

A close-up photograph of a woman with vibrant red hair styled in a bun, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue blazer over a light-colored patterned blouse. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an office or meeting environment. A blue graphic overlay is positioned on the left side of the image, containing text.

# KPMG Women's Leadership Study

**Moving Women Forward  
into Leadership Roles**

[KPMG.com/WomensLeadership](https://www.kpmg.com/WomensLeadership)

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In a marketplace defined by complexity, disruption and change, today's most successful enterprises are those that bring diverse perspectives and experiences to each new challenge. Along with being the right thing to do, diversity and inclusion offer a strategic advantage – especially at the leadership level.

That is why it is critically important for businesses to look at the challenges women often face, and clear the path for talented and dynamic leaders to rise to the top.

This understanding – together with our own commitment to fostering a culture at KPMG that is both diverse and inclusive – inspired us to commission this study on women and leadership. At KPMG, we have long believed that creating a work environment where women can thrive, and implementing initiatives that support, advance, retain and reward them, is not only the right thing to do, it is a smart and strategic business approach.

The KPMG Women's Leadership Study is a comprehensive survey of more than 3,000 professional and college women, exploring the qualities and experiences that contribute to women's leadership and advancement in the workplace. In addition to outlining challenges and opportunities shared with us, the study also offers concrete steps that can be taken to move more women into leadership positions.

The release of our study coincides with our inaugural KPMG Women's Leadership Summit, to be held on-site with the KPMG Women's PGA Championship. The KPMG Women's Leadership Summit and follow-on programming have one objective: to move more women into the C-suite. The summit will bring together today's most accomplished leaders from the worlds of business, politics, sports and the media, to inspire the next generation of women leaders.

It is our fervent belief that this study will inform and encourage leaders to take clear and decisive steps to develop the leadership potential of their female employees—and that we will all be stronger for it.

John Veihmeyer, Chairman, KPMG International,  
and Lynne Doughtie, KPMG U.S. Chairman and CEO-elect

# The Path to Female Leadership

A woman's perception of leadership begins not with collegiate academic success, her first big break or when she's named to a position of power. The trajectory to female leadership starts much earlier and is defined by key influences throughout life.

Imagine a young girl—perhaps a daughter, a niece or the girl down the street. She is smart. She is ambitious. She believes in herself and her abilities. From a young age, she has the desire to lead—to inspire others to greatness, to surpass expectations, to better the world. Yet as she grows up, two elements will affect her ability to lead: confidence and connections. Throughout her life, she either will receive what she needs to build these two key components of leadership—or she won't.

There are many women who serve as models for how to lead and how to become leaders. They've taken corporations, governments, academic institutions and other organizations to new heights. They've shown other women the possibilities and the power they hold in their own hands. Yet for all their achievements, these women represent too small a percentage of leaders overall. What experiences moved these women forward? How can we empower more women to follow in their footsteps? The answers to these questions could be critical to empowering all women—and all businesses.

## Addressing the challenge

The KPMG Women's Leadership Study, conducted by the independent research company, Ipsos, on behalf of KPMG, seeks to understand how the aspiration and ambition to lead is developed and nurtured—or not—in women.

3,014 U.S. women (2,410 professional working women and 604 college women) between the ages of 18 and 64 were surveyed as part of the study.

Specifically, the study sought to identify how these women were socialized to leadership growing up; explore their self-perceptions growing up and today; uncover which characteristics are associated with leadership; examine who influenced these women in learning about applying business leadership; and discover concrete ways to help more women move forward into leadership roles. KPMG hopes the insights derived from this study will help companies identify actions that will contribute to women achieving their potential.



Notably, the findings reveal that there is no shortage of ambition among the women surveyed. Six in 10 of the professional working women who responded indicated they aspire to be a senior leader of a company or organization, and more than half aspire to serve on a board. Yet they also reported hesitancy: More than half of the women agree that, “as women,” they are more cautious in taking steps toward leadership roles, and six in 10 find it hard to see themselves as a leader. The results reveal a critical disconnect: Women want to lead, but something is holding them back.

The importance of confidence and connections is evident throughout the study, highlighting key opportunities to influence a woman’s perceptions of leadership. Was she encouraged to lead as a child? Did she have a role model? Is she offered appropriate support and development opportunities in a corporate setting? Factors such as these become significant milestones in the aspiring leader’s life. If they are available to her, she is more likely to move further down the path to leadership. If they are not, her aspirations of becoming a leader are more likely to remain out of reach. In the following pages, we explore that path to leadership, along with possible ways to pave it for more women.

