

SHAPING SUCCESS

Learnings from a Day of Wo+Men's Engagement

**Wo+Men's
Leadership
Centre**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**
Judge Business School



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Anne Robinson, Former Chief Strategy Officer, Kinaxis: *"For me, diversity is really the mosaic of differences – gender, ethnicity, abilities and perspectives. It's the culmination of different ideas that sparks innovation. It's what leads to new ideas and perspectives, enabling a workplace to grow and expand."*

Wo+Men's Leadership Centre student and staff volunteers

Andreea Gabriela Alexa, Marketing & Events Coordinator, MBA

Emily Cannon, Learning Designer, Executive Education

Sadia Cuthbert, Head of CJBS Careers

Floriana Guida, Alumni Relations Coordinator, Alumni & External Engagement

Louise Loxley, Senior Content Writer, Corporate Communications and Marketing

Helen Maher, Marketing, Brand and PR Manager, Corporate Communications and Marketing

Noor Mandviwalla, MBA Student 2023

Ruth Newman, Website Operations Lead, Corporate Communications and Marketing

Oluwatoyosi Oni, MBA Student 2023

Hazel Pelling, Digital Portfolio Manager, Executive Education

Nancy Sam, MBA Marketing and Communications Coordinator, MBA

Kal Sandhu, HR Manager,

Aruniya Selladurai, MFIN Student 2023

Shreya S S., MBA Student 2023,

Ruth Watson, Head of Digital Marketing and Campaigns, Corporate Communications and Marketing

Emma Wragg, Festival Ticketing Manager, Festival Republic, WLC supporter

SHAPING SUCCESS LEARNINGS FROM A DAY OF WO+MEN'S ENGAGEMENT

Despite many years of progress, the gender gap still permeates every aspect of professional life. From talent pipelines and job types to promotions, pay and data representation, women still lag behind men on a global scale. This systemic issue demands transformative action.

At Cambridge Judge Business School's Wo+Men's Leadership Centre's annual conference on November 25, 2023, we brought together keynote speakers, panellists, workshop leaders and academics to share their insights and ignite conversation on this crucial topic. Thank you to all of our speakers, and to our student and staff volunteers who helped make the day a success.

In this report, we share some of the key takeaways from the day, alongside research findings from Cambridge Judge Business School faculty members.

Our aim is to continue the conversation and offer practical tips on how employees can:

- Find tools and strategies to silence self-doubt and showcase one's value and contributions.
- Set firm boundaries and have the confidence to speak up if something's wrong.
- Cultivate strong networks and find mentors and sponsors.
- Achieve a better work-life balance.

We also offer guidance to help organisations:

- Bring to light and break down hidden biases.
- Ensure inclusive hiring, promotion and leadership development for women.
- Foster a culture where women feel empowered to speak their truth and be heard.
- Build a robust network of support and mentorship to help women navigate a complex career landscape.

The report is a call to action for both employers and employees to recognise the dynamics that perpetuate the gender gap and work to actively eradicate them. Together, we can create a workplace where equity, not disparity, defines the professional landscape.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Prithviraj Chattopadhyay Professor of Organisational Behaviour, Cambridge Judge Business School. In his research, Raja focuses on organisational behaviour, exploring topics such as relational demography and diversity, social identification, employment externalisation, managerial cognition and affect. He is currently working on combining his various interests to develop a more comprehensive understanding of diverse teams. His work has appeared in outlets such as the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Organization Science*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Strategic Management Journal*.



Barbara Dryhurst Actor and Integral Development Coach; Associate Coach, AGL Communication. Barbara is an Associate Coach at AGL Communication, where she helps leaders from various sectors find their voice and be better communicators. She also works with Open Space Learning and is an Associate of Narativ, which provides coaching and training to help businesses leverage the power of storytelling. As an actor, she has appeared in plays across the UK, alongside various TV shows (from *Cold Feet* to *Coronation Street*). Her most recent films were *Swan Song* and *Speakeasy*, a two-hander where she featured alongside Victoria Emslie. She also works frequently with Actors in Industry, one of the first companies to pioneer roleplay coaching in business.



Rina Einy Member of the Advisory Board, Cambridge Judge Business School; Managing Director, Textyle International; Founder and Owner, Culthread London. Rina is Managing Director at Textyle International, which specialises in the production of outerwear for big brand clients in the fashion industry. She is also the Founder of ethical and sustainable coat and lifestyle brand Culthread. Prior to her career at Textyle, she competed on the Women's Professional Tennis Tour, before studying Monetary Economics at the London School of Economics. Following her undergraduate degree, she completed the J.P. Morgan Finance Programme in New York, before trading bonds and derivatives at J.P. Morgan in London. She holds an Executive MBA from Cambridge Judge Business School, and is currently working towards her Doctorate in Business Administration at Warwick Business School.



Feryal Erhun Professor of Operations and Technology Management, Cambridge Judge Business School; Academic Director, Wo+Men's Leadership Centre. As Professor of Operations and Technology Management, Feryal's research looks at strategic interactions between stakeholders in supply chains, healthcare and socially responsible operations. She is a strong proponent of practice-based research and has collaborated with Intel Corporation, NHS, Stanford University Medical Center and others to help them deliver insights for communities. Her work has appeared in outlets including *Management Science*, *M&SOM*, *Operations Research*, *Production and Operations Management* and *Sloan Management Review*. She is a Department Editor of *M&SOM* and a member of the editorial board of *Management Science*.



