Pivot
Thrive through anything
Parenthood
New city
Reinvention
Health crisis
Caregiving
Layoff

PLUS
Why women leave
What #MeToo means to you
The multicultural gender gap
The NEW interview: Chris Baldwin and Denise Morrison
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If it isn’t time to pivot, it soon will be. Starting a family, getting reassigned, caring for an ailing loved one or undergoing your own health crisis — these are pivot points that can delay or derail a career. NEW research shows that supporting leaders through work/life changes is often the difference between keeping a valued team member or losing her for good. In this special edition, you’ll read how NEW members handled critical career/life pivot points and how their companies (and NEW) supported them. NEW is developing new insights and new solutions to support leaders and their organizations as they navigate the times of our lives. I hope our members’ stories will inspire you, as they did me. And I trust our other articles will inform you about the challenges, benefits — and necessity — of women’s leadership in our industry.

Sarah Alter
President & CEO
Network of Executive Women
It’s been a rocky couple of years. My husband and I have two boys — ages 2 and 5 — and we both work full-time. We both have aging parents with serious medical conditions, and they’ve been in and out of the hospital. My in-laws live 10 minutes away and my parents an hour flight away. Caring for them, getting them to doctor’s appointments and dealing with the financial aspects have been a family effort. My husband is a chiropractor, and he can flex his schedule, which helps. Sometimes he adjusts his; sometimes I adjust mine. At times I start my day at 6 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. — other days are longer. Emergencies are emergencies and we’ve learned to take them as they come. At one point I thought, “Things will slow down.” Now, it’s about how we manage day to day and what our priorities are. It’s also about making time to connect with our kids, even if it’s just running around with them outside for 20 minutes. Not waiting for life to slow down, but having a carpe diem mentality has been amazing. I’ve worked in consumer goods for 15 years, with four companies that all had very different cultures. I’ve worked in an extremely stressful environment, where you were evaluated by the hours in the office versus your output. This culture took a toll on me emotionally and physically. I finally said to myself, “This is not working for me — I need to be in a company that knows I will deliver, but gives me autonomy to manage my schedule.” Working for Coca-Cola has been a blessing. I’m not questioned about my need for work flexibility. Working for a boss who trusts my judgment, challenges my thinking and focuses on my results makes me feel empowered and energized. The conversation is about growing the business. The culture reduces stress and delivers creative ideas and better business results. Why do women have to jump off the career track to handle family responsibilities? Why do we have to be stuck in one or two positions until our kids are older? Caring for your children and your parents doesn’t have to mean taking a step back.”

“Caring for your children and your parents doesn’t have to mean taking a step back.”

Mini Walia is director, national retail sales West for The Coca-Cola Company.

Coca-Cola’s Mini Walia juggles career, kids and the needs of her ailing parents

Stretched thin: A word from the sandwich generation

Great companies need great women

Entry and mid-level women are leaving our industry at nearly twice the rate of men — senior-level women are leaving at nearly four times the rate of men.” NEW provides solutions that retain and develop great women leaders. Our learning programs, career development, conferences and local events help tens of thousands of women advance each year. Our insights, best practices and advocacy help transform organizations and create a better industry workplace for all. Join our movement today at newonline.org.

Download our report
The Female Leadership Crisis
Why women are leaving (and what we can do about it)
newonline.org/crisis

Advancing women. It’s just good business.
Leadership crisis

Forced out, lured out: Why women are leaving

Women leaders are exiting retail and consumer goods companies. Here’s why.

By Joanne Friedrick

The ranks of executive women in retail and consumer goods companies are on the move — just not in the direction you’d expect after decades of the industry’s efforts to close the gender wage and opportunity gap.

Senior executive women are heading for the exits at an astonishing clip, according to “The Female Leadership Crisis,” a report by the Network of Executive Women, developed in partnership with Mercer and Accenture. The report is based on surveys of more than 3,600 NEW members and U.S. retail and consumer goods industry employees, plus hiring, promotion and turnover data from eight leading companies representing more than 400,000 employees.

If the companies who participated in the study do not come up with a retention solution — fast — their female executive population is projected to decline by more than 50 percent over the next decade, from 35 percent to just 15 percent by 2027.

“The astounding rate of turnover of women in leadership roles guarantees we will never reach gender parity,” says NEW President and CEO Sarah Alter. “To turn the tide on female leadership, organizations must boldly commit to gender equality and transform their corporate cultures and institute effective new programs and policies.”

Women’s turnover rates are far higher than those of their male counterparts overall (31 percent vs. 24.1 percent in companies studied), leading to a dearth of female candidates for leadership roles, the report found. The exit rate among first-level and mid-level female managers is about double that of their male counterparts, 24 percent vs. 13 percent. But the fastest turnover is happening at the highest levels, with senior executive and C-suite level women executives leaving at nearly four times the rate of men — 27 percent vs. 7 percent.

“Most remarkable to me is that more progress hasn’t been realized in retail and consumer products — segments that have been viewed as gender-friendly for quite some time,” says talent management and inclusion expert Leslie Mays, principal at LAM Consulting. “As exit rates of women continue to be significantly higher at all levels, greater attention to other stages of the employee career lifecycle is required to produce better gender outcomes.”