“Having people tell me ‘this is something you can do’ built my confidence.”

Candy Duncan  
Chair, KPMG Women’s Leadership Summit



# Key Findings: Influences on the Path to Leadership

“Just say yes. Use any fear as motivation to be successful. That fear will then turn into confidence.”

Adena Friedman  
President, Nasdaq

“Having sponsors that put their own capital and credibility on the line for me helped me move into a number of leadership roles.”

Dalynn J. Hoch  
CFO, Zurich North America, Zurich Insurance Company

### The socialization of leadership

*Childhood lessons and early exposure to leadership have a significant impact on a woman’s perceptions of her ability to lead.*

A woman’s views of leadership begin to take shape early in childhood, starting with the values she learns, her exposure to leadership skills, and whether she has positive leadership role models.

- Professional working women surveyed saw themselves as “smart” growing up and cited school and academics as the area where they most felt like a leader.
- 86% of women recall being taught to be nice to others growing up; 44% were taught to be a good leader; and 34% were taught to share their point of view.
- A full three-quarters (76%) of women today wish they had learned more about leadership and had more leadership opportunities while growing up.

Given their sense of academic achievement—and the predominance of female students in U.S. colleges today<sup>1</sup>—we look at what happens to these bright female students when they enter the workforce. We see that extending the leadership training and positive messaging some received beginning in childhood throughout a woman’s career could help continue the self-perception of one’s ability to lead.

### Modeling leadership

*Confidence, the encouragement of positive role models and the presence of a strong professional network shape a woman’s view of leadership in the workplace.*

Confidence is an attribute women themselves identify as the key to leadership success. Throughout their professional careers, women struggle with what they characterize as a lack of it.

- 67% of women said they need more support building confidence to feel like they can be leaders.
- The lack of confidence affects an array of other activities tied to ultimately becoming leaders: nine in 10 women said they do not feel confident asking for sponsors (92%), with large numbers also lacking confidence seeking mentors (79%), asking for access to senior leadership (76%), pursuing a job opportunity beyond their experience (73%), asking for a career path plan (69%), requesting a promotion (65%), raise (61%), or a new role or position (56%).

The results suggest that corporations would do well to ask themselves why confidence is such a struggle for so many women in corporate environments. Why do women, who identify with being “smart” and as leaders in school growing up, feel less confident to lead at work? Initiatives focused specifically on building confidence could help women to leverage—rather than question—their abilities.

**“Relationships are the building blocks of anyone’s life or career, and making those connections has been the single most critical thing for my career advancement.”**

Kelly Watson  
KPMG Partner and Board Member

**“A way to move more women forward is to identify high-performing women and give them stretch assignments that will help them reach their full potential.”**

Maggie Wilderotter  
Executive Chairman, Frontier Communications

<sup>1</sup>Pew Research Center: Women’s college enrollment gains leave men behind. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/03/06/womens-college-enrollment-gains-leave-men-behind/>

## “Recognize when women do great work. Appreciate it. Celebrate it. Reward it.”

Michelle Kydd Lee  
Chief Innovation Officer, Creative Artists Agency

**“To ensure a sustainable pipeline of exceptional female leaders, companies need to be innovative in developing programs that provide opportunities for growth and advancement, while also intentionally seeking out and encouraging these high-performing women to participate in these programs.”**

John Veihmeyer  
Chairman, KPMG International

Receiving encouragement from role models and having a strong professional network can also help women bridge the confidence gap. Nine in 10 working women believe that their own perseverance will accelerate their journey to leadership, but they also overwhelmingly agree that female colleagues, role models and professional networks play a critical role in advancing women’s leadership.

- 67% of women reported they’d learned the most important lessons about leadership from other women.
- 82% percent of professional working women believe access to and networking with female leaders will help them advance in their career.

Implementing leadership programs that develop and connect high-potential women with senior leaders may be key to helping more women advance.

### **A commitment to moving more women forward**

*Innovative corporate initiatives and senior female leaders can motivate and reinforce women on their way up the corporate ladder.*

Corporations can help women shift from aspiring to leadership to developing the confidence to lead and then to being a leader in business. Leadership development programs and performance reward programs that provide necessary constructive feedback as well as a personal validation for a job well done—“soft” incentives—can deliver hard results in terms of empowering female talent. Integrating this kind of reward system into management training and career architecture initiatives complement traditional rewards of raises and promotions.

- More than half of working women (53%) indicate receiving praise from colleagues, leaders and mentors most influences their perception of themselves in the workplace, vs. traditional rewards of raises (39%) and promotions (37%).