Khayala Eylazova EMEA Consulting, Operations Transformation, PwC; Board Member, Philanthropy and Partnerships, UN Women UK. Khayala has a passion for advocacy, co-leading PwC's diversity and inclusion initiatives and helping clients embrace DEI topics. She is currently chief of staff on the firm's EMEA Consulting Operations Transformation team, following roles as Commercial Director for EMEA Deals, and Sales and Business Development Lead in Financial Services. She is also a thought leader, experienced public speaker, mentor and coach, and has been recognised with a number of industry awards, including finalist at the UN Women UK Awards 2023; Advocate of the Year at the Women in Finance Awards 2020; finalist at the Women in Insurance Awards 2021; and a WeAreTheCity Top 50 Trailblazer. She is a regular contributor to Cambridge Judge Business School's Rising Women Leaders Programme and the Wo+Men's Leadership Centre, and was recently appointed a UN Women UK Board Member.



Elizabeth George KMPG Professor of Management Studies, Cambridge Judge Business School. Elizabeth's research examines how non-standard work arrangements affect workers and organisations, including how individuals react to new forms of work, such as temporary contracts or remote working. She has also looked at how individuals work alongside colleagues that differ from them in various contexts, and has focused on issues such as emotions at team meetings, and the organisational effect of pay grade discrepancies. Her work has appeared in outlets such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Organization Science*. In addition, her research has been used by the International Labor Organization and the US Society for Human Resource Management to help inform public policy and management practice. She is Editor-in-Chief of the *Academy of Management Annals*, and a member of the editorial boards of journals including *Academy of Management Journal* and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.



Dorothy Gregson Non-Executive Member and Chair of the Quality, Performance and Finance Committee, NHS. Dorothy attended the University of Cambridge's Clinical School and is now a Non-Executive Member and Chair of the Quality, Performance and Finance Committee for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. During the pandemic, she worked as Deputy of the Eastern Regions and then Acting Regional Director of Public Health. Prior to this, she was the Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, and also had a stint as Chair of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Public Service Board.



Tracey Horn Director of Corporate Communications and Marketing, Cambridge Judge Business School; Executive Director, Wo+Men's Leadership Centre. Tracey is passionate about improving gender diversity through dialogue and action, and is a founding member of Cambridge Judge Business School's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee. As a member of the senior leadership team, she is responsible for overseeing externally facing communications and corporate marketing. She is also a member of the European Foundation for Management Steering Committee and a mentor to students at the University of St Andrews, where she studied. Tracey's background is in outreach, engagement and PR. In her early career, she project-managed the creation, operational running and marketing of museums, including the World Rugby Museum and Twickenham Stadium Tours. She developed engagement and partnership programmes as Director of Outreach for the NASA Specialised Center of Research and Training in the Research Triangle in North Carolina, and for Scottish Telecom in Edinburgh.



Kamal Munir Pro-Vice-Chancellor for University Community and Engagement, University of Cambridge; Professor of Strategy and Policy, Cambridge Judge Business School; Professorial Fellow of Homerton College, University of Cambridge. Kamal's research interests include institutional change, creation of markets, technological disruption, and inequality. He has published numerous papers in leading academic journals and is frequently asked to present his work around the world. Kamal has won several awards for his teaching. He has served as a consultant to several blue-chip organisations, as well as to several multilateral agencies. Prior to assuming the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, he served as the Academic Director of the Centre for Strategic Philanthropy (Cambridge), Interim Director of the Centre of South Asian Studies (Cambridge), and Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (LUMS).



Maxine Nwaneri Bestselling Author, Speaker, Leadership Adviser and Executive Coach. As the Founder of professional services business The Future is Greater, Maxine uses her experience overcoming significant odds to help female leaders conquer their challenges and succeed in both their professional and personal lives. A near-death experience giving birth to her second child was the catalyst for her new book, *The Future is Greater: A Working Mother's Guide to Finding Balance*, recently published by HarperCollins. Prior to starting her business, Maxine obtained her MBA from Cambridge Judge Business School, and acquired over 15 years' experience in the global consulting, technology and financial services industries.



Anne Robinson Supply Chain Transformation Leader and Strategist. Anne is a seasoned supply chain strategy and analytics executive. She currently serves as a strategic advisor and mentor, focusing on digital transformation and change management. Prior to this, Anne was Chief Strategy Officer at Kinaxis, responsible for accelerating the company's strategy to add further value to customers. Before joining Kinaxis, Anne was Executive Director of Global Supply Chain Strategy, Analytics and Systems at Verizon, and previously spent several years at Cisco. She is a fellow and past president of INFORMS (the Institute for Operations Research and Management Sciences), has served on several advisory boards, and is a seasoned industry speaker. She has an undergraduate degree in Mathematics, and a master's and PhD in Industrial Engineering.



Rob Thomson CBE DSO, Chief Executive, AGL Communication. Rob joined AGL as CEO in 2022, drawing on his interest in all aspects of leadership after spending 34 years in the Armed Forces. He studied at the University of Cambridge and King's College London, before being commissioned into the Royal Green Jackets and serving as a frontline soldier at home in Northern Ireland, and overseas in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2009, he was awarded a Distinguished Service Order for his service in Afghanistan, and in 2014 he was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE). More recently, Rob has served more as a soldier diplomat, first as the UK's Defence Attaché in Paris and then as Administrator of the UK Sovereign Base Areas and Commander of the British Forces in Cyprus. He is passionate about history and now regularly delivers leadership talks to organisations, drawing on his experience as a leader and commander.

