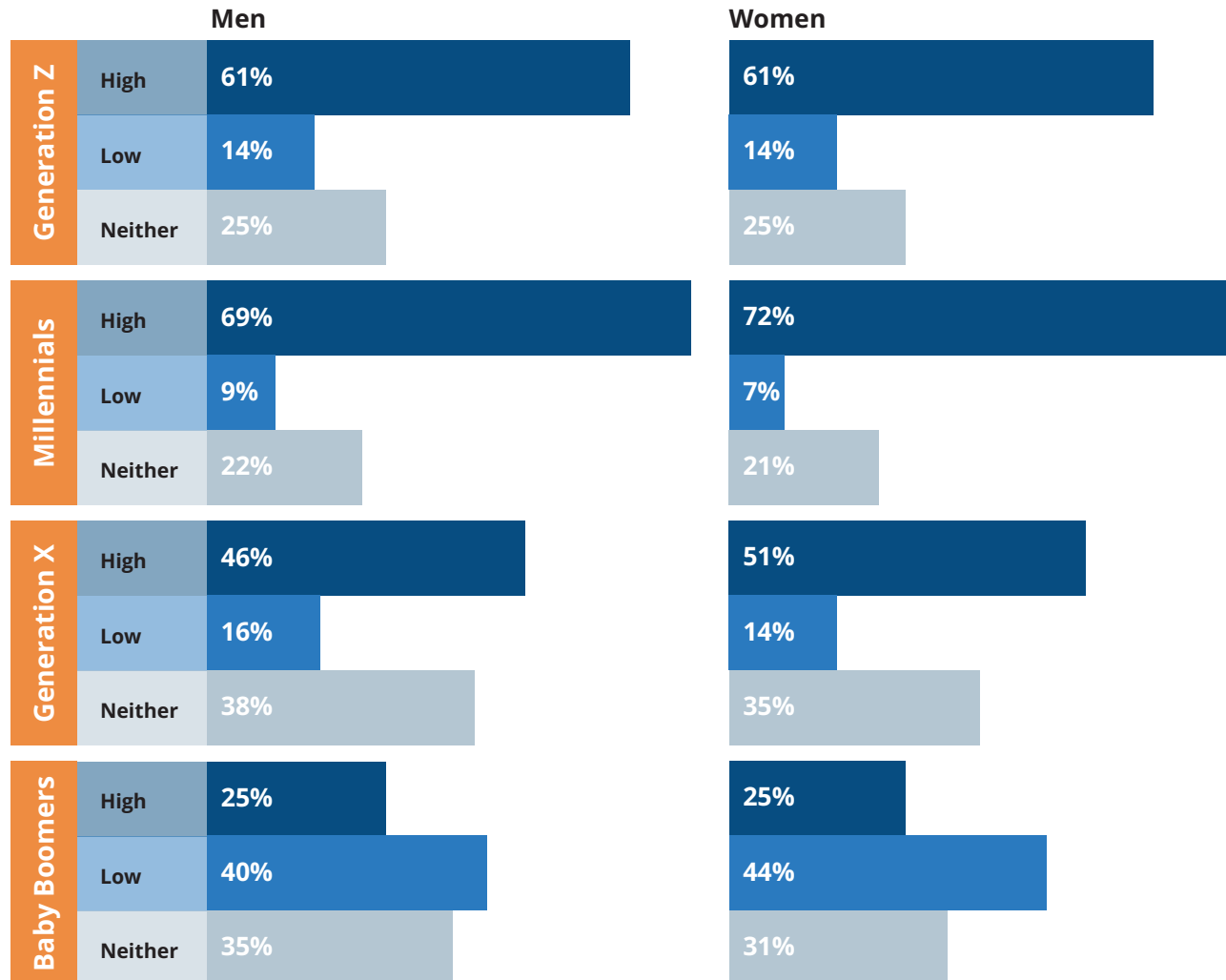
Each generation approached engagement and awareness differently

Finally, we sought to explore how different generations are perceived in terms of their engagement on issues of gender and racial equity. We discovered that millennials were perceived as the most aware and engaged generation, followed closely by Gen Z. Baby boomers were perceived as the least engaged and aware generation on these issues, with Gen X between their older and young counterparts. We found that all generations agree on the order of awareness and engagement.