Why women leave

“The Female Leadership Crisis” identifies four main reasons for the disparity in turnover: Women feel isolated, favoritism and bias is embedded in corporate cultures, women do not feel supported in new roles and work/life issues are taking a toll.

Projected percentage of women executives, with no intervention

With no changes to corporate culture or policies, women will hold just 15 percent of executive positions by 2027.

Percent turnover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Senior and executive managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female managers are exiting their jobs at nearly twice the rate of men. Women who are higher-level managers and at executive/C-suite levels are leaving at nearly four times the rate.

Source: Mercer Internal Labor Market data from participating NEW partner companies.

Only slightly more than half (54 percent) of the women surveyed said there were people similar to them in leadership positions, compared to nearly three-fourths (73 percent) of men. Even fewer, 51 percent, of women said there were appropriate numbers of male and female role models in their organization, compared to 63 percent of men. When women’s responses are broken down by ethnicity, just 30 percent of African-American women found people similar to themselves among company leaders, compared to 50 percent of Asian women and 43 percent of Hispanic women.

As one survey respondent said: “Many times, men will see a woman or two at certain levels and state there is not a problem. But it is a problem when the leadership ratio is 1 in 100.”

Along with lacking role models, women perceive favoritism or bias in the workplace much differently than men do, especially at the highest level of corporate ranks. Overall, only about one-third of women agreed there was minimal favoritism where they worked, compared to 42 percent of men. But when executives and above were asked that question, far more men than women perceived minimal favoritism.

“There is still a very pervasive culture of directors, vice presidents and above preferring to hire and work with, through conscious or unconscious bias, those who look and act as they do,” according to a survey respondent. “They do not see enough of the benefits of hiring those...
Women and men have much different perceptions of and relationships with their direct supervisors, too. A greater percentage of men than women trust their supervisors, especially at the most senior levels of a company.

When executive-level respondents were asked specific questions about interactions with their supervisor, 66 percent of women said they received helpful feedback compared to 74 percent of men. Men also ranked their supervisors higher when asked about being treated with respect, comfort with bringing concerns to the supervisor and their range of assignments.

“The common elements of a productive employee experience include opportunity for career development, rewards and recognition, and being part of an organization or culture that has a higher purpose,” Mays says. “When those are breached or interrupted, turnover results.”

Receiving stretch assignments — especially those with P&L responsibility — is key to career advancement. But nearly four in 10 women surveyed said they do not believe they are getting the range of assignments that would take them to the next level.

“We need to ensure we develop women for the next levels as opposed to promoting them into roles when they are not set up for success,” one survey respondent said.

A culture that sets women — and men — up for success is one that values employees’ lives outside of work, too. “We need flexible working arrangements that meet the demands of home life,” according to a survey respondent.

Just 65 percent of female executives vs. 71 percent of male execs said they were satisfied with their work schedule.

Turning it around

Without changes to remove gender bias from the workplace culture and policies, there will be no gender equality, Alter says. But, the research found, with some adjustments the number of women in leadership roles will increase.

“Companies must address the core issues identified by women by crafting a new value proposition,” Alter adds. With simultaneous adjustments in hiring practices, promotion policies and turnover rates, she notes, the percent of women executives at participating companies would rise to 45 percent by 2027.

Mays adds, “Organizational culture and tone starts at the very top. This is also where all successful change efforts begin — where rules are established and ultimately enforced. Gender diversity progress at all levels will undoubtedly occur when there is clear intention and, most important, the will to drive new, sustainable outcomes, starting in the C-suite.”

Women identified these two top factors for increasing their workplace engagement: A feeling of belonging and the opportunity to achieve long-term goals.

Factors influencing retention of women surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drivers of engagement</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Happiness</th>
<th>Stay in industry</th>
<th>Recommend industry</th>
<th>Intent to stay with company</th>
<th>Recommend employer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I belong at this company.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an opportunity to achieve long-term career goals.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is minimal favoritism where I work (distribution of work, promotions, etc.).</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company invests in my development and career.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive recognition from management when I do a good job.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mercer survey of NEW members and participating company employees.

Companies can improve retention rates of women by creating a culture where they feel they belong and offering development and opportunities to fulfill career goals.
Progressive Grocer: Why is gender equality a major focus area for P&G? What’s changed?

Deanna Bass: P&G has always been committed to inclusion and equality in the workplace — it’s part of our DNA! Today, 50 percent of our management hires around the globe are women. Women make up greater than 45 percent of all managers and more than 34 percent of our executive levels. Today more than ever, we’re looking outside the walls of P&G to advocate for equality. We want to use the strength of our brands, and our voice as a company, to create a world where everyone sees equal. We are very committed to women’s economic development and to keeping girls in school, which ultimately improves the economic well-being of women.

PG: Describe some of the biggest myths that hold even the most qualified women back in the workplace today.

DB: We’ve identified several myths that in 2018 don’t ring true, even though they are part of the popular narrative: the Pipeline Myth, the Fix the Women Myth, the Tech is a Guy Thing Myth, the Work/Life Myth, and the Sexual Harassment is a Woman’s Issue Myth.

