



Introduction

In early 2024, CMP conducted the 4th annual national survey of Women leaders to assess the evolving landscape of women's leadership. The 2024 Pulse Check delves into the status of women leaders, scrutinizing the degree of influence they hold within their respective organizations and the support systems they encounter. Probing an array of sectors and levels of leadership, the Pulse Check provided valuable insights into the progress being made toward gender equity, the challenges still faced by women in their leadership journeys, and the organizational structures which enable or hinder their advancement. Thus, the findings have proven instrumental in shaping inclusive workplace policies and empowering the next generation of women.



Key Organizational Issues to Address in 2024

Addressing key organizational issues related to women's issues requires a well-defined approach that effectively tackles gender differences and fosters an environment that advocates diversity and inclusion. It is crucial for organizations to reassess their policies and procedures to ensure that they are tailored towards promoting fairness and providing ample growth opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender. According to the respondents, the top 2024 issues to address are: Strengthening communication (44% of respondents), examining performance reviews (34% of respondents) and reconsidering norms around flexibility (33% of respondents). Through such concerted efforts, organizations can create an atmosphere that empowers women and bolsters their contributions to corporate success.

Which of the following do you feel your organization needs to address? Check all that apply.

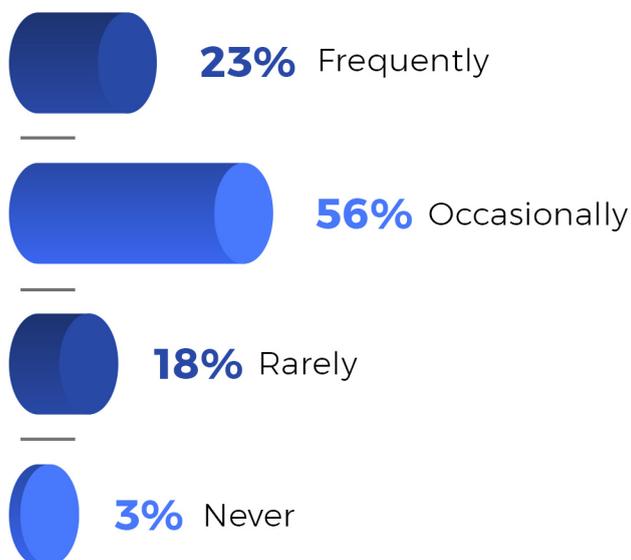


Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome is a ubiquitous obstacle to personal and professional growth, manifesting as a persistent belief in one's own inadequacy or incompetence, often leading to an irrational fear of being exposed as a "fraud." Despite clear successes and accomplishments, those grappling with imposter syndrome struggle to internalize their own abilities, leading to a continuous cycle of self-doubt and anxiety. By acknowledging and challenging the beliefs that fuel imposter syndrome, individuals can overcome self-defeating thoughts and begin cultivating a more empowering self-image, leading both to personal fulfillment and professional success.

Our 2024 Pulse Check results show that 23% of woman leaders frequently experience imposter syndrome and 56% occasionally experience it. This represents a 3% and 13% increase from the [2023 report](#), respectively. Only 21% "rarely" or "never" experience imposter syndrome, a worrying indication of increasing self-doubt among women leaders.

As a woman leader, how frequently have you experienced imposter syndrome? (feelings of self-doubt and personal incompetence or belief that one's success is not deserved).



Along these same lines, those who participated in the survey related to the following patterns of thought concerning their lives and careers:

Which of the following can you relate with? Check all that apply.



Women's Voices

In today's competitive professional environment, it is essential that women recognize their worth and advocate for themselves when it comes to career advancements and salary negotiations. Women have historically been underrepresented in leadership positions and often face wage gap disparities, underscoring the importance of asserting their value in the workplace. Furthermore, fostering an environment of open communication, transparent expectations, and confidence in one's abilities empowers others to follow suit, ultimately paving the way for future generations to command the respect and compensation they deserve. With global conversations around gender equality continuing to gain momentum, it is paramount to acknowledge and celebrate the power of outspoken women who are driving change and challenging the status quo. By shattering antiquated stereotypes and actively advocating for a more equitable world, unapologetically outspoken women continue to leave an indelible mark on history, collectively breathing life into a more progressive and enlightened tomorrow.

CMP's 2024 Pulse Check results indicate a variety of responses when women were questioned on what they were comfortable asking for in the workplace. Notably, 39% of women claimed to be comfortable asking for a promotion, a 7% increase from the 2023 survey. 66% were comfortable requesting additional development or training, an 11% increase from 2023. A welcome indication of growing confidence among professional women, especially in light of the increasing levels of self-reported imposter syndrome.



Pulse Check results showed women's variety of responses when questioned on what they were comfortable asking for in the workplace:





“ The goal is to create a psychologically safe space where all women can be heard, understood, and supported, changing the environment in the room.”