OPENING REMARKS

*Finally I was able to see that if I had a contribution I wanted to make,
I must do it, despite what others said. That I was OK the way I was.
That it was all right to be strong.*

Wangari Maathai

It seems like only yesterday that our late colleague, Professor Sucheta Nadkarni, laid the foundations for the Wo+Men's Leadership Centre (WLC) at Cambridge Judge Business School (Cambridge Judge). In the nine years since its inception in 2015, the WLC has contributed to far-reaching research in gender diversity and had a transformational impact on many people, prompting them to challenge the often invisible structural and cultural hierarchies that shape our lives.

Since then, we have also made significant strides in achieving greater diversity at Cambridge Judge. Every year, we make an effort to reach a better balance in our student body. In 2023, 36% of our EMBA intake and 43% of our MBA intake were women. We now have a more diverse faculty than when Sucheta started the WLC, and since September 2021, we have recruited six additional female faculty members.

In 2023, we also started taking our first steps towards the Bronze Award under the Athena SWAN charter – a global framework to recognise and support gender equity in higher education and research. This is part of our five-year pledge to further support and transform gender equality at Cambridge Judge.

The fight for equality requires a collective effort. Here at the WLC, we extend a warm invitation to join us in this ongoing endeavour to nurture talent and potential – irrespective of arbitrary barriers – by:

- challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination, wherever we see it;
- amplifying the voices of women in our own networks;
- supporting organisations working to empower women and girls; and
- advocating for policies that promote gender equality in our communities and workplaces.

It's time to stop token gestures and cultivate systemic change through sustainable solutions. These include:

- investing in inclusive education and skills training for all;
- supporting and scaling up women-led businesses and social enterprises that drive economic growth;
- developing innovative solutions to environmental and social challenges;
- breaking down glass ceilings to ensure women have a seat at the table and play an equal role in making these critical decisions for our future; and
- recognising that true sustainability requires female representation in leadership.

The often overlooked perspectives of women hold invaluable insights for solving the complex problems we face.

Research shows that today, “diversity matters even more” (Hunt et al. 2023). Beyond the realms of the WLC, Cambridge Judge Business School and the University of Cambridge, we want to create a far-reaching, paradigm shift in wider society – one that sees the empowerment of women as not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do.

Feryal Erhun
Academic Director

Tracey Horn
Executive Director

Kamal Munir
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(University Community &
Engagement), University
of Cambridge; Professor
of Strategy and Policy,
Cambridge Judge
Business School



SECTION 1: WHAT IMPEDES WOMEN'S ASCENT TO LEADERSHIP ROLES

Demolishing biases

We have come a long way from the time when fields such as medicine, law and politics were considered exclusively male domains, and the University of Cambridge denied degrees to women (Girton College became the first college to admit women in 1869, but the first degree wasn't awarded until 1948; it was an honorary degree to the Queen Mother)¹.

Yet despite significant progress, gender parity in leadership positions across industry, politics and STEM fields remains a key issue. Around the globe, only 31% of leadership positions are held by women, despite the fact women make up 41.9% of the workforce (World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2022).

In the non-governmental, education and personal services and wellbeing sectors, women hold their share of the pie, representing almost half of leadership positions. In energy, manufacturing and infrastructure, however, less than a fifth of leaders are women (they hold just 20%, 19% and 16% of leadership positions respectively; World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2022). Women's share in parliaments across the world is just 23%.

Over centuries, we created a world that embodied a particular gender hierarchy. Social hierarchies became embedded in everything around us, from organisations and working hours to the design and safety of commonly used items (such as seatbelts in cars) and services (such as healthcare). Now in the age of large data and AI, we are finding data gender gaps – instances where data is collected and analysed in ways that overlook or misrepresent the needs and experiences of women (Criado Perez 2019).

Of course, we should celebrate the many successes that have been achieved. For example, within the University of Cambridge, strides have been made to close the gender pay gap and achieve greater female representation in leadership positions. Our current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Prentice, is the third woman to hold the position, and over 50% of Cambridge colleges have female presidents.

The gender balance among top decision-makers at the university has improved significantly, but there's still more to be done. We have also hugely reduced the

¹ The Rising Tide: Women at Cambridge <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/the-rising-tide>

gender pay gap, but given that most lower-paid positions are dominated by women, it is unfortunately still present.

Organisational literature offers valuable insights. Rosabeth Moss Kanter's seminal work, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977), brought new insights into the role of women in corporations more than half a century ago. Kanter's work highlighted the existence of "self-perpetuating cycles", where women were often found in more routine functions within organisations, without opportunities to advance. These roles didn't allow employees to show and be rewarded for independent judgement.

Kanter's work considered the interplay between *structure* and *behaviour*. If you observe a certain behaviour – say a woman seems to be less ambitious in a particular situation – does it mean "women don't go for success," or does it mean "there's something about this situation that's evoking a certain kind of behaviour"? Kanter showed there was always an interplay.

More recently, Iris Bohnet's book, *What Works: Gender Equality by Design* (2016), shed light on the deeply ingrained biases that often go unnoticed. Bohnet's research helps us understand why, as she puts it, "when performance is observable, successful women are rated as less likeable than men," but "[w]hen performance is ambiguous, successful women are rated as less competent than men."

Achieving gender equality isn't just a moral imperative but also a business necessity. We should all question and demolish biases that hold the oppressive structures in place – whether around women, ethnic minorities or other marginalised parts of society. Unfortunately, we still see some societal leaders, including some women, actively reinforcing these biases, instead of working towards breaking them down. Gender diversity is still often treated as a peripheral issue – a box to tick, rather than a driving force for progress.

Challenging this perspective and dismantling the oppressive structures is exactly what we're trying to do at the University of Cambridge. We hope you will join us in this endeavour, wherever you might be working.