These myths suggest that the lack of advancement of women is a women’s issue — that the onus for change is on women — which fundamentally prevents all of us from making progress.

Two myths are particularly important to me because they span all institutions and all parts of the globe:

The Pipeline Myth says there aren’t enough qualified women in the workplace to take on senior roles and to lead in the workplace. We challenge that assumption.

Graduation rates for women with MBAs, law degrees and higher ed are exceeding rates for men, and they have been for a while. That means there are highly qualified women who have been in the workforce for 10 to 15 years, who have the skills and experience to lead. There is much energy focused on equality at the Fortune 500 CEO level — and the Pipeline Myth is that it will take decades to reach 50 percent female CEOs. But if you break it down to simple math, one-half of 500 is 250 — so we’re only looking for 250 qualified women with enough ambition, confidence and experience to take on Fortune 500 biggest jobs — on a base of 136 million women in the US. You can do that at any level of management in an organization today — break down the numbers and suddenly it’s more obvious exactly how achievable a goal is.

The Fix the Women Myth says women disproportionately lack ambition and confidence, that they fear failure and aren’t risk takers. Those ideas are unfortunately permeating the conversation. But I say women simply behave differently. What some call “lack of confidence,” I call “humility,” which is actually one of the most important leadership skills in today’s very complex world. It’s foolish to believe these myths don’t show up in the psyche of people who are making decisions on promotions. That’s why it is really important to change the narrative, which will in turn change attitudes and behaviors.

PG: What are some actions P&G is taking to bust workplace myths?

DB: We recently worked with Seneca Women to create the “Women at Work: Myth vs Reality” interactive exhibit which debuted at the World Economic Forum at Davos in January 2018. It identifies these myths that are holding women back at work and provides provocative insights and solutions that company leaders can use to create a gender-equal workplace.

And like a lot of companies, P&G understands that you get what you measure. We are clear about our desire to get to 50-50 representation throughout all levels of management in all parts of the world, so we are also clear on who is in our talent pipeline, both short- and long-term. And we are making sure the most talented men and women get all of the help they need to succeed. That’s what I call deep intentionality.

Another part of our strategy has to do with men’s role in gender equality. Getting men involved is one of the most important things we can do. We are working with Catalyst and Men Advocating Real Change (MARC), in partnership with White Men as Full Diversity Partners, to design programs that look at diversity from a male perspective. We are creating avenues for men to be full partners, to do their own development work, and to be allies. And we have to rethink our policies to reflect their needs. For example, we can’t have Luvs diaper ads that show men at home caring for children or Dawn ads where dads are doing dishes, without ensuring our own policies — i.e. paternity leave — reflect true gender equality.
Closing the multicultural gender gap

Changes are needed now to make our industry more inclusive for women of color

By Tammy Mastroberte

While many companies herald the importance of gender diversity — appointing diversity officers, supporting women’s business resource groups and adding the words “diverse” and “inclusive” to their strategic goals — gender and race inequality in the workplace remains. Multicultural women are in a double bind, having to overcome both gender and race career barriers.

“The biggest obstacles [for women of color] are bias and lack of strategic relationships needed to obtain sponsorships and advocacy,” says Trudy Bourgeois, founder of The Center for Workforce Excellence and author of Equality: Courageous Conversations about Women, Men and Race to Spark a Diversity and Inclusion Breakthrough. “Organizations are more comfortable starting with an approach of addressing the needs of women in general, because it’s safer. With women of color, it’s more complicated, because now we have to talk about race and not just gender, and that makes people really uncomfortable. They shy away from it.”

More than 36 percent of U.S. women are multicultural, and by 2050, women of color will represent more than half of the nation’s female population.

Data shows those organizations that do the analysis and take conscious steps to put women of color into leadership roles and on boards perform better,” says Ronald C. Parker, who recently retired from his role as CEO of The Executive Leadership Council. “But we are still dealing with a high level of unconscious bias that exists and the fear to act, which inhibits companies from erasing the barriers.”

Mentors and sponsors

Women of color are underrepresented throughout organizations, but are particularly scarce in the C-suite and on boards. Just 24 of the Fortune 500 CEOs are women, and only one, PepsiCo Inc. CEO Indra Nooyi, is a woman of color. Two keys to opening the C-suite up to women of color are mentoring and sponsorship by both men and women leaders within a company.

“Executive sponsorship not only shows you believe women of color can rise into the C-suite, but [these leaders] are putting their executive credibility on the line by demonstrating they believe in this person,” explains Cid Wilson, president and CEO of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility.

White women, in particular, who share the experience of gender bias can be more methodical in championing and sponsoring women of color to help them move up the corporate ranks. As women dealing with gender bias, they can give mentoring advice and guidance that a man cannot, he notes.

“Right away, from day one, women of color need to be assigned a buddy in addition to a mentor, and it needs to be someone who is a rising star,” Bourgeois explains. “Then everyone sees the star hanging out with the new kid. It’s like going back to middle school in a way because the newcomer has to be viewed as cool. If they are with someone others like, people will gravitate to them more quickly.”

“Don’t stay and complain or say, ‘I’m a victim.’ Take that out of your vocabulary and say, ‘I am empowered and my vision will become a reality, whether it’s here or for someone else,’” she says. “We always have a choice.”