**“To inspire greatness is to empower those around you and to give them the confidence and opportunities to succeed.”**

Suzy Whaley  
Secretary, PGA of America

- When asked what training and development skills were needed to help move more women into leadership roles in the future, professional working women cited leadership training (57%), confidence building (56%), decision-making (48%), networking (47%), and critical thinking (46%) most often. Professional working women believe it is critical for companies to support a woman’s development in her twenties (80%) and career advancement in her thirties (61%).

Companies will be instrumental in helping aspiring leaders advance, but women are eager to do their part, too. They realize what they do today impacts future generations of working women, and they’re prepared to take action to help others advance in their careers. With more women in senior leadership positions today, nine in 10 respondents reported they are excited about what is possible.

- 86% of women report when they see more women in leadership, they are encouraged they can get there themselves.
- 83% of working women know the steps they take in business today will help set the stage for future generations of women in business.
- 76% of working women plan to personally take active steps to help other women advance in their careers.



**“Own your career. Don’t wait for someone to tap you on the shoulder and present an opportunity to you.”**

Lynne Doughtie  
U.S. Chairman and CEO-elect, KPMG



# The Call to Action

*The research results are clear and there are things that can be done to move more women into workplace leadership. Below are some considerations:*

- **Actively engage potential leaders.** Identify and invest in high-performing women with the capacity and inclination to lead, and give them the confidence to do so.
- **Treat leadership as a tangible skill.** Clarify the most valued and respected attributes of leaders in the organization—strategic thinking, for example—and provide training opportunities and confidence building for women who wish to hone their skills.
- **Establish relationships and networks.** Actively connect junior-level employees with female senior leader mentors/sponsors and create networking opportunities regardless of level.
- **Enhance the visibility of role models.** Highlight female senior leaders.
- **Chart the path to leadership.** Articulate clear steps for career development, starting with employees in their twenties or earliest stages of their careers.
- **Combine “soft” and “hard” rewards.** Reinforce and validate women’s performance and confidence with clear and consistent personal feedback, together with the more conventional rewards of raises and promotions.

# Detailed Findings

## The Challenge

Women aspire to lead but are hesitant. Why?

Being a leader is a professional goal that seems attainable to the majority of women. Six in 10 women (64%) aspire to be a senior leader of a company or organization in the future, and more than half (56%) of women aspire to be on the board of a company or organization. But at the same time, women are hesitant about taking a leadership role. More than half (56%) of all working women reported that as women, they are more cautious about taking steps toward leadership roles. Women also reported difficulty envisioning leadership in their future. In fact, six in 10 women (59%) indicate they sometimes find it hard to see themselves as a leader.

The research indicates the important role that encouragement plays in addressing this hesitation. Women who were encouraged to be leaders growing up are more likely to aspire to be a senior leader of a company or organization (74% vs. 48%) and to aspire to be on a board of a company in the future (66% vs. 39%) than those who did not receive that encouragement growing up.

**“If I learned about leadership and how to be a leader as a child, I think it would have taught me to be more confident in myself and express my opinions without caring about what other people think.”**

College Woman, 18-24



**“I wish I had been encouraged to be more self-confident and given the opportunity to develop leadership skills. I was told I was smart but not encouraged to lead.”**

Working Woman, 40-64

**56%**

Working Women,  
25-64

As a woman, I am more cautious about taking steps toward leadership roles.

**59%**

Women, 18-64

I sometimes find it hard to see myself as a leader.

Q. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

# Exploring the influences on a woman's path to leadership

**“I wish I had learned that it’s okay to be nice to people and be a leader. Maybe it would have been great to learn how to be nice and how to be a leader at the same time.”**

Working Woman, 40-64

## The socialization of leadership

*A woman's inclination to lead doesn't begin in adulthood—it begins years earlier, in her childhood. Providing opportunities to lead—and training on how to do so—could offer a sound foundation for future leadership.*

For many women, doing well in school and identifying as “smart” initially prompts feelings of leadership potential. The majority (86%) of respondents were instructed to be good students, and seven in 10 (70%) women would have described themselves as “smart” while growing up. School was the most commonly cited setting for feelings of leadership for more than half (58%) of women, followed by others including jobs (30%), special interest clubs (26%), youth organizations (25%), expressive groups (25%) and sports (22%).