- Maryanne Piña Frodsham
CMP CEO

Influence of Self Perception

We live in a society that promotes belief in oneself; but it is equally important to have self-awareness. Owning one's success is a fundamental aspect of self-improvement and professional growth. It involves taking responsibility for your achievements and embracing the confidence that comes with recognizing your own skills and hard work. By acknowledging the role they play in reaching their own goals, women can not only empower themselves to pursue future endeavors, but also foster a mindset of accountability and continuous improvement. This is crucial for building a strong personal brand, establishing credibility, and creating meaningful relationships with peers and supervisors. Likewise, by celebrating accomplishments with humility and gratitude, they contribute to a positive work environment and set an example for others to follow.

When Pulse Check respondents were asked which factors they believe to most influence their self-perception in the workplace, 68% answered that it was their actual performance, while 61% said it was the perception of their professional colleagues/peers - the latter statistic representing an 11% increase from 2023. Clearly, more must be done to ensure professional women are holding themselves to their own standards as opposed to others'.



What do you believe most influences your perception of yourself in the workplace?



Moving Your Career Forward

For the most part, those in leadership naturally seek to position themselves for exciting roles in the future. The graph below indicates the specific behaviors and actions participants believed would most effectively forward their career.

What behaviors or personal actions do you believe will forward your career the most? Check all that apply.



Development or Skills Needed the Most

In the same vein, good leaders often reflect on their own strengths as well as the areas which they could most improve. When asked which skills are most crucial for women seeking leadership roles, 63% selected “Confidence building” – the most by far, even more than “Leadership” itself (57%).

In order for more women to move into future leadership roles, which development or training skills will be most needed?



Confidence building



Leadership



Critical thinking



Negotiating



Networking



Sharing your point of view articulately



People management



Decision making



Talent Management



Budgeting and financial



Social collaboration and interaction



Team building



Project management



Interviewing

The Gender Gap

Much progress has been made regarding women leadership and C-suite roles. Research shows that in the United States, women now make up 30% of college and university presidents and 37.5% of Senior Executives in the federal government. Overall, women constitute 42% of managers and 32% of executive positions across all industries.

With that being said, on average women still make roughly 25-30% less than their male counterparts, with heavy variance across race, ethnicity, and industry. Clearly, there is still much to be done to achieve full equality in work environments. For example, 39.5% of Pulse Check respondents believed there to be an unconscious bias against women for top leadership roles. However, it is worth noting that 38.5% of respondents do not believe any of the listed behaviors are responsible for a lack of gender parity in their organization. Further, 43% admonished the lack of transparency in their company's succession and promotion processes, an issue which may stretch beyond concerns of gender inequality.



Leadership Training

As women continue to advance in the workplace, the unique challenges they face when climbing the corporate ladder become more apparent. This has led to the creation of programs and initiatives aimed at developing the skills and talents of women leaders. It's encouraging to see more organizations investing in such training and development, as studies have shown that when women are in leadership positions, companies tend to be more successful. By supporting women's leadership development, we can help to cultivate a more inclusive workplace that benefits everyone.

When Pulse Check respondents were polled on situations used to develop women leadership roles in their organization, 47% noted the existence of a women's leadership-focused network/Employee Resource Group and 34% indicated that their organization offers mentorship programs for high-potential women. 43% noted the existence of active Executive participation in diversity and inclusion efforts, a stark 23% increase from 2023. At the same time, 30% indicated that their companies engaged in none of the listed situations.



Indicate which of the following situations you use to develop women for leadership roles in your organization. Check all that apply.



Self Reflection & Encouragement

As the old saying goes, hindsight is 20/20. While we cannot go back in time and change history, it is our responsibility to reflect on the lessons we have learned and offer those insights to the next generation of leaders. At the end of the Pulse Check survey, respondents were asked what guidance they would give to their younger self if they had the chance. A handful of highlighted responses are included below.

- Don't feel so insecure - **you've got this!**
- You **deserve** to be here.
- Speak up for yourself, promote what you do, **don't be afraid to advocate for yourself.**
- **Change is good**, keep learning and growing.
- Make sure to pursue work that you **love** and are **vested in**.
- **Take risks**. Find a comfortable way to self-promote.
- **Gain critical allies in leadership** to support career growth and development. **Have a support group** outside of work to keep a healthy perspective.
- **Setting goals** is as important as **setting boundaries** in both your professional and personal life.
- **Keep working hard**, opportunities often come from the places you least expect them to.
- **Accept your successes and learn to celebrate them!** It's not always about tackling the next big thing.
- Create empowering context - **enrich the people around you**.
- **Pace yourself**. It's not a race to the top & once you get there you'll realize that you want to slow down. Invest. Go deep into what you can learn & don't just focus on moving up. Enjoy flexibility & lower levels of responsibilities while you can.

Conclusion

Women leaders are instrumental in driving organizational success, providing integral insights and stellar skillsets that organizations must draw upon to stay ahead of the curve. While there remains a significant dearth in power and representation among organizations, the growing number of women in key roles is inspiring. We need more active and engaged female leaders, and organizations will continue to realize ROI as they invest in the development of women and people across all demographics.

In a talent constrained workplace, organizations benefit from building the capacity of all their employees. CMP encourages organizations to continue to utilize the insights contained within the 2024 CMP Pulse Check to advance the careers of women and the success of their organizations.



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