

Deloitte.

Women @ Work

A global outlook



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Executive summary

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic overtook the globe in early 2020, inequities were holding women back in the workplace. In 2020, women globally earned 81 cents for every dollar earned by men.¹

The pandemic has widened the gap. In 2020, as 114 million jobs were lost across the globe, employment losses for women were at 5%, compared with 3.9% for men.² And studies have found that during the crisis women assumed additional responsibilities, such as taking on more household, childcare, and other caring duties—while continuing to work.³

To understand the impact of the pandemic on gender equality in the workplace, Deloitte Global conducted a survey of 5,000 women across 10 countries between November 2020 and March 2021. The survey probed several areas relating to their work lives, including their experiences during the pandemic and career expectations for the future. Respondents varied across age groups and the data from the survey has also enabled analysis through the intersectional lenses of race and ethnicity and sexual orientation and gender identity.



The survey findings indicate that gender equality in the workplace regressed during the pandemic. But the findings also demonstrate the vital role that employers can play in reversing that trend.

Highlights



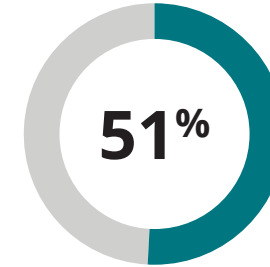
WOMEN'S WELLBEING HAS FALLEN SINCE THE PANDEMIC

Healthy boundaries between work and home have deteriorated. Only 22% of women believe that their employers have enabled them to establish clear boundaries between work and personal hours. As many as 77% of women say their workload has increased and 51% of women feel less optimistic about their career prospects today than they did before the pandemic, and 29% of the women who said their career isn't progressing as fast as they would like (42% of the total sample) say poor mental health is one of the reasons for this.

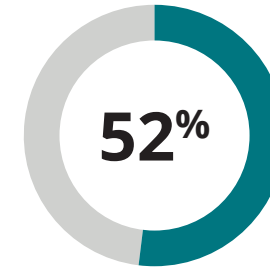


WOMEN CONTINUE TO DEAL WITH NON-INCLUSIVE BEHAVIOR AT WORK, EVEN IN THE VIRTUAL WORKPLACE

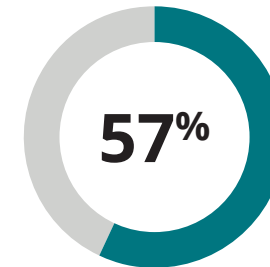
More than half have experienced some form of harassment or microaggression in the past year, ranging from the belief that their judgment is being questioned because they are women to experiencing disparaging and/or sexual comments. The data also shows that many of these events go unreported to employers, with concerns over career penalty being one of the main reasons cited.



feel **less optimistic** about their career prospects today



have **experienced some form of harassment** or microaggression in the past year



say they **plan to leave** their current job **within two years**

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF),⁴ the pandemic has set gender parity efforts back by a generation or more. Business leaders cannot ignore this. If they do not move to proactively address gender inequality in the workplace, they are likely to lose some of their best people—and may struggle to recruit younger talent, who choose employers that demonstrate a truly inclusive culture.

Executive summary



LGBT+ WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOR FACE EVEN MORE CHALLENGES

LGBT+ women and women of color are more likely to report lower levels of mental wellbeing and work-life balance compared with the overall sample. LGBT+ women are less likely than those who are not LGBT+ to say that their employer's commitment to supporting women has been sufficient since the COVID-19 crisis began (35% vs. 44%). Women in these groups have also experienced more non-inclusive behaviors. Compared with white women, women of color in the survey are more likely to say they have heard comments about their communication style (15% vs. 5%) and to have their judgment questioned (14% vs. 8%). LGBT+ women are nearly four times more likely to say they have experienced jokes of a sexual nature than non-LGBT+ women.



THE MAJORITY OF WOMEN ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS AND DO NOT SEE A LONG-TERM FUTURE IN THEIR CURRENT JOB

Less than half of the respondents rate their current job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity at work as “good” or “extremely good,” compared with about three-quarters before the pandemic. Almost half (45%) of the women who had to change their working hours due to care responsibilities say their relationship with their employers was negatively impacted, increasing to 54% for women of color and 65% for women who are sole parents. Women of color are also more likely to say that their careers are not progressing fast enough (52% vs. 42%) compared with the overall sample. With regard to satisfaction with their jobs, 57% of women say they plan to leave their current job within two years, and 21% of these women expect to be gone in less than a year. Work-life balance was the top reason why women would consider leaving their current employer.