## Lessons learned growing up

Women, 18-64

Be nice to others	86%
Be a good student	86%
Be respectful to authorities/elders	85%
Be helpful	77%
Believe in yourself	68%
Never give up	62%
Be a good team player	62%
Be supportive of others	62%
Take a stand for what you believe in	56%
Get involved in something you're passionate about	50%
Be a good leader	44%
Make a difference in society	41%
Master a skill	39%
Share your point of view	34%
Be a good athlete	19%
Other	2%
None of these	<1%

Base: Women, 18-64

Q. Growing up, which of the following do you recall learning?

Yet in childhood, women also reported being taught lessons that can undermine an inclination to lead—namely, an emphasis on practicing the “golden rule” rather than being assertive or speaking one’s mind (see chart, this page). Two-thirds (65%) of women reported that when they were younger, they were hesitant to show they could be a leader. Interestingly, today’s senior women leaders are more likely than their professional counterparts (mid-management and entry-level) to recall learning to share their point of view as children (entry-level: 31% vs. mid-level: 32% vs. senior-level: 37%).

Praise and encouragement from female role models may be crucial in helping women develop into corporate leaders. More than six in 10 women (63%) indicated that they were encouraged to be a leader when they were growing up, and more than eight in 10 women (84%) reported that having positive leadership role models helped them feel confident about what they could accomplish in life. In fact, three-quarters of women (75%) received praise and recognition when they acted like a leader growing up. Most commonly, it was their female teachers (68%) and moms (67%) who acted as positive role models to teach them about leadership.



**“I wish I would’ve received more formal training in effective leadership, it would have made me less hesitant to step into leadership roles sooner. It’s difficult as a woman sometimes to have to fight for those opportunities.”**

Working Woman, 25-39

### Learning to lead

Despite early encouragement and good intentions from female role models, women still feel more leadership opportunities are needed during the formative years. Three in four (76%) women wish they would have learned more about leadership when they were growing up, and that they had more opportunities to learn how to lead when they were growing up (75%). Senior leaders are more likely than their colleagues (mid-management and entry-level) to recall learning to be a good leader growing up (entry-level: 36% vs. mid-level: 39% vs. senior-level: 49%).

Furthermore, those with childhood leadership experience are more likely than those without that experience to be senior leaders today.

Specifically, growing up:

- Those who learned to be a good leader are more likely to be senior leaders than those who did not (26% vs. 18%).
- Those who felt like a leader are more likely to be senior leaders than those who did not (23% vs. 11%).
- Those who were encouraged to be a leader are more likely to be senior leaders than those who did not (26% vs. 15%).

The impact of early positive role models is also seen in women during their adult years. Those who had positive role models growing up are twice as likely to feel confident today (50% vs. 25%) compared to those who did not have positive role models.

**“I wish I would have learned to be confident and stand up for my beliefs. Just to never be afraid of what others think.”**

Working Woman 25-39

# Modeling leadership

It's a theme that recurs throughout the study: Confidence is key for leadership, but it's something women struggle with throughout their careers. Confidence-building programs, networking opportunities and the encouragement of role models can offer women the support they need to believe in their leadership abilities.

Women cited confidence (63%) and determination (63%) as the top two characteristics of leaders; however, less than half of women (49%) personally identify with being confident today. Further, confidence was not a strength for women in their early years, with less than one-third (31%) of women describing themselves as being confident while growing up. Entry-level working women report the lowest levels of confidence (44%) compared to their professional counterparts (mid-level: 52%, senior-level: 55%), illustrating a strong need for confidence-building at the onset of a woman's career.

Women also feel apprehensive about claiming their achievements. Only one-third of the surveyed working women today identify with being successful (36%) or accomplished (34%), a sentiment shared regardless of age and level. Further, only one-quarter (27%) of the same working women feel empowered today.

This persistent lack of confidence likely is holding women back professionally. One in four working women (25%) report that not asking for what they want held them back from advancing in their career. Moreover, six in 10 of the surveyed working women do not feel confident asking for a raise (61%) or promotion (65%). This may be related to the fact that only one-third of the women recall learning to share their point of view (34%) growing up.

## **Building confidence in the workplace**

Helping women to develop and sustain confidence will be key to nurturing them as leaders. Two in three respondents (67%) believe they need more support building their confidence to feel like they can be a leader. Almost six in 10 working women respondents believe leadership training (57%) and confidence building (56%) will help move more women into future leadership roles. Respondents also cited decision-making (48%) and critical thinking (46%) as needed skills. Clearly, a strategic mindset and decisiveness are characteristics needed for senior leaders.