Facing the double bias of gender and race, women of color often feel misunderstood or overlooked when it comes to moving up the corporate ladder, but there are those who have overcome the barriers, proving it can be done. Seeking those women out is a strategy that can prove valuable.

“My advice for women of color is to network with other women of color so they can share experiences and best practices and understand some of the success stories of those who have moved up the corporate ladder,” says Cid Wilson, president and CEO of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility.

It’s also important not only to know one’s value, but also speak up about it. “It’s about being intentional when it comes to self-advocacy and building strategic relationships,” notes Trudy Bourgeois, founder of The Center for Workforce Excellence.

“Find yourself a sponsor who is rocketing through the organization so that you can be part of their network and board of advisors and be willing to take a risk early on in your career,” advises Ronald C. Parker, former CEO of The Executive Leadership Council.

If steps are taken to obtain sponsors, network with other women of color and speak up about their role in the company, and women still find they are not advancing, it may be time to re-evaluate if the company offers the right fit, Bourgeois says. “Don’t stay and complain or say, ‘I’m a victim.’ Take that out of your vocabulary and say, ‘I am empowered and my vision will become a reality, whether it’s here or for someone else,’” she says. “We always have a choice.”
Change from the top down

Diversity on all levels must be embraced at the leadership level of the company to create change and this includes the C-suite level and board of directors. One of the best ways to measure how much diversity is valued at a company is to see if the board is diverse, Wilson says.

“Women in general are underrepresented on boards. When you factor women of color in, it’s significantly lower,” he notes, explaining corporate America needs to acculturate to women of color and should have a leader at the top who makes this case.

Empathy is an important leadership trait when trying to understand where a woman of color is coming from and the challenges they face — and is needed to make changes from the top down, Bourgeois notes.

“Only through empathy can you appreciate what someone else is going through when you have not gone through it,” she shares. “Most senior execs can pontificate a narrative to suggest they understand the journey of women of color, but most have not taken time to speak to them and appreciate what that experience has been, so they don’t have the knowledge to serve as a powerful advocate.”

Corporations must make changes to the company culture to allow women of color to feel welcomed and comfortable in their true selves. A 2013 Deloitte report showed 67 percent of women of color are “covering” some aspect of themselves at work. However, when changes in the culture are promoted from the leadership level, in particular the CEO level, there will be a “measurable difference in women of color being promoted,” Wilson states.

Some of these culture changes include strong employee resource groups where women of color can participate, be visible and share solutions to the challenges of work/life balance, he says. Also, a favorable relocation system for women is needed, as many promotions come with relocation conditions. The current system of job promotions with relocation is still biased toward men.

“Companies need to allow for an environment where women can talk about issues affecting them when it comes to race and culture,” Wilson says, adding networking opportunities are also important because they build an employee’s brand and credibility, which is key to advancing in corporate America.

“Qualifications get you a job, but credibility is what gets you on a board or a high-level C-suite opportunity,” he says.

Hiring and recruiting

Every facet of the talent management cycle needs to overcome bias for women of color to start advancing in corporate America, and, experts agree, change starts with the hiring and recruiting process.

“If someone went to Duke University, then they want to hire from there, and they don’t go to places where they will have a better opportunity of finding diverse talent,” Bourgeois says. “Then companies say they can’t find [good candidates of color]. But they don’t have a strategy that allows them to do so.”

When looking to make changes and grow, companies often perform strategic analysis and collect data, and the same approach should be used when it comes to diversity, according to Parker. This way, companies will discover the gaps where women of color are underrepresented and enable them to be intentional about changing those numbers over a specific period of time.

“It’s no different than any other business strategy where you see you are not serving a particular type of customer or need,” he says. “You [make] what you feel are disruptive changes to take advantage of the opportunity.”

When hiring new employees, many companies use their existing workforce for referrals, and if the workforce is not already diverse, they are less likely to refer candidates to fuel diversity, Wilson explains. Instead, companies can work to recruit through historically black colleges or Hispanic-serving institutions.

How to talk to your boss

Are your workplace conversations getting the results you want?

By Joanne Friedrick

Dealing with work-life pivot points is hard enough — discussing your situation with your supervisor and how it will impact your work can bring on sweaty palms and awkward silences all around.

Personal lives and work lives are going to intersect. Good news or bad, it’s rare that life’s major moments — starting a family, caring for aging parents or small children, a divorce, dealing with a spouse’s job loss or illness — won’t require a discussion about critical next steps that affect our career. Additionally, major work-related events — a shot at a promotion, a chance to relocate — will bring you to your boss’s door.

How you handle these important conversations could determine if you get the outcome you’re seeking. So where to begin?

Timing is everything. Something that is critically important requires setting aside time when the two of you are free to have a real discussion. That means avoiding the end-of-day “Got a few minutes?” request as your manager is putting on her coat and walking out the door, according to professional etiquette expert Peter W. Murphy. Schedule a meeting instead.

Tough talks

When having a meeting with your boss, come armed with both facts and ideas, advises Rajat Garg in his Catalyst blog “Handling Difficult Conversations.” When having a meeting with your boss, come armed with both facts and ideas, advises Rajat Garg in his Catalyst blog “Handling Difficult Conversations.”

