

LEAN IN



ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

*Women in the Workplace 2018:*  
A Report From Lean In  
and McKinsey & Company

# Overview

*Women in the Workplace 2018* is a comprehensive study by Lean In and McKinsey & Company on the state of women in corporate America.

For the last four years, companies have reported that they are highly committed to gender diversity. But our report shows that company commitment has not translated into meaningful progress. Women continue to be vastly underrepresented at every level. For women of color, it's even worse. Only about one in five senior leaders is a woman, and one in twenty-five is a woman of color.

Progress isn't just slow—it's stalled. In this meeting we will discuss why and explore possible solutions.

*Women in the Workplace* is focused on corporate America. But whether you work in that sector or not, you can use this Circle guide to start a conversation about how the findings from the report may apply to your organization and your experience of the workplace.

## MEETING GOALS

- Discuss the findings from the Women in the Workplace 2018 report
- Consider how the findings relate to your organization or your experience of work
- Generate ideas for how you can support the women you work with and what companies can do to create more inclusive workplaces

## PRE-MEETING PREP

- Everyone should read the Women in the Workplace 2018 report before the meeting (available at [womenintheworkplace.com](https://womenintheworkplace.com))
- Remind everyone to bring a copy of this PDF
- Remind everyone to bring their One Action Update from your last meeting (if you're doing this)

# Meeting Agenda

⌚ Approx. 95 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

## 1 Check-In

⌚ Approx. 15 minutes

*Warm up, catch up, and get going*

## 2 Connection Activities

⌚ Approx. 55 minutes

*Learn from experts and one another*

- **Activity 1: Leveling the playing field for hiring and promotions** ⌚ 10 minutes  
*Group activity*
- **Activity 2: Improving the experience for “Onlys” in the workplace** ⌚ 15 minutes  
*Group activity*
- **Activity 3: Addressing everyday discrimination at work** ⌚ 15 minutes  
*Group activity*
- **Activity 4: Policies and programs to support equality** ⌚ 15 minutes  
*Group activity*

## 3 One Action

⌚ Approx. 5 minutes

*The little push you need to go for it*

## 4 Wrap-Up

⌚ Approx. 15 minutes

*What’s next and a few final words*

## Optional Worksheets

One Action Update to prepare for your next meeting



# Meeting Guide

## 1 Check-In

*Warm up, catch up, and get going*

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

### STEP 1: ICEBREAKER

👥 Group activity

🕒 5 minutes or less

An icebreaker is a powerful tool to help us become present with one another and ourselves.

Use this icebreaker to see if your Circle members have experienced an uneven playing field at work. Read out the statements below and have members raise their hand if they relate to the experience. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

- Raise your hand if
  - You think women are underrepresented in senior leadership at your organization
  - You think women face an uneven playing field at work
  - You think your manager provides less support to women than men
  - You have ever been mistaken for someone in a more junior position
  - You think your gender makes it harder for you to advance
  - You see your company as meritocratic



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## STEP 2: MEMBER UPDATES

 Group activity

 1 minute or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action Update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting; the goal of a One Action is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

**For example, a member update might go like this:** *"Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action Update]."*



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## 2 Education Activities

*Learn from experts and one another*

🕒 Approx. 55 minutes for all activities

### Activity 1: Leveling the playing field for hiring and promotions



Group activity



Approx. 10 minutes

Companies are disadvantaging women from the beginning when it comes to hiring and promotions. The questions below help you to think about why this happens and what can be done.


Have someone in the group read aloud the key takeaways summarized below, then discuss the questions as a group.

- **Key takeaway 1: Entry-level hiring.** Women earn 57 percent of bachelor's degrees, but they are hired for only 46 percent of entry-level jobs.
  - Does the gap surprise you? Why or why not?
  - Why do you think women are hired at lower rates at entry level?
  - Can you think of anything companies could do to address this imbalance?
- **Key takeaway 2: First promotion.** At the first critical step up to manager, the disparity widens further. Women are less likely to be hired into manager-level jobs, and they are far less likely to be promoted into them. Largely because of these gender gaps, men end up holding 62 percent of manager positions, while women hold only 38 percent.
  - Why do you think women are promoted less often from entry level to management?
  - Do you think this happens at your company?
  - What could companies do to make sure they promote more women into manager roles?

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## Activity 2: Improving the experience for “Onlys” in the workplace

 Group activity

 Approx. 15 minutes

Individually or as a group, read the key takeaways from the report about “Onlys”:

- **Women are too often the only one.** It’s still a common occurrence for women to find themselves the only or one of the only women in the room.
  - 20 percent of women are often the only woman.
  - Approximately 40 percent of women at senior levels and in technical roles are often the only woman.
  - 45 percent of women of color are often the only or one of the only people of color.
  - 76 percent of lesbian women and 70 percent of gay men are often the only or one of the only people of their sexual orientation in the room.
- **Women who are “Onlys” have a significantly worse experience** than women who work with more women.
  - They are more likely to deal with microaggressions.
  - They often feel pressure to perform, on guard, and left out.
  - They much more likely to have been sexually harassed during the course of their career.
  - They are much more likely to think of leaving their companies—but they are also more likely to be ambitious.
- **Far fewer men are Onlys.** Just 7 percent of men are often the only or one of the only men in the room.
  - They face less scrutiny than women Onlys and they most frequently say they feel included.