When looking at professional roles, those in entry-level and in mid-management positions are more likely than senior leaders to believe they need more support around building their confidence to feel like they can be leaders (entry-level: 75% vs. mid-level: 63% vs. senior-level: 56%). In fact, women in entry-level positions are more likely than their professional counterparts to indicate that training articulating and sharing their point of view would help more women move into leadership roles in the future (entry-level: 40% vs. mid-level 34% vs. senior-level 34%).

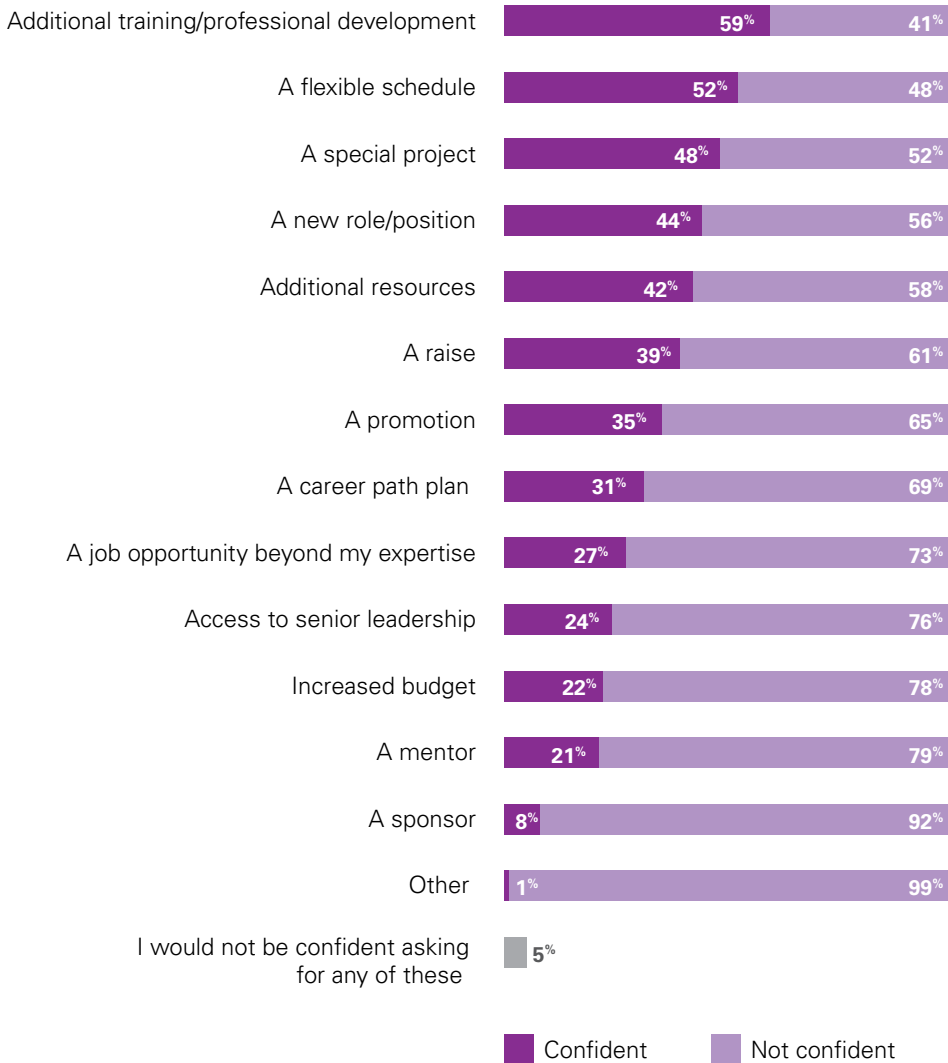
## **Creating a 'circle of trust'**

Connecting women is essential for the evolution of female leadership, but building a personal 'circle of trust' is not easily accomplished. A discrepancy was found between the importance of engaging with other women and the realities of who is doing it. While seven in 10 working women (70%) feel a personal obligation to help more women advance in the workplace, only one-third (33%) have learned to leverage and support other female employees. Unfortunately, eight in 10 working women (79%) do not even feel confident enough to ask for a mentor and nine in 10 (92%) do not feel confident asking for a sponsor.

The data suggests that those who rose to senior leadership and mid-management positions might have learned the advantage of engaging with other women, as they are more likely than their professional counterparts to indicate they learned to be good mentors/sponsors from positive role models (entry-level: 49% vs. mid-level 58% vs. senior-level 60%).

Unfortunately, career-related conversations among women tend to turn negative. Seven in 10 women reported that they are more likely to talk to other women about the challenges around career advancement rather than the opportunities. This is more common among younger working women, ages 25-39 than it is among more senior working women, ages 40-64 (65% vs. 72%).