Maxine Nwaneri, Author, Speaker and Executive Coach: *"As a woman of colour, I have faced discrimination and racism which has led to me feeling deeply hurt. Sometimes the challenges we face can make us begin to doubt ourselves and our abilities. It's important to show up as the best, highest version of ourselves, no matter what challenges we face, and to remember that we aren't defined by our circumstances or others' opinions."*

WORKSHOP PART 1: COMMUNICATING AT YOUR BEST

Rob Thomson CBE DSO
Chief Executive, AGL
Communication

Taking inspiration from Aristotle

Raise your words, not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.

Rumi

Leaders need to be excellent communicators to share their vision, goals and expectations with clarity and impact. They rely on good communication skills to build trust with employees, clients and partners. Compelling communication enables them to gather and properly consider different perspectives, and to clearly articulate their thoughts and plans in response.

At AGL, we rather like the principles Aristotle set out for communicating at our best, and they can act as a good framework for helping today's leaders cut through the noise and convey the right message to their audiences. I have considered Aristotle's five principles below (using the word "conversation" as a catch-all phrase for any form of communication; I like this because conversations are natural, and we're at our most successful when we act naturally).

Τελος τέλος The ultimate end, purpose or goal of a conversation

Aristotle was an early proponent of what I call effects-based communication, and he is right that the best conversations are the ones where we know the exact purpose and effect we want to achieve. I have found in my career that conversations can be divided into three general types, and the distinction has helped me be clear about my purpose:

- **Decisive:** This is a conversation when a decision, whether high or low-stakes, is sought. It is better when both sides agree a decision is required.
- **Shaping:** This is when a conversation is not focused on a specific decision but when more ground needs to be covered; perhaps to set out the rationale of an argument, without forcing the issue or necessarily winning the other person over.
- **Building capital and trust:** This is about building trust with other people or organisations (and is the purpose of most conversations). Whether in the defence and security field or the business world, trust is essential for profitable conversations and takes time to develop. It requires us to listen as much as we talk, and to find areas we have in common, both on a personal and professional level. Being open is the key to building trust in most cases.

Ethos ἦθος The credibility and character of the speaker

We all make judgements based on the speaker we are listening to: principally, I think, about their credibility and their character. If credibility is about competence, then character is probably about charisma and warmth. A good blend of the two is a heady mix and breeds trust – which, as mentioned, is the first and most important mechanism for building a profitable relationship. We all need to work on how we build trust quickly and effectively.

Pathos πάθος An emotional connection

The target of a conversation should, in most cases, be the heart, and pathos is the best route in. People most often remember how they felt at the end of a conversation or a speech, rather than what they necessarily heard. I like to think that pathos is principally focused on building an emotional bridge between a speaker and her/his audience, over which the rational content (logic, data and figures) flows. Like a physical bridge, this emotional bridge needs to be load-bearing and requires careful construction over time; it's rarely built in one session.

Logos λόγος The rational content

Logos is, at its simplest, the rationality of the argument – the assembly of the right data in the right format to convince the minds of the listeners. For a lawyer, this is the logic of the case; for a corporate leader, it might be the figures that support the business case. For a leader on the battlefield, it will be about the thoroughness of the plan – the winning concept and the attention to detail within it.

Kairos καιρός The right moment

You need to know when the right moment is for a key conversation; has the data been assembled? Have all the shaping conversations happened? Have we booked the right amount of time in? This is often more of an instinctive judgement than a calculated one. Getting the setting and preparation right also matters; is it an office call, a walk or a relaxed breakfast meeting? Is there something to send beforehand? If you're in a team, who is saying what and when? It's also important to allow time to create the right relationship and atmosphere at the start of a meeting. Immediately launching into slides or a pitch is rarely the right answer.

In addition to these key principles, I would, with both humility and temerity, encourage people to think about two other ingredients for successful conversations: listening and preparation.

Listening. Too often, communication experts absorb themselves in how people speak – but how we listen is also a key part of a winning, effects-based conversation. The ability to listen starts with a highly developed and authentic interest in the other person. This has been described by motivational speaker and author Bob Burg as “the single greatest people skill”. Patience is a pre-requisite in absorbing the perspectives of others. Closely linked is the ability to ask the



right, open questions. Open questions, in my experience, draw open, exploratory answers. Closed questions invite closed, unadventurous (and timid) answers. Listening, like speaking, is an art to learn and to practise.

Preparation. When I was in the British Army, if ever I was confronted by a looming media interview, I found that ruthless preparation was the only answer. The articulation of my key messages, the analysis of likely questions and the refinement, red-teaming² and rehearsal of my answers all took time. As a rule of thumb, I found that a minute of live interview took an hour of preparation, and it was a team effort: policy advisers, media advisers, contrary thinkers and senior soldiers all had roles to play in preparing me for that moment. Careful preparation is a pre-requisite for effective communication, and it doesn't only apply to media interviews. I love this quote from Mark Twain: “It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.”

Aristotle offers some wonderfully timeless advice, but I hope that our two additions also chime. A friend once told me when I started out in business that the best commercial pitches should feel like conversations. I think you can broaden that out to all communications – if you leave any room feeling as if it has been a conversation, chances are the other person will feel the same way, and you'll have achieved the effect you were after.

Anne Robinson: “Challenges are just opportunities waiting to happen; failures are a sign you're growing and learning.”

² 'red-teaming' is a military phrase to capture the idea of testing out your arguments: a challenge function.

SECTION 2: WE'VE COME A LONG WAY

**Prithviraj
Chattopadhyay**
Professor of
Organisational Behaviour,
Cambridge Judge
Business School

Gender in the workplace

This moment imposes great challenges on us. One of the greatest is the need to unite! In mobilizing our resources, so that the platform of action we will approve here becomes reality for the benefit not only of womankind but of all humanity.