Having said that, when we analyzed the responses in terms of both attitude and behavior among the generations, we found few statistically significant differences. With some exceptions, such as the likelihood of pursuing romantic relationships at work, and some perceptions of women leaders, we believe our study shows that the generally held belief that the generations differ greatly on these issues is not supported by the data. On some questions, such as that of allyship with LGBTQIA people, we do see significantly lower levels of support among older workers and leaders, but these are mostly matters of magnitude, not direction. So, while it is clear that people see significant differences between generations on issues of equity and inclusion, our data does not support this widely held belief.



Perceived engagement and awareness of each generation at work.



Race not a strong predictor of attitudes

Given the subject matter of this study, we were very interested in differences in viewpoints across people of different races and ethnicities about how recent social movements have impacted the workplace. The major groups represented in the sample group in the United States were Black, white, Hispanic/Latino and Asian-American. The numbers for Middle Eastern and Native American people who responded to the survey were too small for us to generalize our findings for these groups.

Perhaps surprisingly, there were few statistically significant differences in terms of the views and reported behaviors among racial groups. Women respondents, in particular, when grouped by race, showed little to low variability in their answers. On only three of our survey questions were the differences by race significant at the .001 level of probability.

Two areas of inquiry did show meaningful differences by race and ethnicity: the question of how important is it for respondents to be allies to women, racialized and LGBTQIA people, and viewpoints on whether having different standards in order to address equity issues was the right thing to do when hiring or promoting.

Differences for women by race and ethnicity

Women respondents showed very few differences by race and ethnicity, which suggests that, for the most part, women appear to hold very similar views and perceptions of how the workplace has changed following recent social movements. Black women were generally more likely to say that being an ally to women and to racialized and LGBTQIA people was extremely important to them, and Asian-American women were the least likely to express this view. About one in ten women of all races said that it was extremely unimportant to them to be allies to LGBTQIA people. Having said that, the largest number of women respondents of all races answered that it was extremely important to them to be allies for LGBTQIA people (39% white, 38% Hispanic/Latina, 35% Black and 30% Asian). Black women were most likely to say that being allies for racialized communities was important to them (56%), with other groups significantly less likely to say this (39% white, 37% Hispanic/Latina and 31% Asian). Still, the percentage of respondents who said it was at least slightly important to them to be allies for LGBTQIA people was about the same across all races and ethnicities.

Differences for men by race and ethnicity

Similar to our findings with women respondents, we found very few differences in attitudes among men by race and ethnicity. It appears that men hold fairly consistent views on these issues regardless of their race or ethnicity. There were, however, some meaningful differences of note.

As with women, the main differences were in regard to the importance of being an ally. While Black men scored the importance of being an ally to women and racialized people at the highest level (mean scores of 5.14 and 5.29 respectively, on a seven-point scale), only on importance of being an ally to racialized people were their scores statistically different than those of other groups. However, the mean scores of respondents don't tell the full story. The percentage of men who said that being allies to women and racialized people was "extremely unimportant" to them was significantly higher among whites. This suggests that while commitment to allyship is strong across all categories of men, race and ethnic background do impact these commitments. The charts below illustrate these differences.

Percentage of men who said it was **extremely important** to be an ally:

<i>Respondent race or ethnicity</i>	<i>Ally to women</i>	<i>Ally to racialized people</i>	<i>Ally to LGBTQIA people</i>
All	26%	23%	22%
Asian	22%	20%	22%
Black	22%	33%	19%
Hispanic/Latino	27%	29%	24%
White	33%	23%	23%

Percentage of men who said it was **extremely unimportant** to be an ally:

<i>Respondent race or ethnicity</i>	<i>Ally to women</i>	<i>Ally to racialized people</i>	<i>Ally to LGBTQIA people</i>
All	11%	17%	22%
Asian	7%	7%	11%
Black	4%	9%	16%
Hispanic/Latino	17%	21%	21%
White	11%	17%	22%

So, while the differences in mean scores were not large, our data suggests that the percentage of white and Hispanic/Latino men who say it is extremely unimportant to them to be allies for these groups is meaningfully higher than for Black and Asian men. White men were the most likely to say it was extremely important to them to be allies for women. An almost equal number of white men said it was extremely unimportant for them to be allies to LGBTQIA people and said it was extremely important to them. Generally, we found that the importance placed on allyship with women was on par with the importance of allyship with racialized people, but that the importance of allyship with LGBTQIA people was consistently at a lower level, especially for male respondents.