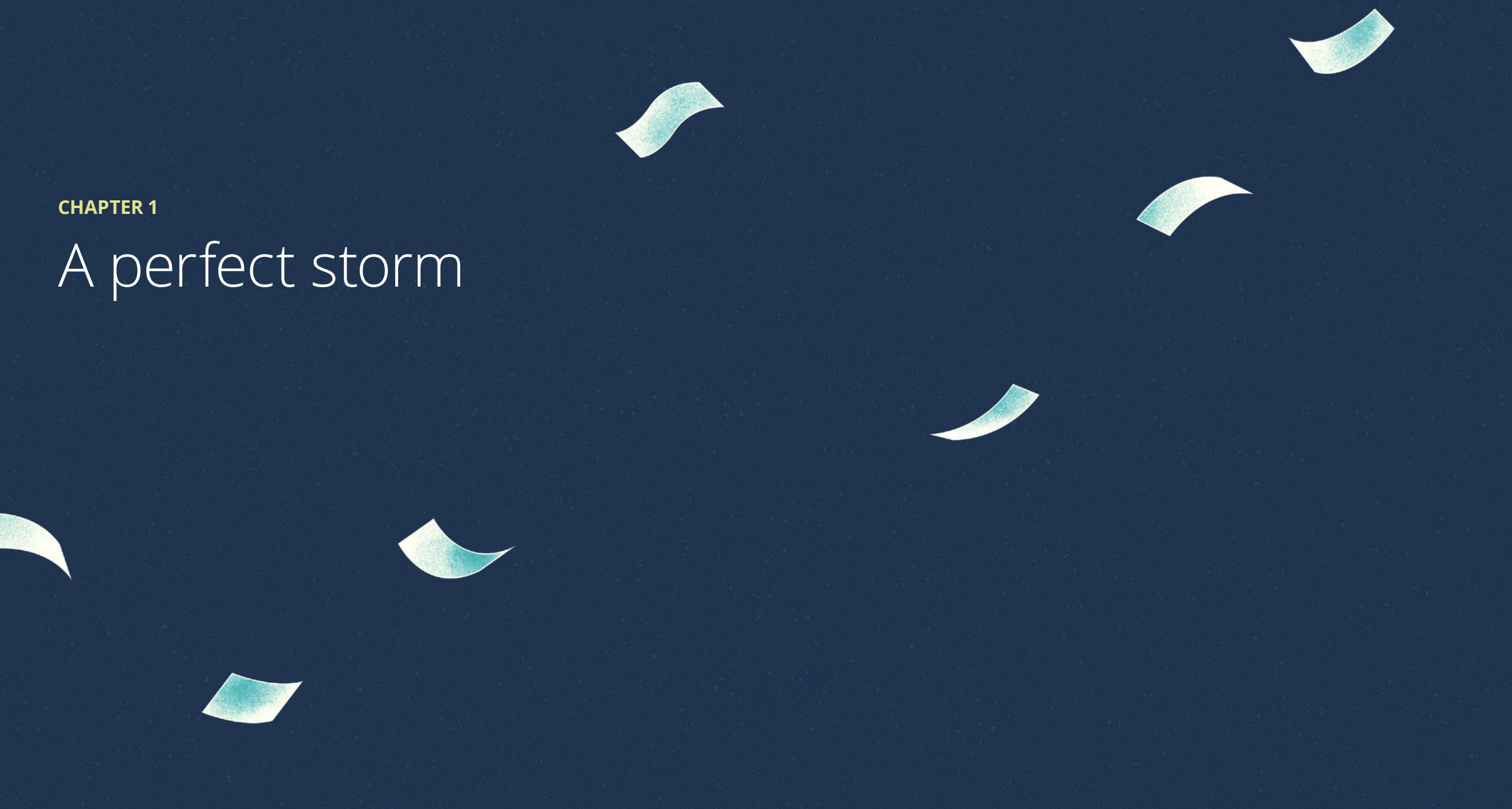


ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, WHEN WOMEN EXPERIENCE A TRULY RESPECTFUL AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE, THEY ARE MORE ENGAGED, PRODUCTIVE, AND LOYAL

Some companies have created genuinely inclusive cultures where women believe they are fully supported by management and respected by their peers. Women who work for these organizations—which we call *gender equality leaders*—report higher levels of mental wellbeing, motivation, productivity, and loyalty to their employers. They are also far more likely to say they are planning to stay with their employers for longer than two years, compared with women who work for businesses that have not demonstrated an inclusive culture (we call these “lagging organizations”).

CHAPTER 1

A perfect storm



Chapter 1

A perfect storm

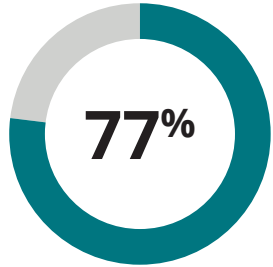
“Already we are seeing a reversal in decades of limited and fragile progress on gender equality and women’s rights. Without a concerted response, we risk losing a generation or more of gains ... In short, the pandemic is exposing and exacerbating the considerable hurdles women face in achieving their rights and fulfilling their potential. Progress lost may take years, even generations, to recover.”⁵

—UN Secretary-General António Guterres
(August 2020)

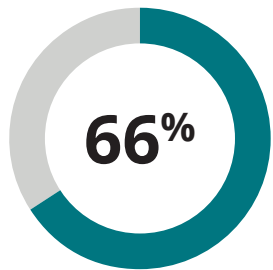
This global survey of 5,000 women shows that many have seen increases in both workload and responsibilities outside work and have become increasingly pessimistic about their career prospects since the pandemic began. Many are also facing non-inclusive behaviors⁶ at work. The pandemic has impacted their lives, their careers, and their hopes for the future.

Our research indicates that higher workloads and increased caregiving responsibilities—combined with lack of support from employers—are affecting women’s engagement, loyalty, and overall wellbeing. They are also forcing many women to make difficult decisions about whether to remain in their jobs.

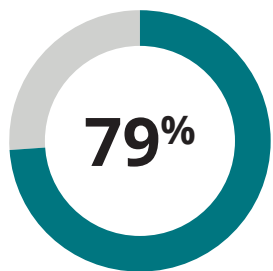




say they their **job workload has increased** as a result of the pandemic



have the **greatest responsibility** for household tasks



who care for dependents other than children have the **greatest responsibility** for domestic tasks within their homes

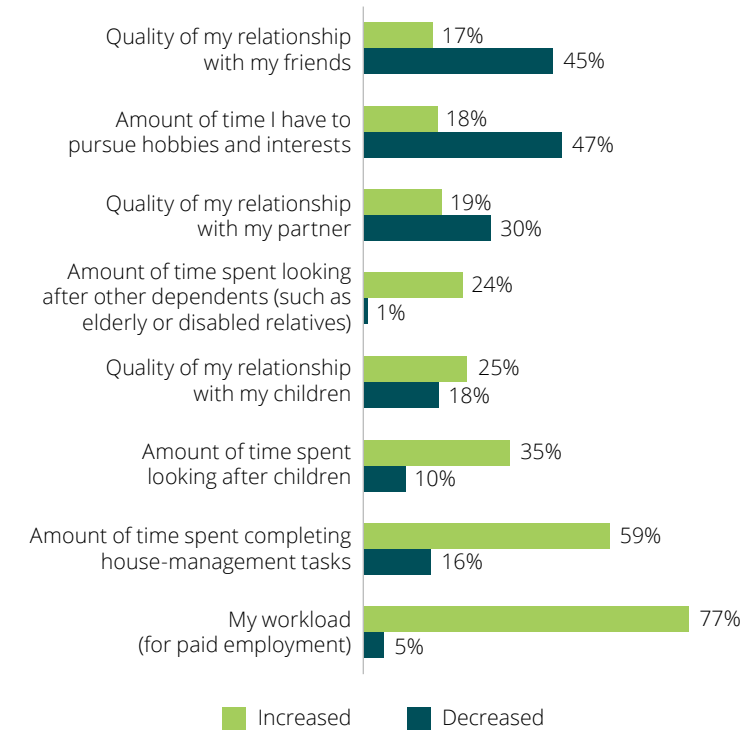
The pressures on women during the pandemic are coming from various directions.