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The NEW interview

Sarah Alter talks gender equality with two leading CEOs

For Denise Morrison and Chris Baldwin, change starts at the top

To reach gender parity in retail and consumer goods, strong leaders must use their power and influence to spur action in their own organizations and throughout the industry. NEW President and CEO Sarah Alter recently spoke to two industry leaders, Campbell Soup Co. CEO Denise Morrison and BJ’s Wholesale Club CEO Chris Baldwin, who offered their personal and professional insights about driving gender diversity and inclusion.

How would you characterize the state of gender equality in your company today?

Denise Morrison: At Campbell, we’re working hard to advance female leadership, but I recognize there is much more to do.

Chris Baldwin: I start from the point that how people are treated matters. It matters to the business. It matters to our culture. It matters to us as leaders and it certainly matters to team members. Diversity and inclusion are a huge part of how people are treated.

We feel good about the progress we’ve made in developing, promoting and recruiting women leaders. Over the past year or so, we’ve added four women senior vice presidents to our company through promotions and outside hires.

A great example is Gina Iacovone, our senior vice president of operations, who’s responsible for more than 100 of our clubs. Gina’s been with the company for almost 30 years. She started as an hourly employee and worked her way to her current role. Our most recent senior vice president is Krystyna Kostka. She joined us in 2014 and was recently promoted. Krystyna has a background in the fuel business and runs our BJ’s gas stations — it’s unusual to find senior women leaders in the fuel business. These are just two examples, but I’m thrilled that we’re able to attract and develop women leaders of this caliber.

We have a strong team of women leaders at the vice president level being developed as future senior executives. That said, we still have work to do, and we’ll continue to make gender equality a top priority for our company.

What strategies and policies are helping you achieve your diversity and inclusion goals?

Baldwin: We start from the position that we need the best possible talent to succeed — and we want that talent to be proud of where they work and the culture they’re part of.

We have taken a number of steps to achieve our goals. Of course, our partnership with NEW is one example. We’ve gotten excellent feedback from team members about the NEW events and training that we offer as part of this partnership. We’ve also strengthened our development programs and succession planning to make sure that we’re providing great career opportunities for women and identifying the top leaders in the company.

One of the ways we’re fostering a diverse and inclusive culture is through team member resource groups, including our Women’s Forum, a group for new and expecting parents and an LGBT group, as well as several others.

The key takeaway is that as we have instituted these programs, as we’ve developed our women leaders and emphasized diversity and inclusion, we’ve seen the results in our business.

Morrison: I was particularly proud of Campbell when we defined our company’s values, including “Seeking the Power of Different.” This value goes beyond market innovation and product creativity to include valuing and supporting diversity among all of our employees.

Some of the steps we’re taking to advance diversity and inclusion include hiring our chief diversity officer, sharing best practices, expanding our unconscious bias development and fostering a work environment where all employees feel safe, valued and supported.

I’m delighted by Campbell’s strong business resource affinity networks that we established for our women, Hispanic, African American, LGBTQ and Asian employees. The work of these affinity groups, in part, has earned Campbell a score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index eight times. My goal is that as a company, we will continue to progress, adapt and change as the world does around us.

Chris, as a male leader, what are your personal goals for promoting gender parity?

Baldwin: I want to ensure that all voices are being heard. We’re operating in an industry that is going through enormous change. We can only thrive in this environment if we bring the absolute best thinking to it.

“It’s unusual to find senior women leaders in the fuel business.”

CEO Sarah Alter joined more than 70 CEOs at the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion summit in New York to bolster NEW’s C-suite partnerships.
It starts at the top. We have the responsibility to act as mentors, to guide future leaders and help them navigate their careers.

Chris Baldwin
CEO, BJ’s Wholesale Club

#MeToo and you

How sexual harassment creates a toxic workplace for everyone

In the age of #MeToo, company leaders and employees are increasingly vigilant of behaviors that constitute sexual harassment. Even so, too many workplaces have still not cultivated a corporate culture in which victims of sexual harassment or assault — or those who witness it — are comfortable reporting an incident or confident their claim will be taken seriously. An environment that ignores or mishandles sexual harassment claims hurts not just the victims of sexual harassment, it drives talent away and brings down productivity, experts say.

“Regardless of whether it happens to you or whether you observe it, there is still a sense that reporting [sexual harassment] is taking it to the next level,” Even Esen, former director of workforce analytics for the Society of Human Resource Management, told CNN. “If this kind of behavior is just occurring and people don’t feel comfortable reporting it, it impacts the organization, the morale.”

Tip of the iceberg

Eleven percent of more than 1,000 nonmanager employees surveyed by SHRM in January 2018 said they experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. Three-fourths of them did not report it.

They cited a number of reasons, including fear of retaliation and a belief nothing would change. Rather than reporting harassment, some victims downplayed the behavior, while others said they preferred to address the harasser personally. SHRM reported.

Those who observe sexual harassment face many of the same questions and decisions victims do, Esen said. What will happen if I report? How do I describe what happened? Should I confront the harasser?