The other area of inquiry that yielded small but significant differences based on race regarded whether having different standards of experience or performance in hiring and promoting was the right thing to do in order to address equity issues. We tested these two questions separately, asking respondents to rate different standards of experience and performance as separate items. In both cases, Black and Asian men were more likely to think it was the right thing to do compared with white and Hispanic/Latino men, with almost four in ten white men strongly disagreeing.

Still, all groups showed lukewarm support at best for different standards, with less than 5% of whites, Asians and Hispanics/Latinos strongly agreeing it was the right thing to do. Seven percent of Black men strongly agreed that having different standards of performance was the right thing, and 10% strongly agreed on different levels of experience. In other words, while there were differences on these two questions, directionally all groups leaned towards not supporting the idea of having different standards in order to address equity,

Open-ended comments supported this view, with many women and racialized people expressing the view that they did not want to be seen as having been promoted or hired because of race or gender. When put alongside the weak support for equity quotas as a method to address diversity among all racial and ethnic groups, there is evidence that people want an even playing field while moving towards more diversity.

While it is beyond the scope of this report to suggest the best method for addressing diversity in hiring and promoting, our research strongly suggests that efforts that focus on finding more qualified candidates for the pool will be more well received by all groups than those focused on quota targets in hiring and promotion.

Discussion & Future Directions

This study explores shifts in workplace culture, and the growing focus and awareness around diversity and inclusion, in the wake of recent social equity movements. Focus group and quantitative survey respondents paint a rich picture of gender relationships and the impact of external forces on leadership approaches to building inclusive workplaces.

At the highest level, we found that men and women of all ages are more engaged, aware of, and focused on creating more inclusive, equitable workplaces than they were before these movements. While we could not directly test the impact of the movements themselves, both the focus groups and open-ended survey comments suggest they have had a profound impact.

Many leaders spoke about a heightened awareness of the need for change, and a stronger commitment to accelerate the creation of inclusive workplaces for all genders, races and ethnicities, and the LGBTQIA community. We were particularly struck by how these movements have created a sense of psychological safety for women in the workplace, increasing their willingness to be bold and speak up with more confidence. In turn, men have expressed greater motivation to be stronger allies for those who have experienced less historic advantage.

Blueprint is dedicated to creating new paths for men and strengthening their relationships with communities. Through this study, we hoped to better understand how viral social movements changed men's attitudes and behaviours in the workplace over the past five years. What we discovered is that most men want to change and that these movements have catalyzed a desire to change their behaviour and to find solutions that positively influence the systems they inhabit. However, we also discovered an apprehension in some men to translate their intent to action. While a preponderance of men expressed a strong commitment to becoming more inclusive, some men continue to feel cautious, less confident, and more concerned about making mistakes. This caution can have a positive impact on the workplace when men choose to be more intentional about their behaviours and the impact of their attitudes and actions. It can also create challenges as men may not participate fully in workplace conversations about inclusion if they feel their voice is not welcomed on issues of gender and racial equity, and sexual harassment.

Based on the study, and our decades of research, programming and advocacy work with men and senior business leaders, it is clear that men must be part of comprehensive, innovative and sustainable solutions to workplace equity and inclusion. Two-thirds of women and half of the men believe that it is important to have dedicated opportunities for men to explore what it means to be effective, inclusive leaders in a more diverse workplace. Thus, we recommend creating safe spaces for men to talk about their desire for change, the challenges they experience, and how they can contribute new solutions to help accelerate a culture shift in workplaces.

The study also explored changes in tolerance for misogynistic behaviours such as sexual harassment and inappropriate jokes. While the findings show a significant increase in men and women's willingness to challenge such behaviour, most men believe that these behaviours have not significantly diminished and have only become less visible. Although about half of men say they are more likely to speak up and challenge such behaviours, one confounding factor for men is that it appears most believe that other men are more misogynistic than they see themselves. This likely dampens men's willingness to challenge other men when they believe themselves to be the "exception" rather than the "norm." This mirrors what we know about predominantly male workplace cultures, such as first responders, where most men believe their colleagues would react more negatively to expressions of weakness or vulnerability than in actuality. We hope our study will show men that a vast majority of others want to move towards a more inclusive workplace, thereby emboldening men to express their views more openly. We think further research exploring men's perceptions of other men, and how this perception impacts behavior, would provide important information for shifting male culture towards championing more pro-social behaviors.