Notably 77% of respondents say that their job workload has increased as a result of the pandemic. They are also spending more time on household tasks and looking after children and loved ones than they did before the pandemic, and the data suggests that they are taking on a larger share of this than other household members.

As many as 66% say they have the greatest responsibility for household tasks (this increases to 67% for women of color), and more than half of those with children say they handle the majority of childcare. Many parents have also had the conflicting responsibilities of work and home-schooling, often for lengthy periods.

Women who care for dependents other than children (e.g., elderly parents) are also feeling the pressure. Nearly 80% of women who have such caregiving roles have the greatest responsibility for household tasks within their homes.

Chart 1 – Women are shouldering more responsibility at home and at work, and they have less time to pursue their own interests



Q5: To what extent, if any, have the following aspects of your life changed since the COVID-19 crisis broke?

CAREGIVERS AND SOLE PARENTS ARE HAVING A HARDER TIME

Women with caregiving responsibilities and sole parents feel less engaged, less respected, and more stressed than the other women we surveyed.

When it comes to household tasks, a significant number of women report an increase since the pandemic—whether they have caregiving responsibilities or not—albeit this was higher for those with caring responsibilities (62% compared with 51% without). Almost a quarter of women with caregiving responsibilities say they are less likely to return to the office than their partners when safe to do so.

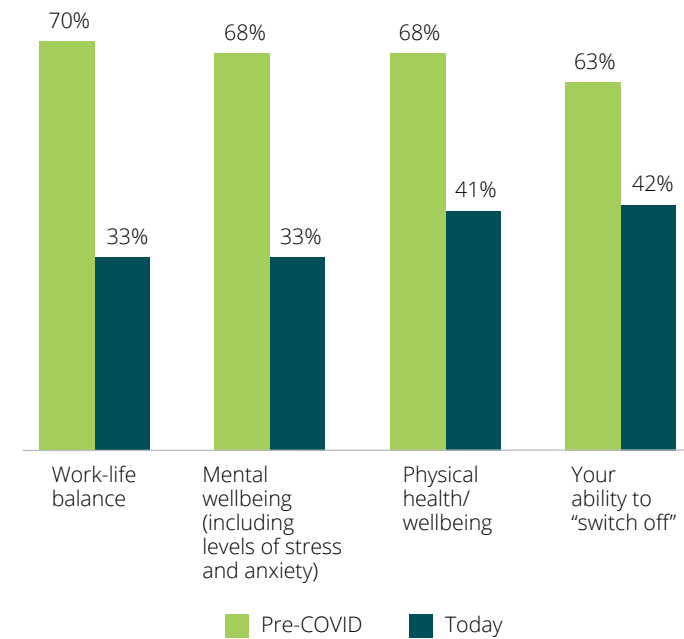
Sole parents also report facing greater challenges at work. **Almost two-thirds of this group (65%) who had to reduce/change their working hours due to caring responsibilities during the pandemic say it negatively affected their relationship with their employer**, compared with 45% in the sample overall. And caregiving responsibilities have impacted these women's work-life balance. Nearly 58% of sole parents report low levels of work-life balance compared to the overall sample (44%).

Respondents say that the increase in responsibility at home has adversely impacted relationships at work: 45% of women who had to change their working hours as a result of care responsibilities say their relationship with their employer was negatively impacted, jumping to 54% for women of color; this increases even further for sole parents, at 65%.

Respondents have found themselves in a perfect storm: increased responsibility at home, heavier workloads, and damage to relationships with their employers. Added to this, respondents say they have less time for outside interests and have experienced an adverse impact on their relationships with friends and partners.

It is therefore no surprise that this situation is affecting women's health and their general optimism about the future. Only a third of women consider their mental wellbeing today to be "good" or "extremely good," compared with 68% before the pandemic. And only 41% rank their current physical health as "good" or "extremely good," compared with 68% pre-pandemic. Caregivers, LGBT+ women, and women of color are especially affected, reporting lower levels of wellbeing than the overall sample.

Chart 2 – Women's wellbeing has been severely impacted by the pandemic, across a range of measures



Q2: How would you rate each of the following aspects of your life pre-COVID-19? Chart shows % of women who selected "good" or "extremely good"

Q3: And how would you rate each of the following aspects of your life today?

Chapter 1

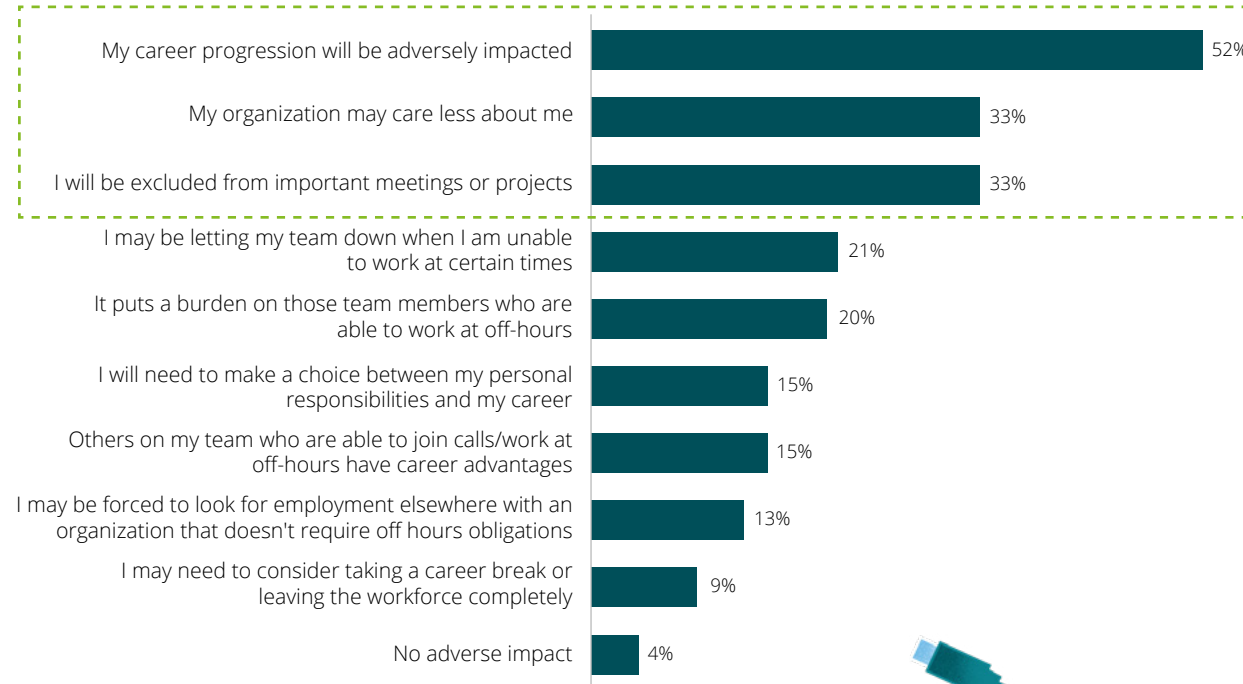
WOMEN FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE TO BE “ALWAYS ON”