Dr Ruth Cardoso

In the history of agricultural societies, work tended to be divided equally between men and women (Kranzberg and Hannan, 2023). Greater segregation started at the beginning of the industrial revolution, as a greater proportion of men went to work in the factories while women stayed at home.

As Kranzberg and Hannan note, segregation deepened over time, driven by the need to protect women and accompanying children from certain dangerous tasks in the factory, and later, the emerging view of men as good providers.

As more women joined the workforce to fill positions such as clerks and teachers – created as the industrial and educational sectors grew – they were paid less than men for the same work. This was based on the assumption that men were the ones financially supporting their families, not women.

Although women came to work in greater numbers in national emergencies, including wartime, the earlier norms meant that organisations continued to pay women less, while offering fewer opportunities for progression. This held true even as more women began joining the workforce to support their families financially (from the 1970s onwards). These issues are still ingrained in the workforce today – and while awareness has been building, progress is slow.

Kanter (1977) noted that women historically tended to be locked out of higher status positions within firms. Occasionally females did progress upwards, but they had to conform to the values defined by male top management to do so. Chattopadhyay, Tluchowska and George (2004) described this individual, tokenistic approach as social mobility – compared to a more collective strategy based on social competition, where all women in the organisation could benefit.

Theodoropoulos, Forth and Bryson (2022) found the wage gap between women and men could be closed completely in organisations where women made up

at least 60% of management positions and were able to independently make decisions about wages (rather than being driven by unions, for example). Such situations, found in 20% of firms in Britain, illustrate social competition, with pay balanced out by a rise in women's wages and a fall in men's wages.

Over the past few decades, there has been a lot of attention on the benefits that women bring to leadership positions. Female CEOs are often perceived to be particularly effective, having overcome prejudice to reach top management (Rosette and Tost, 2010).

According to Eagly and Carli (2003), women in leadership roles also tend to be more democratic (rather than autocratic), make more use of contingent rewards, and lean more towards transformational leadership than men. These styles are more effective in sectors such as education, government and social services, and may also work better in flatter, more dynamic organisations.

These styles may also be more effective in firms undergoing major changes or recovering from a crisis, where communication is paramount. However, because female CEOs are seen to perform better in crises, they can also suffer from the "glass cliff" phenomenon (Ryan and Haslam, 2007). This means they're often put in charge of failing organisations, and so may be seen to fail more often than male CEOs.

Going forward, the role of business schools should be to raise awareness of these issues and the progress that has been made in addressing them. Knowing the history of the gender gap at work can help us to understand why it exists and is pervasive.

Understanding why individual versus collective strategies have been deployed to raise women's status and pay; where and whether they have worked; and what behaviours are more effective in securing promotion, can help us to overcome the broken rung in the promotion ladder (Field et al., 2023).

Rina Einy's tips on achieving a better gender balance

- **Trust yourself:** Don't let others tell you they know what's best for you – have faith in your decisions.
- **Speak up and call things out:** When I was younger, my approach was to try to be as tough and competitive as my colleagues, who were all men. I kept my head down and worked long hours. As I've got older, I've tried to tackle these challenges directly by speaking up and calling things out, which I think is a better approach!
- **Be aware of 'greedy jobs':** This year's Nobel Prize winner in economics, Claudia Goldin (a Harvard University Professor) pioneered research demonstrating that a large portion of the gender pay gap can be attributed to higher pay for 'greedy jobs' that don't offer flexible working schedules. My research found four key strategies that women often employed to try and succeed and advance in a 'greedy' industry, including *performing ideal worker behaviour* by demonstrating

perfectionism and profound commitment to work; *expanding social capital* by networking and relationship building; *asking and telling* by sharing one's accomplishments and asking for opportunities; and *managing gender* by being assertive (but not aggressive), and downplaying femininity. Most respondents found the first two especially challenging due to family commitments. Ultimately, when greedy jobs require 24/7 commitment, there are no strategies women can use to succeed besides being 100% committed and available for work. The requirements and expectations for this need to change in order for us to see progress.

- **Be a good manager:** If you're a manager, you have an important role to play when it comes to evening out the playing field for women. Focus on giving personalised guidance and feedback to women on your teams, provide opportunities for them to take on responsibility, and help connect them with powerful leaders in the organisation.
- **Acknowledge the biases:** The first step to addressing the obstacles is to acknowledge that sexism, racism and other deep prejudices remain in all spheres of our lives. Large organisations in particular have tried to draw attention to these issues by means of diversity management programmes, but these can sometimes backfire, so efforts need to go beyond that. Key strategies for helping women to progress in gendered workplaces include good monitoring mechanisms and transparent, up to date information that creates a perception of fairness.
- **Offer training and opportunities for progression:** It's really important for organisations to provide accessible and relevant training programmes, and opportunities to advance; these can help all employees, including women, feel valued in the organisation.
- **Create resource groups and provide role models:** Resource groups can help foster a sense of security and encourage all employees to speak up and feel heard. Female role models are also crucial, and a valuable way to inspire other women to succeed.



Maxine Nwaneri: "I wish I had known or been told, 'you are enough!' Stop second guessing yourself – what you think, say and do matters, so speak up and contribute as only you can."

