

6 WAYS THAT WOMEN CAN CHAMPION EACH OTHER AT WORK

We've all heard the myth that women don't support each other—but it's not true. Women can be powerful allies at work for other women, and these 6 ways that women can champion each other at work are simple things we can do every day to celebrate and advocate for our female coworkers. Together we can level the playing field and go further faster.



DID YOU KNOW?

When women stay quiet, our status suffers: women who speak less in group discussion are seen as having less influence.

3. CELEBRATE WOMEN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Look for opportunities to celebrate women's accomplishments, and point out when women are being blamed unfairly for mistakes.

Moreover, women and men respond to recognition differently. Women often credit our accomplishments to external factors such as "getting lucky" and "help from others," while men attribute theirs to innate qualities and skills. They own their success, and we undermine ours. Conversely, when women celebrate our own accomplishments, we are often penalized for self-promotion. As a result of these dynamics, women's contributions can go unnoticed.

Women are often given less credit for successful outcomes and blamed more for failure.

Better yet, get together with a group of women and agree to celebrate one another's successes whenever possible. Although women are often penalized for promoting ourselves, you can lift up other women, and they can do the same for you. When you introduce female coworkers, highlight their credentials and accomplishments—for example, you might say, "Katie was in charge of our most recent product launch, and it generated more sales than any other initiative this year."

DID YOU KNOW?

Men apply for jobs when they meet 60 percent of the hiring criteria, while women wait until we meet 100 percent.

5. GIVE WOMEN DIRECT FEEDBACK

Women often receive less—and less helpful—feedback.

While men get specific recommendations for improving their performance, women hear more generic feedback that's harder to act on, such as "Good job" or "You need more presence in meetings." Men may hesitate to give critical feedback to women for fear of eliciting an emotional response—and this is likely the case for women, too. Unfortunately, this lack of input slows women down; it's hard to build skills and advance if you don't know what to do.

Look for opportunities to give the women you work with input that can help them learn and grow.

Remember that holding back for fear you'll upset someone doesn't benefit her. Whenever possible, share your feedback live and in the moment, when it's most effective. Treat feedback as a gift and solicit it often—you'll benefit from the input, and ideally your female coworkers will follow your lead.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your peers can serve as valuable advocates and advisors. The women in small peer groups called Lean In Circles encourage each other to go for it and practice the skills they need to be successful. As a result, 85 percent of members attribute a positive change in their life to their Circle. Start or join your own Circle at leanin.org/circles today.

1. MAKE SURE WOMEN'S IDEAS ARE HEARD

If you watch coworkers at the same level in meetings, you'll likely notice that more men sit in the front and center seats.

While women tend to gravitate toward the end of the table and edge of the room, away from positions that convey status. Women also get less airtime in group discussions. They are interrupted more—by both men and women—and given less credit for our ideas.

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DID YOU KNOW?

According to a recent study by a Harvard PhD candidate in economics, men get about the same amount of credit when they write a research paper with a coed team as they do when they're the sole author. In contrast, women get almost zero credit if they write a paper as part of a team with a man on it.

4. ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO GO FOR IT

Women are prone to more intense self-doubt than men, and it is not because we're missing a special confidence gene.

Women face an uneven playing field at work. This bias is so pronounced that simply changing the name on a résumé from a woman's to a man's increases a candidate's hireability by 61 percent. Because female performance is frequently underestimated, women need to work harder to prove we're just as capable and are more likely to miss out on key assignments, promotions, and raises. Women even tend to underestimate our own performance and are more likely to attribute our failures to lack of ability. Because the workplace is harder on women—and we are harder on ourselves—our confidence often erodes.

Look for opportunities to boost other women's confidence and encourage them to go for it.

If a coworker tells you she's not ready for a new project or position, remind her what she's already accomplished and offer to be a thought buddy while she gets up to speed ... or "fakes it till she makes it".

DID YOU KNOW?

In a recent analysis of hundreds of performance reviews, 60 percent of the developmental feedback men received was linked to specific business outcomes—and therefore actionable—compared to only 40 percent of the developmental feedback women received.

6. MENTOR AND SPONSOR OTHER WOMEN

Mentorship and sponsorship are key drivers of success, but unfortunately women often miss out.

Men tend to gravitate toward mentoring other men because they have shared interests—in fact, two-thirds of the men who participated in our Women in the Workplace study reported that their mentors were mostly men. In addition, women are less likely to have mentors who advocate for and promote them, and this type of sponsorship is ultimately what opens doors and creates opportunities. These disparities help explain why fewer women end up in leadership roles.

Commit the time and energy to mentor another woman.

If you're early in your career, don't underestimate the value of your input—you may have just been through what a woman starting out is experiencing. If you're more senior, go beyond offering advice and use your influence to advocate for your mentee. Sponsorship is a great way for female leaders to reach back to help women early in their careers.