One of the prime interests of this study was discovering what challenges leaders have experienced since the onset of social movements, and how these changes have reshaped men and women in leadership. We were also interested in exploring both the pervasiveness and perceived effectiveness of organizational initiatives to foster great inclusion and diversity.

We discovered three important insights for leaders and organizations to consider. Firstly, a significant number of leaders believe that these social movements have had a meaningful impact on their leadership roles. The focus groups and quantitative survey responses suggest that managing diversity and creating inclusion have become important elements of leader competency. Men appear to have an increased desire to be allies and advocates for a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Women see progress in the workplace and positive change among their men colleagues, but all genders agree that there is much more work to be done. Of note is the consensus amongst respondents that to accelerate progress we need senior leaders to champion and become visible advocates for equity and inclusion, with commitment supported by concrete actions for demonstrable organizational change.

In examining how perceptions of leadership have changed between genders, we found that men and women are seen on par in terms of characteristics such as being charismatic, visionary and strategic. This represents a major historical shift where previously men were perceived as significantly higher in these traits than women and leads us to our second leadership insight. Insofar as empathy and inclusiveness are emerging as critical to being an effective and relevant leader today, and coupled with findings that women are seen as more empathic and inclusive than men, this data suggests that women are now perceived as equal or with higher levels of competence than men.

When comparing changes over time amongst men in leadership positions, the data show that while men are seen as slightly more empathic and inclusive, they are also more cautious and less confident. This change was most acutely noted by men in our leadership focus groups who talked about being worried about "missteps" and avoiding environments where they might be accused of inappropriate behaviour. Our view is that there is a positive aspect to men being more cautious as it demonstrates an awareness and thoughtfulness about how one's actions might impact others. On the other hand, it is critical to create learning environments where growth and dialogue are the norms. Many of the senior women in leadership who participated in the focus groups expressed a strong need to focus on growth as well as concern that a punitive approach is not the best path except for addressing blatant behaviour that is inappropriate.

Our third insight, derived from the data, relates to how these movements and heightened awareness have impacted men's willingness to mentor and sponsor women on their teams. Our findings strongly suggest that these movements appear to have motivated men to be even more intentional and interested in mentoring and advocating for women. This is a hopeful finding.

At the same time, there is significant hesitancy among men in leadership to have one-on-one meetings with women and they worry about the possibility of negative optics in advocating for women on their teams. One illustrative example stands out: a man in a senior leadership position invited a younger man on his team to an out-of-town conference where they had significant time to socialize during the evenings. After returning from the conference, a woman on his team shared that she was “envious of the time her male colleague had to spend with him and that she would welcome that opportunity.” In the focus group, the leader mused aloud, “but would I take that chance in terms of the optics, probably not.” Stories like these support Blueprint’s position that organizations and leaders must create opportunities to encourage healthy gender relationships in the workplace, including opportunities for men to openly discuss perceived barriers to mentorship and allyship. This is not an easy balancing act, but we believe the key is an open dialogue where people feel safe to express their hesitations about working closely with their colleagues of all genders.