### Items women feel confident asking for in their career



“I would thank my role model for believing in me, for bolstering my self-confidence. I’ve always been sort of shy and unsure of myself, so having someone else’s support has been really essential to me.”

College Woman 18-24

Base: Working women, 25-64  
 Q. Which of the following would you feel confident asking for in your career?



### Sharing leadership lessons

The lessons imparted by female role models can be invaluable, survey responses indicated. Female friends (51%), female colleagues (44%), and female professional peers (43%) play a significant role in teaching working women about applying business leadership. Two-thirds (67%) of women have learned the most important lessons about leadership from other women. As a matter of fact, this significance extends to the next generation, as the overwhelming majority (91%) of working women indicated that it is important to them to be a positive role model for younger female colleagues in the workplace.

Younger working women ages 25-39 are more likely than their senior counterparts to have had a role model teaching them about applying business leadership (93% vs. 89%), particularly female role models (91% vs. 84%). Working women ages

40-64 are more likely than their younger counterparts to indicate that being a positive role model to others helped them advance in their career (40% vs. 30%).

More women in senior leadership reported having significant positive role models teaching them about applying leadership than that reported by their professional counterparts (entry-level: 29% vs. mid-level: 35% vs. senior-level 41%). Interestingly, men's historical prominence in corporate America has played an important part in development, as female senior leaders are more likely than their professional counterparts to indicate that they learned the most important lessons about leadership from men (entry-level: 54% vs. mid-level: 52% vs. senior-level: 67%).

# 70%

Women, 18-64

I am more likely to talk to other women about the challenges around career advancement rather than the opportunities.

# 70%

Working Women, 25-64

I feel a personal obligation to help more women advance in the workplace.

Q. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

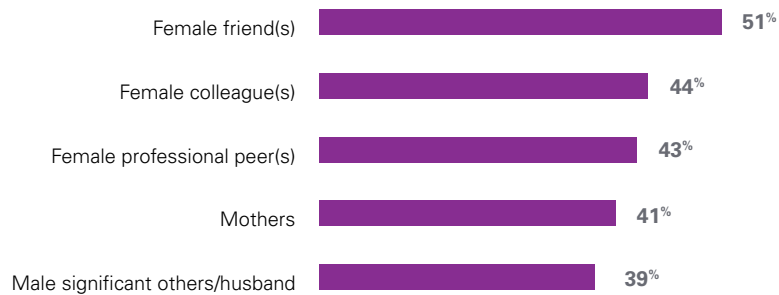


“I’m inspired by the next generation of women leaders. When I see their potential, I want to have more of an impact and pay it forward.”

Kathy Hopinkah Hannan  
National Managing Partner, Corporate Responsibility & Diversity, KPMG

The presence of women in leadership positions and the opportunity to network can help motivate women to advance in their careers. Nearly nine in 10 (88%) are encouraged by the women they see in leadership today and more than eight in 10 (86%) noted that when they see more women in leadership, they are encouraged they can get there themselves. Eight in 10 working women (82%) believe access to and networking with female leaders will help them advance in their career, regardless of professional level.

**Working women’s top 5 significant positive role models in learning about and applying business leadership**



Base: Working women, 25-64  
Q. Which of the following people are significant positive role models for you today in learning about and applying business leadership?

**“I would thank my role model for having confidence in me so that I developed it in myself. Thank you for taking the time to teach me to be a better leader; thank you for empowering me and giving me extra responsibility along the way, but always being there if I needed you.**

Working Woman 40-64

**82%**

Working Women, 25-64

Access to and networking with female leaders will help me advance in my career.

**88%**

Women, 18-64

I am encouraged by the women I see in leadership today.

**86%**

Women, 18-64

When I see more women in leadership, I am encouraged that I can get there myself.

Q. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements

## A commitment to moving more women forward

Corporations have a clear role in cultivating women leaders. Providing women with access to career development programs and ongoing positive feedback could propel them further toward leadership.

### **Companies can drive growth in women's leadership**

Respondents indicate that corporate America can help shape the future for women in business. Working women believe that companies supporting women (21%) and women supporting women (21%) have the greatest capacity to drive growth in women's leadership. In particular, many respondents believe it is critical for companies to most support a woman's career development during her twenties (80%) and career advancement during her thirties (61%).

“There needs to be more investment of resources in leadership and career development for women; recognition that there's actually **VALUE** in that.”