Nearly a third (31%) of the women surveyed report feeling unable to “switch off” from work since the pandemic, with more than half of these saying this is driven by a fear that doing so will affect their career progression (52%). A third (33%) say it is driven by concerns that it will cause them to be excluded from important projects, with the same number saying they are concerned that their organization may care less about them; 15% report that if they are not always available to their employer they may be forced to make a decision between their work and personal lives.

The situation is worse for women of color, with 39% saying they are unable to switch off, compared with 31% of the overall sample.

This problem is exacerbated by the “culture of presenteeism,” whereby employees perceive that they are judged by the amount of time they are present at work rather than by output. Despite the move to virtual work, this perception of presenteeism has continued for many respondents, with close to two-thirds (63%) saying their employers judge them by the amount of time they spend online.

Chart 3 – Fear of career impact is making it difficult for women to “switch off”



Q4: If you are not able to be always available to your employer, what are you concerned may happen? (Base: 1,535)



Chapter 1

THE SITUATION IS WORSE FOR LGBT+ WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOR

While the survey exposes the stark situation many women are in, it also shows that women of color and LGBT+ women are faring even worse. Women in these groups are more likely to report increased responsibilities at home and at work than the overall sample, and the data suggests that this is negatively affecting their home and work lives.

These women report lower levels of mental wellbeing and motivation, and a worse work-life balance compared with the overall sample. **Women of color are more likely than the overall sample (57% vs. 51%) to say they feel less optimistic about their career prospects today than before the pandemic.** And younger women of color (aged 18–37) are more likely than the overall sample to say they are less optimistic about their careers today than before COVID-19 (58% vs. 51%). Younger women of color (aged 18–37) are also more likely than the overall sample to say that their careers are not progressing fast enough (54% vs. 42%).

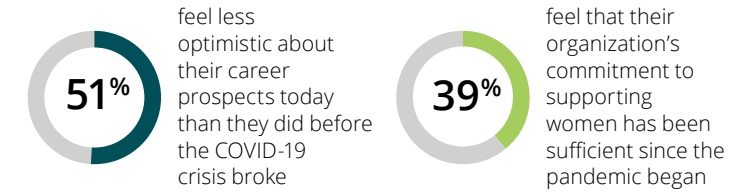
LGBT+ women, meanwhile, are more likely than those who are not LGBT+ to say they do not feel supported by their employers to achieve a work-life balance and are less likely to say that their employer's commitment to supporting women has been sufficient since the COVID-19 crisis began (35% vs. 44%).

CAREER OPTIMISM IS SUFFERING, BUT EMPLOYERS ARE NOT STEPPING UP

When considering the future, more than half of the women we surveyed say they have felt less optimistic about their career progression since the pandemic began. Their falling optimism is not unfounded. Businesses in the hardest-hit industries are having to make tough decisions that affect their entire workforce in the face of the economic downturn. However, women in particular are facing a confluence of events—increased pressures at home and higher workloads at work—so it is no wonder that 52% of the women surveyed feel overworked/burned out even after asking for a reduction in working hours.

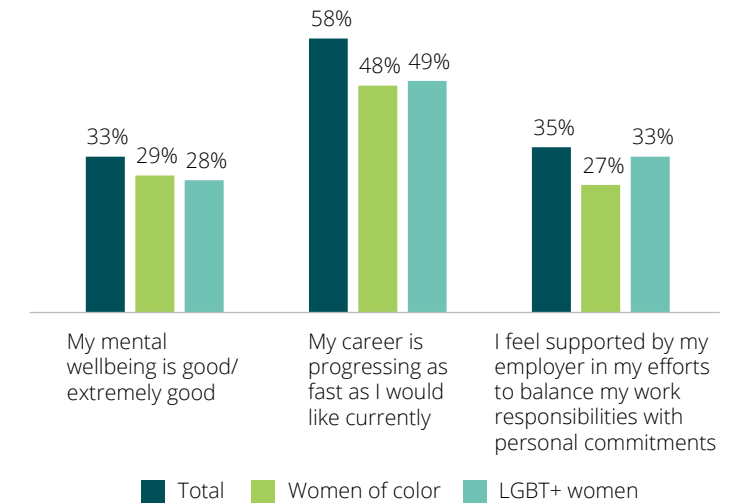
Alongside this, many women say they believe their employer's commitment to supporting women has been inadequate during the crisis. Only 35% of respondents say they have felt supported by their employer when it comes to their work-life balance, and only 39% say they feel their employer's commitment to women since the pandemic started has been sufficient.

Chart 4 - Women's career prospects have been diminished by the pandemic, and they believe their employers aren't offering adequate support

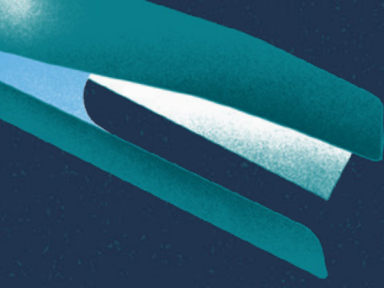


Q6: Indicate whether each of the below statements are true, not true, or not applicable to you. Chart shows % of women who selected "true".