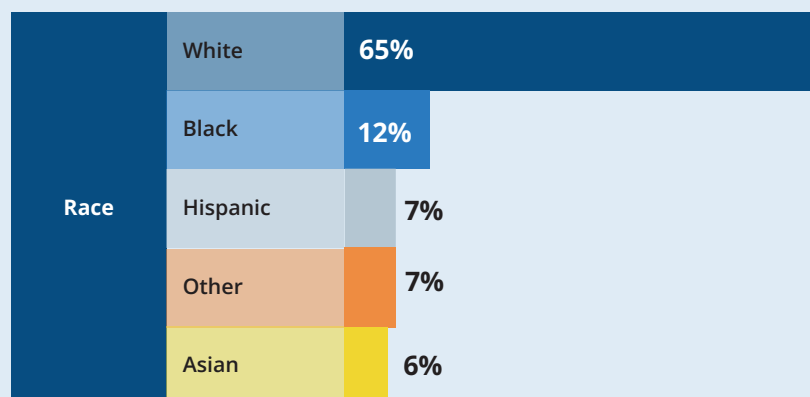
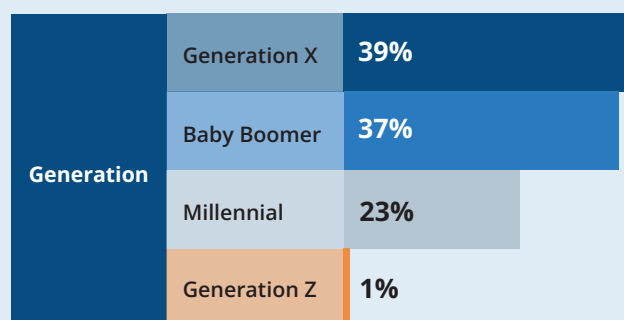
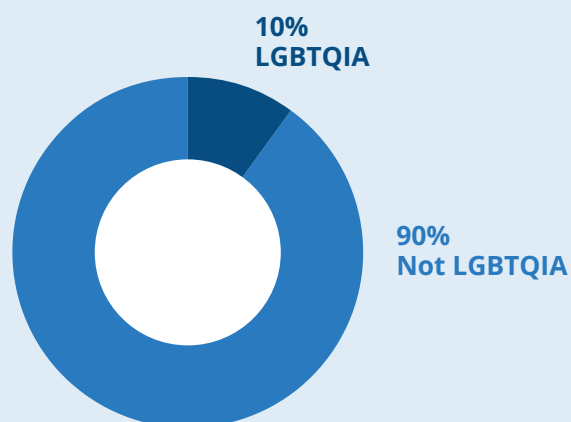
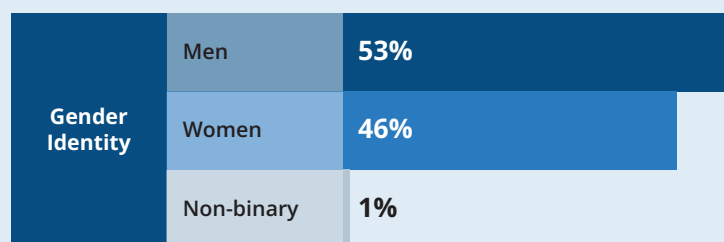
Finally, we wanted to explore the perceived effectiveness of workplace initiatives to foster a sense of inclusion, belonging and trust in the workplace. What we discovered is that intentional efforts to shift work culture are pervasive with about eight in ten workplaces conducting intentional efforts to enhance inclusivity. We also discovered that a significant majority of men and women respondents believe these efforts have been effective in moving the needle towards more inclusive and equitable workplaces. Not all efforts were perceived equally, with equity quotas seen as least effective and pay equity, team-building exercises and employee resource groups seen as most effective. Support for having different standards of performance and experience when hiring and promoting was not pervasive by anyone. Among white men, in particular, unconscious bias training and diversity training scored less well than team-building efforts.

Workplace initiatives for diversity and inclusion, while seen as effective in some cases, require further research, exploration and understanding. Our study suggests that efforts focused on building understanding and hearing the stories of other genders, races, ethnicities, and the LGBTQIA community, who have had different experiences, is the most useful path to shift attitudes. Our work with organizations both in business and in protective services (e.g. first responders and military veterans) supports the notion that when privileged groups hear the stories of others it creates renewed commitment to being allies and advocates. A more fulsome study of the various types of interventions would be a worthwhile endeavor.

Lastly, we must recognize that a meaningful percentage of men as well as a smaller number of women disagree with social equity movements and hold a negative view of how the movements have impacted workplaces. These individuals believe that these movements have made it more difficult to lead, have damaged relationships between the genders and generally made for a more toxic workplace where people are hesitant to engage in collegial relationships. While this percentage is relatively small (about 10-13% in the USA and 3-5% in Canada), intentional efforts to understand and listen to this perspective are important. Creating a truly inclusive and equitable workplace requires deep listening across many perspectives. Understanding the backlash to social equity efforts could provide valuable insight into creating sustainable change more broadly.