Dorothy Gregson's tips on winning in the workplace

- **Challenge the gender pay gap:** If someone is seeking too much money, challenge them – but also recognise if someone is underselling themselves. Don't wait for the end of year report, which often says women are paid less; instead, challenge each remuneration decision.
- **Nurture and build resilience:** Remember that the people who lead organisations aren't that different from you – they have successes, and they have failures. The key is that they learn and have resilience. Don't underestimate how much resilience you'll need to progress, but remember that resilience can be nurtured and built. Developing the skills needed to build your resilience – such as hobbies, meditation and exercise – is just as important as building your career-related knowledge and skills. Your career is a marathon, not a sprint.
- **Put work into perspective:** I have increasingly taken time to review my life wheel – how I balance work alongside time with family and friends, being part of my community, having fun and looking after my health. Steven Covey in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, invites us to imagine our funeral. What would people say about us? When I'm really pushed to compromise on my work-life balance, I imagine standing at the back of my own funeral and I think about what someone would say.
- **Give positive feedback:** As a leader, it's really important to help develop others' confidence. But you don't need to be managing someone to give them feedback – if a colleague has done well, tell them; let them know they should be proud of themselves.
- **Think of networking as a two-way street:** Networks work two ways. You're part of someone else's network, and they're choosing to be part of yours. As leaders, we're increasingly being asked to solve complex problems with no easy transactional solution. To deliver in this environment, strong relationships are needed to achieve joint goals. Leading a successful, complex change with someone else cultivates a strong bond and so cultivates a long-lasting network. I've found networks grow organically this way.
- **Seek to work with people who inspire you:** When looking for new roles, think about the leaders you want to work with and can learn from. I have deliberately sought out opportunities with those who develop leadership in the people they work with, and create environments where others can learn and grow. It's amazing what a team can do with a good leader, and I've learnt so much from them.

SECTION 3: GREAT MINDS DO NOT HAVE TO THINK ALIKE!³

Feryal Erhun
Professor of Operations
and Technology
Management,
Cambridge Judge
Business School;
Academic Director,
Wo+Men's Leadership
Centre, Cambridge
Judge Business School

Inclusion in the workplace

To be fully inclusive of the most diverse talent means recognising and speaking out against discrimination in any form.

Professor Stephen J. Toope

Inclusion is the practice of creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their best. It's about creating a sense of belonging and authenticity, where people feel comfortable being themselves and expressing their unique perspectives.

There are organisational and employee benefits to creating an inclusive workplace – including attracting and retaining a diverse range of talent, which can lead to more creative and innovative ideas. A 2019 Gartner report showed that “gender-diverse and inclusive teams outperformed gender-homogeneous, less inclusive teams by 50%, on average” (Sakpal 2019). Rock et al. (2016) argue that “working on diverse teams produces better outcomes precisely *because* it's harder.”

A diverse workforce can bring different perspectives to bear on problems, leading to more effective solutions. Employees who feel included are more likely to be engaged in their work and more productive. As a result, diverse companies enjoy “2.3 times higher cash flow per employee.”⁴

Inclusive workplaces also foster a culture of empathy and understanding, which can lead to better relationships with stakeholders. Organisations that are recognised for their commitment to inclusion are more likely to attract and retain top talent, and they may also be seen as more socially responsible.

There are also multiple benefits for employees; an inclusive workplace provides increased job satisfaction, wellbeing and purpose. It creates a culture of respect and collaboration, which can lead to stronger relationships between colleagues, while providing opportunities for all employees to develop their skills and advance their careers.

Achieving diversity in the workplace is a challenging task for many organisations, however, and there are a number of reasons why this goal is still elusive. The first is unconscious bias; the tendency to make judgements about people based on their

Manaz Javid, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Cambridge Judge Business School:
“Cambridge Judge Business School aspires to become a leader in business excellence through EDI in everything we do. Gender equality is an important theme throughout the school's EDI strategy, and our aim is for an equal gender balance in our student and faculty cohorts. Our commitment to pursuing the Athena SWAN accreditation is evidence of our dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the Cambridge Judge Business School community.”

race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other factors, without being aware of it, can manifest in many ways – such as in hiring decisions, promotions and performance evaluations.

Secondly, there's a lack of diverse talent in many industries, which makes it difficult for organisations to recruit and hire qualified candidates from underrepresented groups. This lack of diversity in the talent pipeline is the result of various factors, such as discrimination, lack of access to education and training, and cultural barriers.

Thirdly, even if organisations can attract diverse talent, they may not be able to retain it if they don't create an inclusive work environment – one that is welcoming, supportive and respectful of all employees. Diversity initiatives often aren't successful if they aren't championed by top leaders in the organisation. Leaders need to be visible champions of diversity and inclusion, and they need to create a culture that values it. Organisations also often lack accountability for diversity goals. This can be because diversity goals aren't clearly defined or tracked, or because there aren't any consequences for not meeting diversity goals.

Finally, there are systemic barriers that can make it difficult for employees from underrepresented groups to advance in their careers. These barriers can include things like glass ceilings, lack of mentorship and lack of access to resources.

There is a growing body of research that suggests that training in unconscious bias alone isn't enough to improve diversity in the workplace. Often the training may have short-term focus, which can lead to tokenism or superficial changes. To truly change behaviour, training needs to be repeated over time and embedded in the organisation's culture.

In addition, training often focuses on the individual rather than the systemic issues that perpetuate bias. This means that employees aren't given the tools to challenge the status quo and create a more equitable workplace. It also often doesn't include any follow-up or accountability measures, which means employees aren't given the opportunity to put what they have learnt into practice.

In a 2019 meta-analysis of more than 490 studies involving some 80,000 people, psychologist Patrick Forscher and his colleagues found that UB training did not change biased behaviour. Other studies have shown this training can backfire; sending the message that biases are involuntary and widespread – beyond our control, in other words – can make people feel they're unavoidable and lead to more discrimination, not less.