Chart 5 - Women of color and LGBT+ women report lower levels of wellbeing and career optimism compared with the overall sample



Q3: How would you rate each of the following aspects of your life today?
Q6: Indicate whether each of the below statements are true, not true, or not applicable to you.



CHAPTER 2

The culture factor



Chapter 2

The culture factor

Diversity and inclusion are frequently referred to collectively, and an inclusive culture is obviously critical for success when it comes to diversity in the workplace.

Companies may have policies and processes in place, and make statements about their commitment to diversity, but it is a company's "everyday" culture that shows whether these pledges are lived, particularly in periods of extreme disruption such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

NON-INCLUSIVE BEHAVIOR DRIVES WOMEN AWAY

Deloitte Global's survey indicates that many companies have some way to go when it comes to this everyday inclusive culture: A majority (52%) of the women surveyed say they have experienced some form of harassment or non-inclusive behavior at work in the past year.

The women surveyed cite a range of non-inclusive behaviors encountered—from unwanted physical contact, disparaging remarks about their gender, and unwanted comments of a sexual nature to comments about their physical appearance, gender, race, sexual orientation or gender identity, and caregiving status.

WOMEN DO NOT REPORT BECAUSE THEY FEAR NEGATIVE CAREER IMPACT

Most women who experience these behaviors do not report them to their employer, and this is particularly the case for the non-inclusive behaviors that the recipient may perceive to be regarded by their employer as less "serious." Although more than 60% of women surveyed who have experienced derogatory jokes or have been addressed in a disrespectful way reported these incidents in some way to their employer, fewer than half reported other, possibly subtler, forms of non-inclusive behaviors, such as having their judgment questioned or comments about their communication style.

Indeed, nearly a quarter (23%) of women who did not report non-inclusive behaviors say this was because they did not think the behavior was serious enough to report, while 14% said they didn't think their complaint would be taken seriously. The top reason for those who did not report such behaviors was fear of career penalty.

These responses do not mean respondents believe these behaviors should be tolerated. Rather, they point to an organization's culture—to a perception that some non-inclusive behaviors aren't "serious" and where reporting such behavior may not result in appropriate action being taken.

In some cases, organizations may not even have the appropriate reporting mechanisms in place. Only 31% of the women surveyed believe that their company currently has a process for reporting discrimination and harassment.

Chart 6 - Which, if any of the following non-inclusive behaviors have you experienced over the past 12 months?



Most commonly experienced non-inclusive behavior

- Being addressed in an unprofessional or disrespectful way
- Having my judgment questioned
- Being given less opportunity to progress my career
- Being given less opportunities to speak up in meetings
- Comments about my communication style
- Being given less one-on-one time with my manager
- Being belittled by my senior colleagues
- Comments about my physical appearance
- Comments about my caregiving status
- Being excluded socially

Q10: Which, if any, of the following non-inclusive workplace behaviors have you experienced over the past 12 months?



Chapter 2

WOMEN OF COLOR AND LGBT+ WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCED MORE NON-INCLUSIVE BEHAVIORS

Compared with white women, **women of color in the survey are more likely to say they have experienced comments about their communication style** (15% vs. 5%) and have their judgment questioned (14% vs. 8%).

LGBT+ women, meanwhile, are almost four times more likely to say they have experienced jokes of a sexual nature (19% vs. 5%), and five times more likely to have experienced belittling or disparaging comments about their gender (16% vs. 3%) than non-LGBT+ women.

One in 10 women of color say they have experienced comments about their race. And women of color who have chosen not to report non-inclusive behaviors are also far more likely than white women (35% vs. 19%) to cite fear of career penalty as the reason.

SOME WOMEN MIGHT LEAVE THE WORKFORCE FOR GOOD

Almost a quarter of the women surveyed (23%) are considering leaving the workforce altogether as a result of their experience during the pandemic. They cite increased workload both at home and at work as the main reasons for this. More than a quarter of women of color (26%) are considering leaving the workforce.

But the data also shows a link to workplace culture, with more than twice as many women who say they experienced non-inclusive behaviors planning to leave the workforce altogether due to COVID-19 as those who have not (29% vs. 16%).

The top reason cited overall for leaving their employer is lack of work-life balance, but women who have experienced non-inclusive behaviors are almost four times more likely to cite disagreement with their company's values as a reason why they are considering leaving (23% vs. 6%).

Chart 7 - "I am considering leaving the workforce altogether due to the impact of COVID-19"



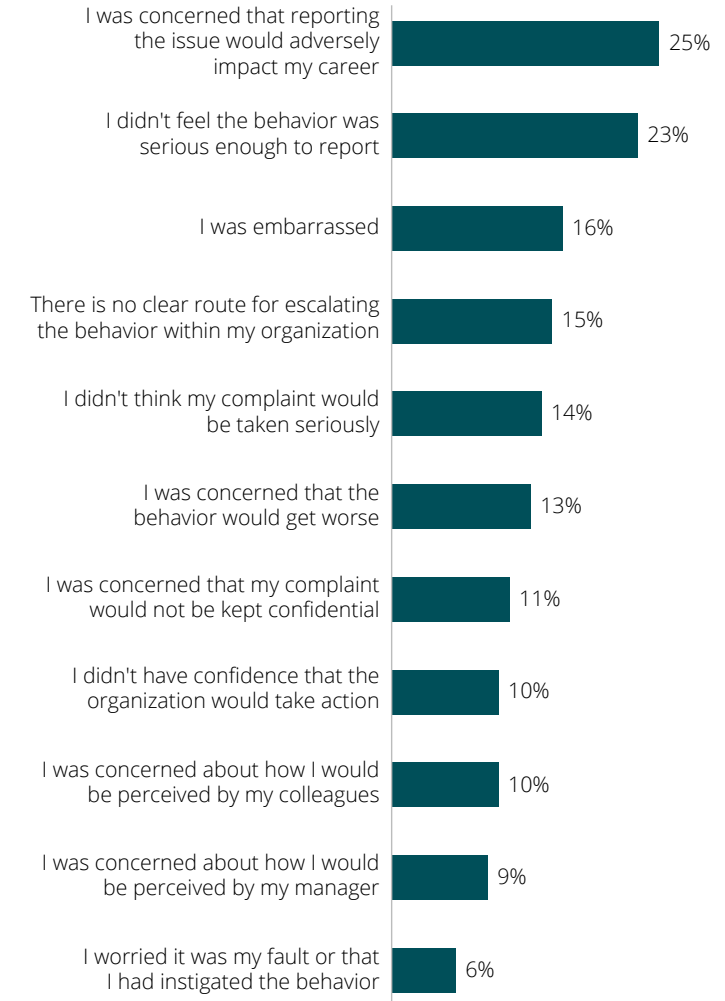
29% of women who have experienced non-inclusive behaviors



16% of women who have **NOT** experienced non-inclusive behaviors

Q21: Has the impact of COVID-19 made you consider leaving the workforce altogether?