Working Woman 40-64

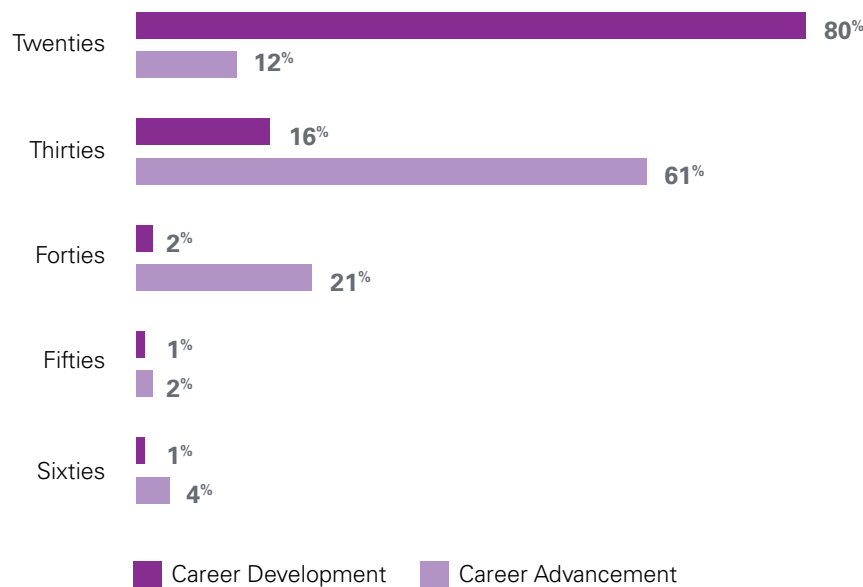


**Training and development skills needed to help move more women into leadership roles in the future** Working women 25-64

Leadership	57%
Confidence building	56%
Decision-making	48%
Networking	47%
Critical thinking	46%
People management	46%
Negotiating	43%
Team building	43%
Project management	38%
Articulating and sharing point of view	36%
Social interaction/collaboration	32%
Financial/budgeting	28%
Talent management	28%
Interviewing	23%
Other	1%
None of these skills would help move more women into leadership roles in the future	3%

Base: Working Women, 25-64  
 Q. When thinking about training and development, which of the following skills would help move more women into leadership roles in the future?

**Age working women believe it is critical for companies to most support a woman’s development and career advancement**



Base: Working women, 25-64  
 Q. At what age do you think it is critical for companies to most support a woman’s career development and career advancement?

When thinking about training and development, professional working women surveyed identified confidence building and leadership training as the skills needed to move more women into leadership roles in the future.

While women mostly rely on an individual assessment of their own performance to evaluate themselves in the workplace, an environment that cultivates feedback from others can facilitate positive perceptions. Seven in 10 working women (71%) look within, to their own performance, to influence their perceptions of themselves in the workplace. However, more than half (53%) of working women indicate that receiving praise from their colleagues, leaders and mentors most influences their perceptions of themselves. This signifies that support and feedback is important for women’s self-esteem and confidence.

Six in 10 women (63%) report they need greater encouragement from others to believe in their potential to be leaders. College women and younger working women are most likely to need encouragement from others to believe in their potential to be a leader (college women 18-24: 72% vs. working women 25-39: 66% vs. working women 40-64: 56%).

Interestingly, the traditional rewards of raises (39%) and promotions (37%) are less important to this respondent group in influencing a woman’s self-perception in the workplace.

**What working women believe most influences their perception of themselves in the workplace**

**Working women  
25-64**

My own performance	71%
Receiving praise from my colleagues, leaders, mentors	53%
My direct manager’s perception of me	51%
My performance review/discussion	50%
Professional peers’/colleagues’ perceptions of me	48%
Receiving a raise	39%
Being selected to work on a special project	39%
Senior leadership’s perceptions of me	37%
Receiving a promotion	37%
My visibility in the organization	29%
Receiving awards and/or accolades	29%
Other	1%
None of these things influences my perception of myself in the workplace	2%

**“To move more women forward, there need to be mentorships and networks supporting women inside and outside the organization.”**

