



Women AT WORK

The **challenges** they face and how to **empower** them to reach their **full potential**

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Despite the legal obligations that companies need to follow to ensure gender equality in the workplace, many organizations to this day are unaware that for many female employees the reality is different.

Women have been used to getting the short end of the stick ever since they stepped into the corporate world. Today, women are leading the fight to get their well-deserved seat at the table, and the progress they've made so far is nothing short of impressive.

Here are some of the pressing issues that women still face at work, in addition to some pointers on how equal-opportunity employers can help eliminate such barriers to work entry that many women still face.

NON-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES



81%
of women say that
they feel **some form of
exclusion** at work.

In male-oriented workplaces, women often find themselves struggling to make their voices heard and they face exclusion when it comes to growth and promotion opportunities. But this kind of exclusion comes at a great cost! When women are excluded from the workforce, companies miss out on a critical economic opportunity. Building an inclusive workplace means creating a culture that fully engages and supports all employees regardless of their gender, ethnicity and disability.

What can employers do about this?

- Recruit people who value differences and can act as “champions” for others.
- Develop a shared understanding and language about inclusion and exclusion between all employees.
- Make sure they hire employees from diverse backgrounds.

HERE ARE 5 REASONS WHY IT'S CRUCIAL TO START HIRING MORE WOMEN:

1. Women Make Effective Leaders

Companies with women in senior positions are more profitable than those run exclusively by men, allowing them to grow quickly and create jobs. In fact, [one study from Jordan](#) revealed that firms with female board members were 3 times more profitable than those headed by men alone

2. Women Are Essential in the Fight Against Poverty

In the Middle East and North Africa only 26% of women work outside the home, making it almost impossible for those trapped in poverty to escape. If women were employed at (or near) the rate in the rest of the world, household incomes would jump a [whopping 25](#).

3. Female Entrepreneurs Can Propel Economic Growth

Women own more than 9 million businesses around the world. But they have a much harder time getting loans and other types of credit compared to men. Changing that would help unlock the potential of female entrepreneurs, setting off a wave of innovation and [job creation](#).

4. Educated Women Transform an Economy

Girls with an education not only lead happier lives, they also help improve the economic prospects of their communities. A 1% point increase in female education leads to a massive [0.37 percentage point](#) increase in a country's gross domestic product.

5. Women are Key to a Company's Success

Firms that employ women can draw on a much broader talent pool than those that don't. These firms are usually more innovative, more productive (up to 25 percent so), and make [better decisions](#). They are also likely to understand their customers better; women make or influence up to 80 percent of [all buying decisions](#). In addition, firms who specifically target female customers – [such as banks](#) – are able to reap the benefits of tapping into a large and under-served market of customers, who are more loyal and more receptive to cross-selling. Firms who diversify their supplier base and [source from both women and men-led businesses](#) are more competitive and are better at responding to their customers' needs.

THE GENDER-PAY GAP

Until this day, women still face a pay gap problem. In fact, women on average will need to work more than 70 additional days each year just to catch up to the earnings of men. On top of that, most women have to work longer and harder to receive promotions that provide access to higher pay.

Logically, if a woman works the same hours, has the same job duties, and has an ultimate goal equal to that of a male employee, she is entitled to equal pay. When women are paid less than men solely based on their gender, this becomes a form of discrimination and it is illegal in almost every developed country, and it is only a matter of time until all countries follow suit.

Battling the gender pay gap problem should not be all about blaming women for not calling this out, but we should examine why our society provides unequal opportunities for women at every point of their education and career.

What can employers do about this?

- Perform a wage audit to identify any workplace wage gaps if present.
- Implement a transparent salary scale.
- Improve performance reviews and feedback.
- Empower more women to reach leadership positions.

LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE



Males are
40%
more likely than females
to be promoted.

Women are often consciously blocked from opportunities to advance, regardless of their competencies, which are in many cases equal to those of men. Women often face difficulties in breaking through the “glass ceiling” society has created for them, simply because certain life milestones such as “marriage” and “motherhood” are considered hindrances. As a result, women are often left with no choice but to watch their male counterparts climb up the career ladder, while they remain stuck in the same job role.

WHY WOMEN QUIT THEIR JOBS?



1
Lack of
career advancement
opportunities



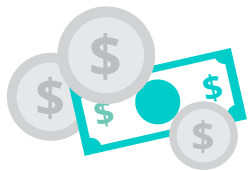
2
Lack of
work/life
balance



3
Low or unequal
salary/wage

Working Mothers AT WORK

REASONS MOTHERS RETURN TO WORK



THE #1 REASON:


For financial reasons





THE #2 REASON:

To pursue their careers


5 FACTS ABOUT WORKING MOTHERS:

71%  of women agree that being a mother today **is harder than it was 20 to 30 years ago**

51%  of working moms feel guilty about **not spending enough time** with their children

57%  of working moms say that **flexible work hours** are important

85%  of working mothers feel that showing their children that **women can succeed professionally** is important

62%  of working mothers prefer to **work part-time**

“

A woman is like a tea bag - you can't tell **how strong she is** until you put her in hot water.

”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

“

There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women.

”

- Kofi Annan

THE STRUGGLES OF WORKING MOMS

Motherhood vs. Career:

When we think about a mother's work-life balance, we are often left with two definite options: A new mom can stay home with the kids and put her career on hold, or she can return to work and face the stress and guilt of leaving her baby for extended hours each day. The reality, though, is that women prefer to have a balance between both duties.

55%

of women struggle to balance their career and family



MATERNITY LEAVE

Due to the short maternity leave period offered in many parts of the world, many women struggle to deal with the lifestyle changes and the guilt of having to leave their new born to keep their jobs. It can also be difficult to find someone to share those feelings with; anyone who hasn't been in a working mother's shoes can find it hard to empathize. Women also often worry that co-workers will perceive them as incompetent so they end up not wanting to expose that vulnerable side of themselves.

Employers must understand that juggling a career and a baby can be emotionally and mentally exhausting. In addition to work piling up while they're on maternity leave, some women actually come back to find that their roles have changed because someone has been "filling in" while they were absent.

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Women's empowerment is intertwined with respect for human rights.

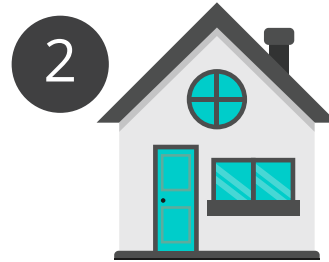
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- Mahnaz Afkhami

5 Office Perks You Can Offer your Working Moms



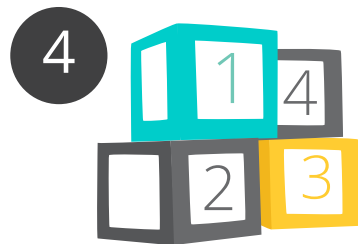
1
Flexible working hours



2
The ability to work from home



3
The ability to extend their **maternity leave**



4
An **on-site daycare center** for their children



5
Paternity **leave for male employees** to help support their working wives



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