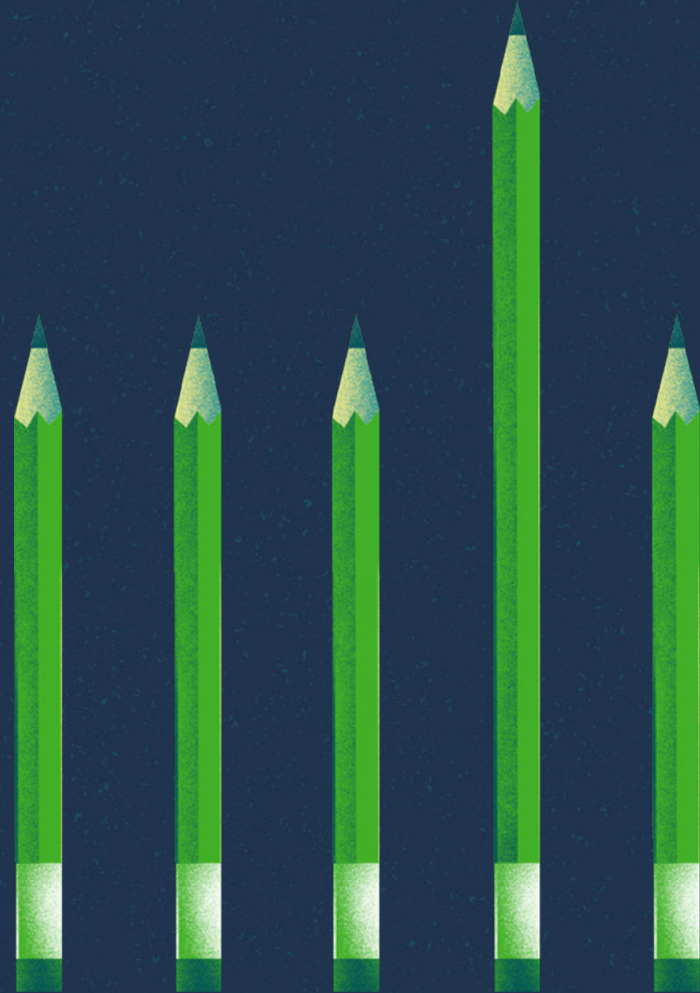
Chart 8 - Fear of career reprisal is the top reason why women don't report non-inclusive behaviors



Q12: Which, if any, of the following reasons describes why you decided not to report some of these behaviors? (Base: 1,740)

CHAPTER 3

Gender equality leaders— A blueprint for success



Chapter 3

Gender equality leaders—A blueprint for success

The data from the survey indicates we have a long way to go to when it comes to gender equality in the workplace. But there are some reasons to be hopeful.

A small group of women (4% of the total sample) say that their organizations have made good progress in building inclusive, flexible, high-trust cultures that support women. We call this group of businesses the “gender equality leaders.”

The women who say they have high levels of productivity, engagement, and loyalty also report that their organizations have a combination of inclusive culture and processes. These women say they:

- Feel confident about reporting when they have encountered non-inclusive behaviors, without concerns of adverse impacts on their careers;
- Feel supported by their employers in their efforts to balance their work responsibilities with other commitments; and,
- Believe that their careers are progressing as fast as they would currently like, and that their employers are offering them development opportunities.

GENDER EQUALITY LEADERS ARE MORE SUPPORTIVE AND RESPONSIVE

Respondents in these organizations are far more likely to say that their organizations have implemented practical initiatives to improve gender equality than respondents from lagging organizations (businesses with a less inclusive, lower-trust culture, which make up the employers of 31% of the sample).

They also say that their organizations have been more responsive to the needs of employees during the pandemic by establishing clear boundaries around working hours, offering paid time off, and reviewing/resetting work objectives to be more realistic in the current environment.

The data also found that gender equality leaders are more than twice as likely as lagging organizations to offer formal mentoring programs for women (40% vs. 16%), to provide development opportunities for women (38% vs. 15%); and to offer support with childcare, including emergency childcare support (22% vs. 8%).

WOMEN AT THE TOP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The data shows that a majority of respondents (59%) who work for gender equality leaders hold senior management or higher roles in their companies, and more than half are from Generation X or are Baby Boomers.

This could indicate that equality at work gets better with age and seniority: The higher a woman rises in an organization, the more opportunities and support they will receive. But it could also **suggest that companies with women at the top have more authentically inclusive cultures**. While 38% of the women at the gender equality leader organizations say that their leadership team is gender diverse, just 6% of the women at the lagging organizations say the same.

Having women at the top of the organization is therefore an important indicator that a company is on the right path toward gender equality.



Chapter 3

GENDER EQUALITY LEADERS VS. LAGGING ORGANIZATIONS: THE BUSINESS BENEFITS

The benefits of being a gender equality leader rather than a lagging organization are clear, and they affect nearly every part of the business.

All the measures that gender equality leaders excel at (and lagging organizations underperform on) can be linked to an inclusive culture in which women feel respected and heard. Gender equality leaders have formal structures in place to prevent bias and discrimination, achieve diversity targets, and enable clear reporting mechanisms for non-inclusive behaviors. These organizations also make inclusion the cultural norm, underpinning their commitment to equality.

The benefit—for women and their employers—is clear. The data reveals striking differences in productivity, wellbeing, and job satisfaction between women who work for gender equality leaders and those who work for lagging organizations:

Chart 9 – Women working for gender equality leaders report better wellbeing and job satisfaction

Productivity



70% of women who work for gender equality leaders **rate their productivity as “good” or “extremely good,”** compared with just **29%** of women who work for lagging organizations.