Discuss as a group:

- Have you ever been the only, or one of the only, people of your race, gender, or sexual orientation in the room? How often have you found yourself in this situation?
- How did (or do) you feel about it?
- What would have improved the experience for you at the time?
- What could companies do to make the experience better—or less frequent?
- How will it benefit companies if they support women who are Onlys?

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## Activity 3: Addressing everyday discrimination and harassment at work

 Group activity

 Approx. 15 minutes

Women are more likely to face everyday discrimination in the workplace, often referred to as microaggressions. For 64 percent of women—and 71 percent of lesbian women—microaggressions are a workplace reality.

In addition, 35 percent of women have experienced sexual harassment during their careers. It's even more common for women who don't conform to traditional feminine expectations: 55 percent of women in senior leadership, 48 percent of lesbian women, and 45 percent of women in technical roles say that they've been harassed.

Raise your hand if you've experienced any of these common microaggressions:

- Been mistaken for someone more junior
- Been addressed in a less than professional way
- Had your judgment questioned in your area of expertise
- Had to prove your competence more than others do
- Heard demeaning remarks about you or others like you
- Not been invited to a social gathering of coworkers

Discuss as a group:

- If you feel comfortable doing so, share your experience of one of these microaggressions with the group. How did it make you feel?
- As a group, brainstorm ways to deal with these experiences when they happen.



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Individually or as a group, read these key insights from the report on what companies should do to combat microaggressions and harassment:

- **Women and men point to the need for companies to do more to create a safe and respectful work environment.**
  - Only 27 percent of employees say that managers regularly challenge biased language and behavior when it happens.
  - Just 40 percent say that disrespectful behavior toward women is often quickly addressed at their company.
  - And just 32 percent think that their company acts swiftly on claims of sexual harassment.
- **Women are less optimistic than men about their company's efforts to curb inappropriate behavior.** As one example, only 32 percent of women say that disrespectful behavior toward women is often quickly addressed by their company, compared to 50 percent of men.
- **When managers regularly challenge gender-biased language and behavior, women are happier and more likely to stay.** Yet less than half of managers say they've received the unconscious bias training needed to get this right.

Discuss as a group:


- What do you think companies can do to prevent microaggressions and support employees who experience them?
- Why should companies care?
- Has your company done anything to address harassment in the past year—for example, strengthened company policy or stated that harassment will not be tolerated? Would you like to see them do more?



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## Activity 4: Policies and programs to support equality

 Group activity

 Approx. 15 minutes

Read the key takeaways from the report, summarized below, on how companies should support diversity and inclusion:

- **Companies need to treat gender diversity like the business priority it is.** Experts agree that articulating a business case, setting goals and reporting on progress, and rewarding success are key to driving organizational change. More companies need to put these practices in place.
  - Only 38 percent of companies set targets for gender representation, even though setting goals is the first step toward achieving any business priority.
  - Only 12 percent share a majority of gender diversity metrics with their employees, even though transparency is a helpful way to signal a company's commitment to change.
  - Only 42 percent hold senior leaders accountable for making progress toward gender parity, and only 16 percent hold managers and directors accountable.
  - Fewer than 20 percent of employers offer on-site child care or subsidies for regular child care.

Discuss as a group:

- Does your company offer any of the policies and programs listed above? What impact have they had at your company?
- What other policies would you like to see at your company to support diversity and inclusion?
- Choose one policy related to equality or inclusion that you'd particularly like to see at your workplace. Think of one small step you could take to try to get that policy put into action—for example, talk to your manager or HR, bring it to your next team meeting.
- Go around the Circle one by one and say which policy you most want to see and the small step you can take to get there.

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## 3 One Action

*The little push you need to go for it*

🕒 Approx. 5 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

This month, think about an action you can take to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion at your company.

### SHARE YOUR ONE ACTION WITH YOUR CIRCLE

👥 Group activity

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following statement:

- I commit to doing [small step] to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion at my company.

Move quickly from member to member, and consider cheering one another on as you go.

**Housekeeping note:** We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. On page 13 of this PDF, you’ll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update.

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## 4 Wrap-Up

*What's next and a few final words*

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

### STEP 1: FINALIZE LOGISTICS OF YOUR NEXT MEETING

👥 Group activity

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting, including day and time, location, and food and drink responsibilities. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who is going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting so you can brainstorm improvements going forward.

### STEP 2: CLOSE ON AN ENERGETIC AND INSPIRATIONAL NOTE

👥 Group activity

🕒 5 minutes or less

- Go around the Circle and in one word share how you feel after today's meeting.

**CONGRATULATIONS ON A GREAT MEETING.**

See the following pages for a One Action Update Worksheet.



# One Action Update

Use the following prompts to prepare your One Action Update before your next meeting, to maximize your time with your Circle.

What was the diversity and inclusion policy you wanted to see happen at your company?

What small step did you plan to take to push for it to become a reality?

Did you take the step? Do you feel that you made progress?