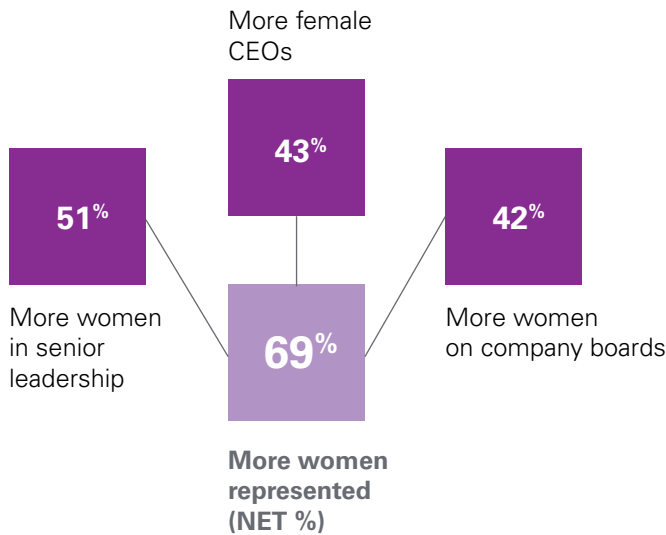
Working woman, 25-39

Base: Working Women, 25-64

Q. Which of the following most influences your perception of yourself in the workplace?



**What working women believe is necessary to help move more women into leadership roles in the future**



Base: Working women, 25-64  
 Q. Which of the following is necessary to help move more women into leadership roles in the future?

**A mindset of ownership & action**

While women believe corporations can help drive change, they also know they must take action to help themselves and other women. Nearly all women (91%) are excited about how the role of women in leadership is evolving, and seven in 10 working women (69%) believe that having more women represented in senior leadership will help move more women into leadership roles in the future.

College women and younger working women are more likely than their senior counterparts, ages 40-64 to be excited about the evolving role of women in leadership (college women 18-24: 92% vs. working women 25-39: 93% vs. working women 40-64: 86%).

Despite hesitation and a lack of confidence, the women respondents believe their “sweat equity” will help them move forward. More than eight in 10 working women (85%) believe they need to take greater ownership of their career and nine in 10 (91%) report that their own perseverance will accelerate their journey to leadership.

Younger working women ages 25-39 are more likely than senior counterparts, ages 40-64 to believe they need to take a greater ownership of their career (90% vs. 79%) and believe their own perseverance will accelerate their journey to leadership (94% vs. 88%).

When asked what advice they would give to future generations of women, more than two-thirds of respondents indicated confidence—being confident in their capabilities (75%) and confidence to ask for what they deserve (67%)—is the key advice they would pass along.

**What personal actions and behaviors working women believe will drive their careers forward**

**Working women 25-64**

Be confident in your capabilities	75%
Be confident to ask for what you deserve	67%
Don't let your gender limit your view of what you can accomplish	62%
Don't let your gender define your future opportunities	61%
Own your success	61%
Make gender a non-issue in the workplace	54%
Take risks	49%
Know you are meant to have a seat at the table	49%
Other	2%

Base: Working Women, 25-64  
 Q. Based on your career experience, what advice would you give future generations of women coming into the workforce?

“Without encouragement, I would not have stepped out of my shell and challenged myself with the many different leadership roles I am in now.”

Working Woman, 25-39

**85%** I need to take greater ownership of my career.

Working Women, 25-64

**91%** My own perseverance will accelerate my journey to leadership.

Working Women, 25-64

Q. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.



# Conclusion

Overall, while much has been gained and accomplished for aspiring women leaders, many have been sidetracked by a lack of confidence, encouragement, connections or opportunities from childhood and later.



To empower more women to reach the highest ranks, we must focus on three key areas: socializing leadership early in life, modeling leadership and building confidence through role models and networking, and providing or enhancing corporate development programs that move more women forward. Specifically, corporations should:

- identify and develop those high-performing women who aspire to lead;
- provide the kind of individual feedback that reinforces and builds confidence and high-performance;
- build empowered and effective networks with the express goal of generating opportunities for women's leadership growth;
- actively give qualified women leadership opportunities;
- put in place challenging and aspirational career paths for women at work.

In a world where the attributes of the most effective leaders include the ability to generate collaboration, effective communication and respect, it seems only logical that the path to leadership should be characterized by the same qualities. This study indicates that there is very important work to be done.

## Research approach and design

A quantitative 20-minute online survey was conducted in English among 3,014 women ages 18-64, in the United States (604 college women and 2,410 working women). To qualify for the study, women met the following criteria:

- College women: 18-24 years of age; currently enrolled either part-time or full-time in a two-year, four-year or advanced degree program; must NOT be working full-time
- Working women: 25-64 years of age; college educated (two-year, four-year or advanced degree); currently working in the white collar\* workforce full-time

\*White collar workforce is defined as those working in the following environments: office, home/remote office, local/regional branch, hospital or medical facility, hotel/resort, or academic institution/university. Please note, respondents could not have a role as a front-line employee (working at a register, counter, front desk, service center, deliveries, mail, etc.).

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