Mental wellbeing



53% of women who work for gender equality leaders **rate their mental wellbeing as “good” or “extremely good,”** compared with just **15%** of women who work for lagging organizations.

Job satisfaction



72% of women who work for gender equality leaders **rate their job satisfaction as “good” or “extremely good,”** compared with just **21%** of women who work for lagging organizations.

Non-inclusive behavior



71% of women who work for lagging organizations say they have **experienced non-inclusive behaviors** in the past year, compared with less than a quarter (**19%**) of women who work for gender equality leaders.

Loyalty to employer



The women who work for gender equality leaders also **feel more loyal to their employers**, which translates to a more stable and productive workforce: **70%** of women at gender equality leaders say they plan to stay for two years or more, compared with just **8%** of women who work for lagging organizations.

■ Gender equality leaders ■ Lagging organizations

Q1: To the best of your knowledge, which, if any, of the following has your organization implemented?

Q18: Given the current circumstances how much longer do you expect to stay with your employer?

Chapter 3

LAGGING ORGANIZATIONS SUFFER GREATER ATTRITION OF WOMEN

In further proof that being a lagging organization is bad for business, 89% of women working for lagging organizations say that their organization's commitment to supporting them during the pandemic has been insufficient, and 22% rate their ability to switch off as "extremely poor." These negative experiences could have long-term implications for their careers: 43% of women working for lagging organizations are considering leaving their employers in less than one year.

Chart 10 – How long do you plan to stay with your current employer?



Q18: Given the current circumstances, how much longer do you expect to stay with your employer?

Chart 11 – Women working for gender equality leaders also have better work-life balance and motivation – both pre-COVID-19 and today

Work-life balance



Motivation at work



Physical health/wellbeing



Your ability to switch off



■ Pre-COVID – Gender equality leaders ■ Pre-COVID – Lagging organizations
 ■ Today – Gender equality leaders ■ Today – Lagging organizations

Q2: How would you rate each of the following aspects of your life pre-COVID-19? Chart shows % of women who selected "good" or "extremely good"

Q3: How would you rate each of the following aspects of your life today? Chart shows % of women who selected "good" or "extremely good"



Conclusion: Now is the time

Women make up at least 40% of the workforce in most countries,⁷ and more than 50% in the United States⁸ and the European Union.⁹

Despite these figures, and many years of focus on gender equality in the workplace, there is still a significant amount of progress to be made. And COVID-19 has made it worse.

However, the pandemic may also actually help to spur gender equality—as long as we take action to rebuild better. But this means acting now. Unless we reverse the harm done over the past year, the impact will be felt by female employees around the globe as well as the organizations that will miss their critical contributions for decades to come.



Conclusion

Six unique insights into actions organizations can take now

1 CREATE AND MAINTAIN A CULTURE THAT IS TRULY INCLUSIVE—EVERY DAY

As the survey shows, women still encounter non-inclusive behaviors in the workplace, even while the majority of work has been conducted remotely: More than half of those surveyed reported experiencing such behaviors at work in the past 12 months. While some feel able to report such behaviors to their employers, many do not—citing concerns about adverse career impact as their primary reason, closely followed by a belief that the behavior was not serious enough to report. The data shows the impact of non-inclusive behaviors on the women surveyed on their engagement and retention. It also shows the positive impact when organizations get this right.

The gender equality leaders demonstrate the benefits of an inclusive “everyday” culture, a culture where it is clear that non-inclusive behaviors are not acceptable and where anyone who experiences such behaviors feels able to speak out without concern. This requires engagement from the very top of the organization, with leaders walking the talk.

2 ENABLE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Lack of work-life balance is the top reason women give for considering leaving their employer, and they cite “providing flexible working options that do not hinder my career progression” as one of the top three most important ways that organizations can support retention of women. Indeed, feeling supported by their employer when it comes to balancing career and life outside work is one of the three primary factors cited by women who work for gender equality leaders.

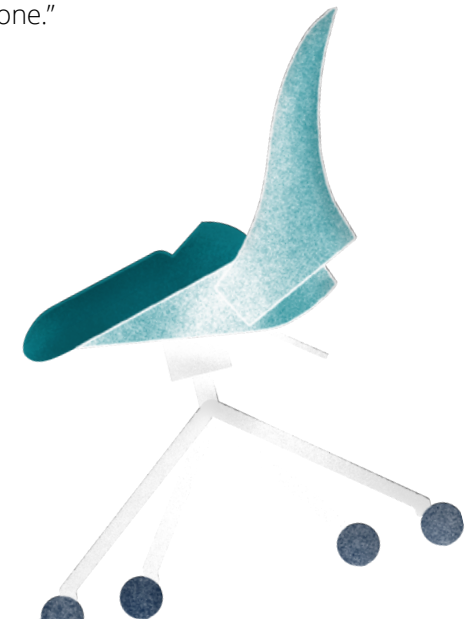
But this is not just about policies. It is about a combination of innovative, flexible working for all employees—whether that is reduced presence, job-sharing, or term-time working—and an engrained lived culture that enables work-life balance for all.

It is also about normalizing flexible working for employees of all genders, addressing latent cultures of presenteeism, and leaders providing support to ensure that those who work flexibly do not sacrifice career progression in doing so. Leadership support is much needed, as 45% of women who had to change their working hours as a result of care responsibilities say that their relationship with their employer has been negatively impacted.

3 VISIBLE COMMITMENT OF LEADERS IS KEY

The role of leaders in enabling gender equality is clear—from enabling work-life balance and supporting the development of women to ensuring that a respectful and inclusive everyday culture is embedded.

But meaningful and sustained change also needs visible commitment from the organization and its most senior leaders—indeed, committing to targets for gender representation at a senior level is the most frequently cited among the top three steps organizations can take to improve gender equality (by 32% of women). After all, “what gets measured, gets done.”