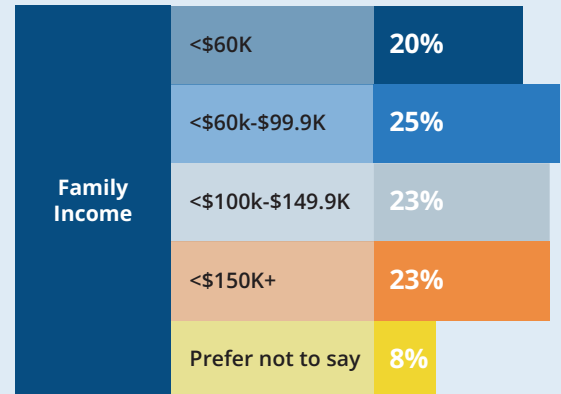
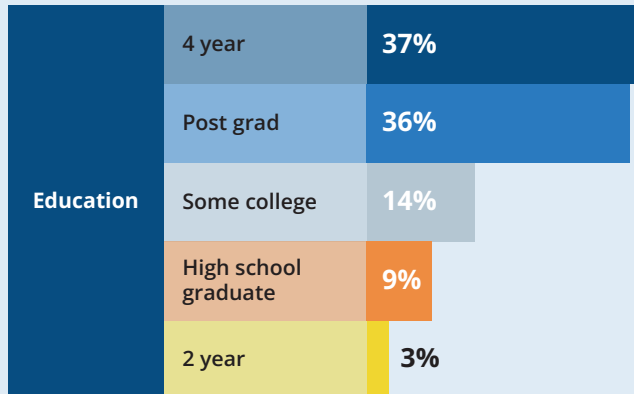
Our primary conclusion is that we are making real progress towards a more gender-equitable and inclusive workplace. There is heightened awareness and desire for change and a willingness to engage in dialogue and identify solutions for continued progress. We hope this study will accelerate thinking about how best to do that.

Appendix A: Quantitative sample characteristics

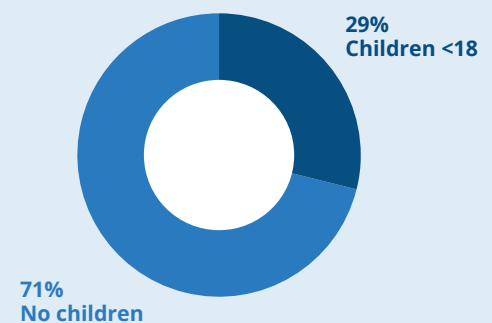
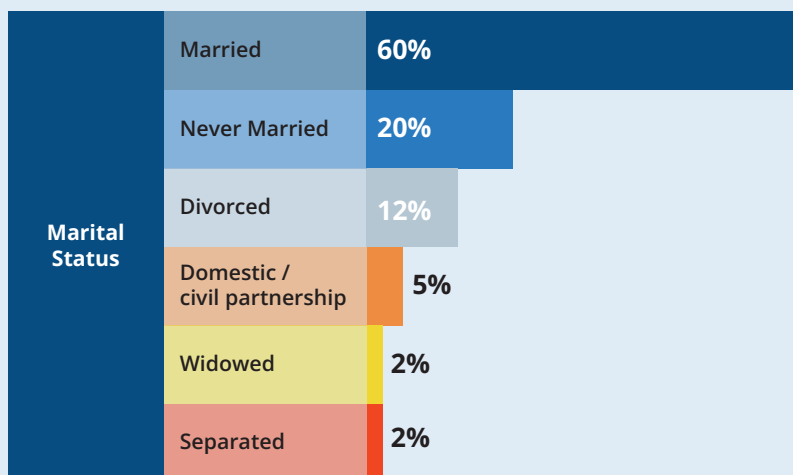


In the quantitative sample, 90% of participants did not self-identify as members of the LGBTQIA community. 53% were men and 36% women. For age cohort, 39% belonged to Generation X and the next highest percentage, 37%, to the baby boomer cohort. In terms of race, 65% reported their race as white; the next highest percentage was Black (12%).

All of the participants were employed full-time. With regard to family income, 25% self-reported at \$60k–\$99.9k, followed by the next highest percentages: 23% at \$100k–\$149.9k and 23% at \$150k or more. Educationally, 37% had a four-year degree, closely followed by 36% with post-graduate qualifications.



Sixty percent of respondents were currently married and the next highest percentage, 20%, had never been married. Also, 29% had children in the home.



With regard to location, 36% of participants lived in the South, followed by 23% in the West. Politically, 42% reported being Democrats and 20% said they were Republican.