Witnesses to sexual harassment often feel the effects and feelings of betrayal as much as the victims do, Jennifer Freyd, a psychology professor at the University of Oregon, told CNN.

“You’re still in a system that is dysfunctional and it’s going to take a toll on you for that reason,” Freyd said. “So, it’s like being in a dysfunctional family — it’s costly to your well-being, just swimming in that system.”

A healthier workplace

What can leaders do to create a harassment-free workplace? Taryn Barnes, who writes about the evolution of the workplace for CultureIQ, offers three guidelines for employers:

1. Create and promote a clear and concise policy that details acceptable and unacceptable behavior. “Clearly spell out the rules for all and make sure everyone has access to those rules,” Barnes advises. Although most organizations have sexual harassment policies, 22 percent of nonmanager employees surveyed by SHRM said they were unsure if their organization has such a policy.

2. Provide more training. Some employees may not recognize their behavior constitutes harassment. Companies are starting to add training that addresses this issue head on, according to SHRM. Nearly one-third of the organizations surveyed have made changes to their sexual harassment training in the past year. The most common changes included the topic of workplace civility and tailoring training to a specific workforce.

3. Enforce an open-door claim policy. Company leaders must speak out and create corporate cultures that protect those who report sexual harassment. “Ensure [employees] are able to get in touch with their HR representative and the HR team is ready and able to handle the matter as quickly and efficiently as possible,” Barnes advises.

“To sustain a harassment-free culture, policies need to be continually reinforced by leaders and managers and be part of everyday discussions,” says SHRM President and CEO Johnny C. Taylor Jr. “If it’s not part of your culture to be talking about this, then it is going to be harder to curb inappropriate behaviors.”
The diagnosis caused Caetlyn Roberts of Giant Food to reexamine the role of work in her life.

On Feb. 5, 2016, my life was forever changed. After spending most of January in and out of hospitals, I was diagnosed with Stage 4 liver cancer. The next four months were a whirlwind. Three major corrective surgeries, the first rounds of radiation therapy, an extended stay at the National Institute of Health and a never-ending battle to remain pragmatic and level-headed.

After being released to the comfort of my family’s home, I began the road to recovery — mentally and physically. While my body healed surprisingly well, my mind kept running away with itself. When will I feel strong enough to go back to work? Do I want to go back to work? Will Giant have a home for me as a customer service manager in my district? Another district? I was near tears thinking I’d never be able to return to my job.

But I took the time to really evaluate my new situation. I asked myself, “Do I really want to go back to Giant? And if I do, why?” Without hesitation, the answer came to me. The men and women I work with, from store managers and department managers, to the clerks, cashiers and everyone in between. They were my motivation to return.

Although I had only been a customer service manager for two years, I loved every single minute of leading the new hire orientations, becoming acclimated to my new team, continuing to develop my working knowledge of the store and identifying and developing talent.

That’s not to say I haven’t had my fair share of stressful days. At times I had to muster the physical, mental and emotional strength to return to work after a full day of scans, lab work and analyzing results. There were emergency trips to NIH because I pushed my body beyond its physical limits. Couple this with my pride in being a manager who makes an effort to give all of her associates a “good morning” or “good afternoon” when sometimes a smile and “hello” was a daunting undertaking.

The associates didn’t look out for me because I was their coworker, but because I was another human being, plain and simple. I received phone calls to “check in,” funny text messages and cards wishing me well. Their actions helped me keep it all together.

It’s been the associates and what I’ve been able to help them attain that continue to enrich me as a person and give me a sense of fulfillment every day I walk into work. There truly is no better feeling than that.

Now, I’m working six days a week and advancing my career, but am careful not to push myself too hard. My treatment schedule is flexible; I receive monthly injections and am well enough to only need full scans three times a year. I was recently promoted, and I’m looking forward to this new role that will further my skill set and empower me to make a bigger impact.

I became a mom — then an MBA

Gold Medal’s Brittney Ross Pickering questioned returning to work after having her first child — but not for long.

Three years ago, when I was eight months pregnant with my first child, Joseph, I started an accelerated MBA program. I intended to go right back to work after maternity leave — I’d worked at Gold Medal Bakery for three years and now I truly was ready to work my way up the ladder.

But while I was on maternity leave, I started thinking, “Do I stay home or jump back in?” Or, “Can I be a good mom and pursue my career goals? Would I have to look for a job with another company that would allow me some flexibility?”

I emailed my manager saying I was eager to get back to work, but flexibility and work/life balance were important to me. I proposed a flex schedule and promised to always get the work done. Gold Medal supported me, and I returned, working 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and attending classes at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth on Monday evenings and online.

Gold Medal’s management team feels a deep responsibility for creating a space where all employees can succeed. In turn, we all take great care of our customers.

When I first started working flextime, though, I thought, “Everyone will judge me. This is going to hold me back.” But it hasn’t. I’ve held two new positions since I became a mom — and had another child, our daughter Addilyn — and was recently promoted. I make it all work by managing my time and prioritizing. If there is a preschool function or one of the kids has an appointment, I put it on my work calendar as far out as possible.

My husband Lance is a police officer, working evenings and spending days with our children. If I don’t have anything pressing, I’ll read a book and have a glass of wine — sometimes you have to put yourself first.