³ Polly Mitchell-Guthrie, Kinaxis

⁴ <https://joshbersin.com/2015/12/why-diversity-and-inclusion-will-be-a-top-priority-for-2016/>

This isn't to say that unconscious bias training can't still be worthwhile – but it needs to be part of a broader cultural change. Organisations need to be committed to diversity and inclusion at all levels, from the top down.

They can create a more inclusive workplace by taking the following steps:

- **Set clear expectations for inclusion:** Make it clear that inclusivity is a priority for the organisation.
- **Provide training on inclusive behaviour:** Help employees learn how to communicate and interact with each other in a way that is inclusive and respectful.
- **Offer cross-cultural training:** Create opportunities for employees to learn about different cultures and perspectives.
- **Encourage open communication and feedback:** Build a culture where employees feel comfortable speaking up and sharing their ideas.
- **Reward employees for their contributions:** Recognise and reward those creating positive impact in the workplace.

Khayala Eylazova's tips on inclusion in workplace

- **Speak up when something's wrong:** Everyone has a role to play, and not only men. It's important to be an ally, and to speak up and call out when something's wrong. Don't be afraid to challenge the system, and if you're in a position of leadership, use your privilege to open the doors for those who are less privileged.
- **Celebrate other women's success:** We women have to lift each other up everywhere we go – there should be no place for insecurity and toxic behaviours. Celebrate each other's success, support each other when we feel stuck or just need an introduction to someone in the network, and be approachable. We need role models, and to have those, we need to bring other women with us as we climb the career ladder.
- **Create a good work-life balance:** My biggest piece of advice is that if you don't look after your wellbeing and take charge of your work-life balance, then someone else is going to do it for you and you won't like it. I have seen many senior female consultants in 'greedy jobs' working long hours, during weekends or on vacation time, which leads to burnout; this doesn't create a great picture for women looking up to these females. Build trust with your co-workers and leaders. If you communicate clearly and deliver your work at a flexible time that suits you, then this is a win for both sides. Block time in your diary for the gym, a walk in the park or dropping your kids to school.
- **Track down a sponsor:** Coming from a different country with a different background, I always had to go an extra mile to prove myself. Leaders tend to sponsor and mentor the people who look like them and talk like them. However,



I used my already established relationships with the right leaders to get access to sponsors. You have to make sure you choose the right credible sponsor who will speak up for you, and who will put your name forward for the promotion if you aren't in the room when decisions are made.

- **Be open to trying new things and acquiring new skills:** If you can, learn new languages, live abroad and experience different cultures to broaden your mindset and gain different perspectives.
- **Be kind to yourself:** If something doesn't go the way you want it, don't beat up yourself. In a year's time when you look back, you will realise it didn't matter at all. Moreover, you will be grateful that it didn't work out because now you have a better choice. So learn to love yourself and be kind to yourself and others.

WORKSHOP PART 2: STORIES FORGE CONNECTIONS

Barbara Dryhurst
Actor and Integral
Development Coach;
Associate Coach, AGL
Communication

How to tell your story

*In the tapestry of life, our stories are the threads that connect us to others.
Networking is weaving those threads together.*

Aarash Darroodi⁵

We remember the people who have told us powerful, true stories. We read stories for entertainment and for learning, but spoken stories perhaps leave the most profound impressions. We all learnt from our earliest interactions how to generate and tell short stories. Some of these had a conscious goal. For years at school, we were asked to “give an example”, and so we searched for ways of giving illustrations. Building and then maintaining this skill of crafting stories gives us a stronger ability to connect with our fellow human beings.

At AGL, we love helping people find their stories. We consistently see that people build trust and success in their business when they can express the value of what they do. When they can tell a powerful story about themselves, their product or their service, they are memorable for who they are as well as what they say.

How do we develop this natural conversational capacity? A first useful step is to observe how often we default to conceptual words, often adjectives, which seem powerful but can blur and generalise our meaning. In doing so, we lose our opportunity for impact.

What a story isn't

Businesses and organisations often lose opportunities to tell a story about themselves. Compare these two ways of speaking or writing:

“At Brinkleys, we are committed to the very best in customer service and we are passionate about our product.”

“One of our branch managers in Leeds took a call from an elderly customer. He didn't use computers or have access to online ordering. A recent fall had prevented him from driving to the store, so he was worried that he would miss the sale. Tracey, the manager, immediately arranged for a staff member to drive him to and from the store so that he could try the sofas that were in the sale for himself”.

⁵ https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kerriroe_networking-connections-stories-activity-7110653148402208768-Vgjn/

The first example uses words intended to inspire: “passionate” and “committed”. They seem powerful, but they have no real context and so become “brochure speak”. The second paragraph is effectively a short story. We can visualise the people and events. We read between the lines to form a sense of the values and behaviour of the company.

How to find a story

It takes a conscious effort to excavate, craft and speak a meaningful story. The reward is relationship building. The results follow, because we've offered something tangible. A story brings us and our business into clear focus. Real events and real examples stay with people.

Your own opportunities for speaking your stories might be informal and conversational, or they might be a pitch or presentation.

We encourage you to develop the habit of finding stories. A great jumping-off point is a personal story. To refine it even further, consider telling an *origin story*. We each have multiple origin stories: where I was born; what led me to my field of work; how I met my best friend; who gave me the best advice in my teenage years; when I found the hobby I love.

So how do you perform this archaeology of memory each time you're searching for a good story about yourself or your business?

It's worth noting that the suggested origin stories above serve as prompts to your own memory. The first word in each sentence creates an open question. Where? What? How? Who? When? You start the process of finding a story by forming a question to yourself. A great example to try is:

“What was a turning point in your early life that led you to what you do today?”