Conclusion

4 PROVIDE FULFILLING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT WORK FOR WOMEN

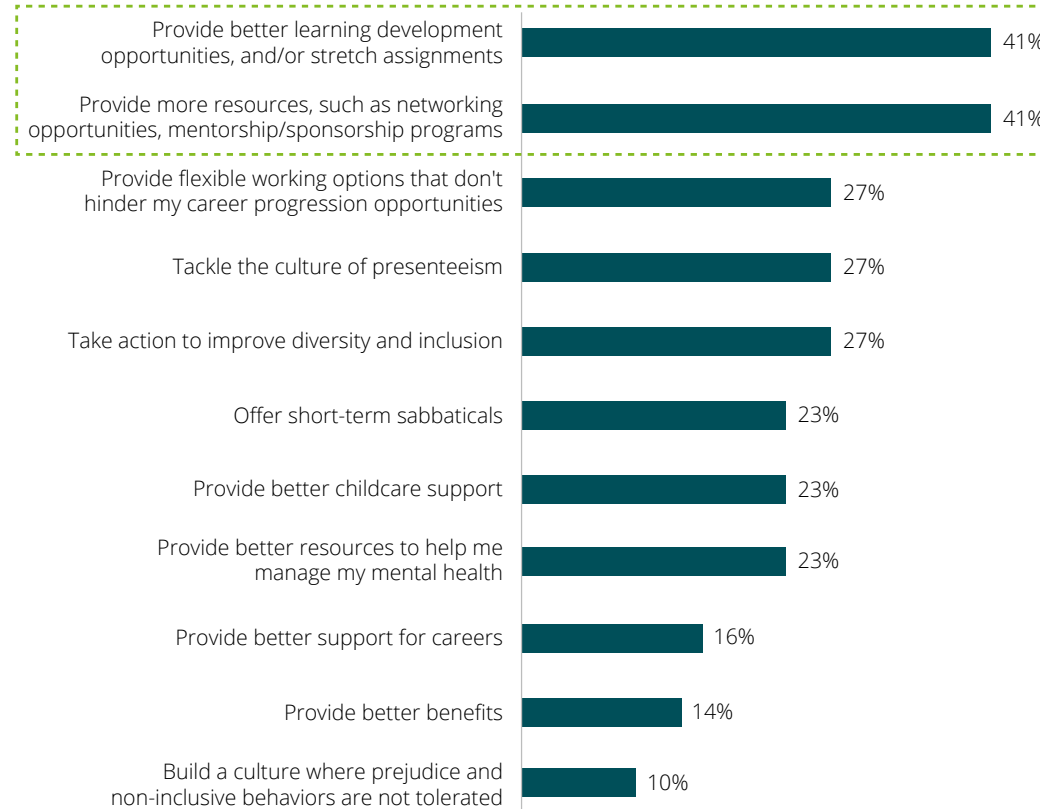
All of the women we surveyed who work for gender equality leaders say they feel like their careers are progressing at a satisfactory rate.

The importance of the opportunity for development is also reflected by the responses when women were asked for the number one step organizations can take to improve gender equality: Offering development opportunities for women ranks among the top four (29%) alongside creating a culture of diversity and inclusion.

Providing better learning opportunities, more interesting projects, and/or stretch assignments is one of the two most-cited (41%) thing(s) organizations can do to support women's development and ensure they stay. But the data shows that only a minority of employers are currently offering such opportunities: Just 22% of respondents say they get development opportunities.

Our research shows that women want meaningful opportunities to develop and build skills. They see these as both beneficial to improving gender equality overall and as a critical element for their retention.

Chart 12 – Providing development opportunities and mentorship programs are among the most beneficial steps to support women



Q23: Aside from increasing your pay, what would be the most beneficial thing(s) your organization could do to support your career development and ensure you stay?

Conclusion

5 SUCCESS AT WORK IS EMPOWERED BY SUPPORT FOR LIFE OUTSIDE WORK

Almost a quarter of women selected better support with childcare, provision of short-term sabbaticals, and better resources to support mental health as the top three things their organization could do to support their development and retention (23% for each). Offering a variety of caregiver support options, meanwhile, is their number one step that organizations can take to improve gender equality (27%).

Our survey findings show the pandemic's impact on women at work. Only a third of women consider their mental wellbeing today to be "good" or "extremely good" (compared with 68% before the pandemic), and only 22% say that their employers have enabled them to establish clear boundaries between work and personal life. As many as 29% of women who say their career isn't progressing as fast as they would like it to cite poor mental health as a reason.

It is therefore unsurprising that these issues are cited by many women when it comes to their development and retention, and they will continue to be important long after the pandemic. Enabling women to succeed in life outside work will enable them to succeed at work.

6 REBUILD BETTER—WITH GENDER EQUALITY IN MIND

As the world of work begins to return to normal, there is an opportunity to rebuild our workplaces with gender equality in mind. The women we surveyed have been clear about their experiences in the workplace (virtual or otherwise) over the past year. They have been clear about the impact the pandemic has had on their progression and the factors that would enable them to succeed within their workplaces. They have also been clear about their expectations when it comes to staying with their current employer, and for many employers this is not a positive picture.

However, our research has also given a unique insight into companies that are getting it right. The data is clear: Women who work for gender equality leaders are more productive, have more positive levels of mental wellbeing and greater job satisfaction, experience lower levels of non-inclusive behaviors, and are more loyal.

As we start to rebuild our workplaces and embrace new forms of working, there is a chance to rebuild a workplace that enables gender equality—a workplace that is fit for the future.

Get in touch



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Survey methodology

The data in this report is based on a Deloitte survey of 5,000 women across 10 countries. All women were aged between 18 and 64 and were employed full- or part-time. Fieldwork was completed between November 2020 and March 2021.

The report represents women from an intersectionality perspective, enabling us to examine data for women of color and LGBT+ women, and includes women with and without caregiving responsibilities.

The research sample was also diverse with regard to seniority and includes C-suite executives through to women in non-managerial roles. The respondents work in 10 sectors.

Countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Sectors:

- Banking and financial services
- Business services
- Consumer (including retail)
- Energy, mining, and utilities
- Hospitality and leisure
- Industrials and chemicals
- Pharma, medical, and biotech
- Real estate and construction
- Technology, media, and telecoms
- Transportation and logistics

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- 6 Non-inclusive behaviors: inappropriate language, favoritism toward specific groups, discriminatory language, and other behaviors that may be viewed by the recipient to be non-inclusive or disrespectful—whether intended or unintended.
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