When I’m with stay-at-home moms, I sometimes feel guilty for wanting a career. But when I’m at NEW events, I know I’m not alone. Meeting other women with children who are pursuing their careers has been so empowering.

I earned my MBA at the end of 2016. I couldn’t have done it without the support of Gold Medal and my family, and, of course, lots of coffee.

Some people say, “You can’t have it all.” But I think if you believe in yourself and stick to your plan, you can do it.

I had only been a customer service manager for two years, I loved every single minute of leading the new hire orientations, becoming acclimated to my new team, continuing to develop my working knowledge of the store and identifying and developing talent.

I’m looking forward to this new role that will make a bigger impact.
I lost my job and found myself

Lynn Schmidt of Micron Technology left her job — and came back stronger

A few years ago, I was the director of leadership development at a healthcare company that was going through a big transformation. HR positions were seen as a cost center, there were reductions in staff and I was laid off. I began interviewing for jobs, and after each interview I felt nauseous. So, I asked myself, “What do I really want to do?” I really wanted to take a year, live in Europe and work in the areas of women’s leadership and resilience.

I had a long list of excuses of why I couldn’t live my dream. Who will take care of my dogs? What will I do with my car and apartment lease? How do I manage my storage unit full of stuff?

If I leave corporate America for a year, who will hire me when I get back? Will I come back in the same pay bracket? Will what I did for the year be appreciated by anyone but me?

But I plunged in. My brother took my dogs. I gave my stuff in the storage unit to the Salvation Army. The dealership bought back my car. The apartment was rented. I was out of excuses to do the one thing I wanted so badly, but was afraid to do. Even with the plane ticket to Europe in my hand, I was on the phone, interviewing for a job in the United States. It’s amazing how hard it is to walk away from what we know, even if we are miserable, and move out of our comfort zone to be happy.

I left the United States with a suitcase and started in Paris, playing it month by month in France, Italy and Greece. Because I wasn’t married and didn’t have young children, uprooting others wasn’t an issue. In most cities, it was easy to meet other expats and locals in person via a group called InterNations.

I joined local professional women’s networks and learned how our issues as women are more similar than different. I wrote a book — Shift into Thrive: Six Strategies for Women to Unlock the Power of Resiliency. It took pushing myself out of my comfort zone to get back to what was important to me.

After the year abroad, I was personally rejuvenated. While I was preparing to return, I heard from someone I met earlier in my career about a job opening doing exactly what I wanted to do — proving the importance of networking. While visiting the United States at Thanksgiving, I interviewed for the job. I was offered the job and allowed to start two months later.

Stepping off the ledge is not easy to do. It doesn’t have to mean leaving the country for a year. It could mean taking another job at your company or exploring other career opportunities.

When faced with challenges, we can either decline, survive or thrive. Surviving means we go back to where we were before the challenge, nothing really changes. What I learned is we have to get uncomfortable to learn, grow and thrive. Thriving is an intentional choice.

Pivot points

Every number tells a story

Startling stats show the challenges (and opportunities) of women in business

The Opportunity

$1.7 trillion
Revenue generated by woman-owned U.S. businesses

39%
U.S. businesses owned by women

The Challenge

47%
U.S. workers who are women

5.4%
Female CEOs of Fortune 500 companies

56%
Female workers who say their employer could do more to promote gender equality and diversity

52%
Male workers who say their employer could do more to promote gender equality and diversity

Projected number of years until gender parity is realized

217

The Retail Talent Drain

54.2%
U.S. retail industry workers who are women

37.7%
Executive and senior-level managers in retail who are women

42.6%
First- and mid-level managers in retail who are women

What Women Say

80%
Women who report they would switch employers for one with greater gender equality

58%
Women who say a lack of promotion to leadership roles is a top reason for gender inequality

40%
Career-relevant relationships made outside — not at — work

18%
CEO replacements last year who were women

Source: American Express, Catalyst, Center for Creative Leadership, MarkelEthis, Randstad US, U.S. Department of Labor and World Economic Forum

Note: Calculations based on data from various sources.
I’ve seen women develop their own creative ways to be heard.”

Joy Salamone is a lead analyst at Altria.

I’ve had nine female bosses over my career and learned valuable lessons from each one of them. Their perspectives and approaches to management have played a big part of where I am in my journey toward leadership. I’ve seen firsthand the struggles and the challenges they’ve faced as decision makers. Watching the strength of these women as they developed a sense for adapting to any situation, especially navigating male-dominated environments, is something I don’t think many men deal with — or think about.

I’ve also learned to respect women’s evolving needs for accommodation. Recently, my boss returned from maternity leave. I witnessed how she needed to plan and anticipate more while traveling. While commanding her usual professional leadership presence as the sole woman among men in our meeting, she simultaneously had to return from maternity leave. I witnessed how she needed to plan and anticipate more while traveling.

As my mindset toward female leadership evolves, so have my female leaders, which is especially relevant today, when concepts of what means to be a female leader in a male-centric environment evolve.

Recently, I worked on an all-female team calling on a female client. I learned about yoga pants, and how to convert a diaper bag into a work bag. Instead of taking our client to a football game, they considered doing a spa day, but decided against it out of concern for my comfort. It made me wonder: Would the reverse consideration happen for a female on a male-dominated team?

If I had to break my “lessons learned” into bite-sized pieces of advice of what the women bosses in my career have taught me, I’d say: Titles are not entitlements; they’re earned. Just because you got there, doesn’t mean you’re done. You’ll get more dedication and productivity from your team when they respect you and your passion as opposed to fearing you. I’ve also learned that more buildings and public places should provide more adequate spaces than just a supply room with an outlet for pumping milk!

“I couldn’t help but notice the lack of diversity.”

Joy Martin is program manager, strategic technology partnerships, for Authorize.net at Visa.

And, while I was paid well, others were being laid off. Plus, I felt as though people didn’t like me, as if I was an outsider who swooped in and stole a position.

Joy Martin left her job at Visa for a bigger salary — and learned money isn’t everything

When I moved from the Philippines to Utah, the culture shock was real. There wasn’t much diversity — many people thought I was a Latina and spoke Spanish.

Finding a job was intimidating. My English wasn’t strong, and I wasn’t sure where to start. My first experience was applying as a teacher’s assistant at a local school. When I asked for the application, they assumed I was there for a janitor position. I was given the application and left crying.

About a month later, I was hired by Visa in a customer support role. I worked hard to learn the software and support our clients, while trying to adapt to my new life.

Five years later, a position opened in our sales organization. I was intimidated by the thought of moving to a new department, because I didn’t think I had the experience or traits they were looking for, but a few of my team members encouraged me to interview for the role. I was hired on the spot. Out of a dozen candidates, I was the only woman who applied.

My new manager became my mentor, inviting me to meetings and conferences to give me exposure to other parts of the company. A couple of years later, he left for a tech start-up and recruited me as a program manager. I saw this as an opportunity to get out of my comfort zone. After nearly 10 years with Visa, I left for a new role with fewer benefits, a big title change and a $30,000 salary increase.

I began to enjoy this new chapter, but I couldn’t help but notice the lack of diversity.
I relocated (three times) to get ahead.

General Mills’ Elise Keeler moved three times in four years to advance her career.

In the span of four years, I moved from Cincinnati to Minneapolis to Tampa and back to Cincinnati — and each move has pushed my career forward.

In 2013, I was working with Mondelez International in Cincinnati and relocated to the Twin Cities to spread my wings and learn another side of the business, moving from selling new items and shelf resets with a grocery retailer to selling incremental displays and calling on regional contacts for a mass merchant.

Due to a company reorganization in December 2015, my entire team was eliminated. I began reaching out to my network and searching for possible career opportunities. I found a position at General Mills and reached out to someone I met at a NEW Twin Cities event, Bliss Pierce. She told me about the culture, opportunity for advancement and the different business centers around the country. Bliss and everyone I spoke to who held similar roles at General Mills were passionate about their work. The company and the job seemed like a good fit for me. After going through the interview process, I accepted a job to work on the Publix business in Tampa.

Professionally, I knew a new role in a new city would be a way for me to cultivate new skills and develop my personal brand. Personally, my close friend passed away a month before I was downsized and the loss made me realize there’s no day but today. You must take risks — you never know what they could lead to.

I boarded a plane in Minneapolis in 10-degree weather and landed in Tampa in sunny, 70-degree weather. I thought, “Yes, my life’s going to be different.”

My year in Tampa was a great learning experience doing analytical work in category management. But when I had the opportunity to move back to Cincinnati, I jumped at the chance, though I had two concerns: The demands of calling on a national customer and getting back in a groove with all my friends and family.

With each move, I grew — and so did my confidence. I discovered I could live on my own in a new city, take advantage of new experiences and adapt.

In every city I lived, I connected with NEW. It’s so empowering to go to a regional NEW event and create bonds with people who understand instantly what you do. We relocate so often in our industry, you never know when you’ll see NEW members you know in another city.

It’s also important for me to have a foundation of friends outside of work — you have to let it all go sometimes. In Minneapolis, I used the Meetup app to find people in the Twin Cities who had similar interests as me. A group of 15 of us would meet to play Whirlyball, go out to eat and explore the city. I’m still friends with them, and I always make sure to connect with them when I’m at General Mills HQ for training. You never know, I may end up moving back.

Elise Helene Keeler is the customer account lead for Kroger at General Mills.

“\You must take risks. You never know what they could lead to.\”

Gender equality isn’t the problem. It’s the solution.

Gender equality drives innovation and provides insights on female consumers. It offers new opportunities in diverse, growing markets. It expands your talent pool and creates more productive work teams. All of which explains why the most gender diverse companies are often the most profitable. NEW is an alliance of nearly 11,000 members, 850 companies, 21 regions and more than 100 corporate partners building a better industry workplace for everyone. Advance yourself and grow your business today at newonline.org.

JOIN NEW NOW
Be part of the gender equality solution
newonline.org/join

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Not only do we value our female customers, but we especially value the helpful smiles at Hy-Vee that serve those customers — including our innovative and dedicated female store directors, supervisors, buyers, executives and members of our board of directors. Call it girl power. We call it what helps power Hy-Vee.

Employee owned.
Employee empowered.