You will find that, even if you feel blank for a while, stories will eventually start to jostle for your attention. This personal origin story is great practice for the other stories you can tell about your work, plans and business challenges and successes.

How to give it structure

When you realise you have a story you'd like to tell, speak it; don't write it down. When we coach our clients at AGL, we encourage them to speak their story quite naturally and let its personality flood through. You can do this with a friend or record it on your phone.

The best structure is a simple one: find a beginning, a middle and an end. Picture the arc – the shape of the rainbow. One end is the beginning, the top is the middle, and the other end is the actual end. The middle section is going to incorporate one or more turning points. For now though, just focus on getting your story spoken aloud.

To make your story alive and impactful, consider your listener. Be prepared to take them into a specific place and moment in time – the way a film takes you straight into the scene. And challenge yourself: bring in as many of the five senses as you can. Really think and feel your way into the memory and invoke what you see, hear, feel, touch, taste and smell.

So, instead of saying: “I started training to be a teacher because my parents always wanted me to do that, but I ended up dropping out of the course and opened my first ice cream parlour.”

You might say: “I can smell the sea, and the fish and chips. I’m standing outside an empty shoe shop on the high street. The paint is peeling, and the sign is hanging off. It’s raining so hard, I can hardly see to use my phone, and my hands are freezing. My mum answers. ‘Mum,’ I say, ‘I’ve found my ice cream parlour.’ There’s a long silence and then she says, ‘that’s great, love. That’s great.’”

When you let yourself remember the places, the people and the events which form the parts of your many stories, you realise that these are vivid moments which can move and inspire other people. Once you’ve told your story aloud without too much thought, start to notice how you might refine it. Create your three sections of the story arc. Use the five senses.

Keeping your stories impactful takes editing skill. Try to tell your story using only seven words. This is a playful exercise and a great way to sharpen your ability to edit yourself down to the real essentials of your message. You can even use it to discover a great headline for your story, such as: ‘Student teacher drops out to sell ice cream.’

What is your purpose?

A short list of what humans might be up to when we tell a story includes the following: to open minds, close minds, entertain, inspire, warn, innovate, gossip, challenge, sell, create, explain, share, deceive, trust, scare, enlist, elect or build. Spend some time considering what it is you’d like your audience to *think, feel* and *do* because of you being in conversation with them. You may even end with a clear *call to action*.

Warm up

Each person’s voice is unique and dynamic. Our sound waves touch and connect with listeners. Many of us are anxious at the prospect of standing up to present at an event, engaging with a new client or attending an interview. There’s a paradox here – we want to speak as our natural selves, yet we need to rehearse and warm up, just as professional actors and athletes do. Here are some steps you can take to help you warm up and show up at ease:

- **Breathe** Settle your state before a speaking opportunity with a minute or two of 4-6-8 breathing. Breathe in through your nose and when you breathe out, purse your lips as if you’re blowing out a candle. Inhale for four; hold the breath for six; exhale for eight.

- **Grounding and posture** Choose a spot to stand on with both feet planted symmetrically on the ground. Compose your body in balance so you’re standing upright, but not rigidly so. Drop your hands by your side, allowing them to feel heavy. Close your eyes or just soften your gaze. Take your awareness to your feet. Allow yourself to get some feedback from the soles of your feet. Then start to notice other sensations and where in your body you feel those sensations. If you feel restlessness or other tension, simply ask your body nicely to let these flow downwards and out through your feet, like earthing electricity.
- **Release muscle tension** We carry tension in our bodies which can constrict our voice and breathing. Scrunch up your face and hold it for a few seconds, then release. Then tense up your neck, then your shoulders and on downwards through your body to your toes, releasing the tension each time as you go.

Feel entitled to your space

When we feel under pressure, we can start to shrink and close in on ourselves. Anxiety can prevent us from being able to listen well and/or speak with confidence. Remind yourself that you’re entitled to the space you take up with your body; it’s your birthright. Think about this when you stand ready for a speaking engagement. If you have a chance before a formal presentation, walk around the stage and auditorium as if it’s your own living room. Give yourself a minute to stretch and take up as much space as you can, reaching out your arms and “owning” the space around your body.

Use your voice

Your voice is an amazing natural instrument – remember that you have power over it and can vary your pace, pause, power and pitch. When we’re nervous, we most often speed up our pace and can forget to articulate every word.

Listen

We connect most profoundly with our fellow humans when we notice what is happening for them in our interactions – when we clarify our purpose to them, show up as credible, connect with their emotional state and bring reason. It’s important to choose the right moment to pay attention to their needs as well as our own. This doesn’t mean that we have to alter the truth of our story; it means we can be available to listen to their responses, and create fruitful conversations from the stories we tell.

Maxine Nwaneri: “Throughout my career, I have seen people both win and wreck with their words. I have seen how seemingly harmless phrases like ‘silly me’ or over-apologising can undermine others’ perceptions of, and respect for, individuals. On the other hand, it has been incredible to see possibilities open up when I’ve used words positively – choosing to change ‘I can’t’ to ‘how can I?’ when facing huge challenges, for example, can make a huge difference to how we think.”

SECTION 4: BECOMING A PROTÉGÉE

Elizabeth George
KPMG Professor of
Management Studies,
Cambridge Judge
Business School

Forging diverse networks and finding the right mentor

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

One of the worst aspects of discrimination is that victims of discrimination aren't actually aware of how they've been disadvantaged. How would you know you'd missed an opportunity if you weren't even aware the opportunity existed in the first place? How can women advance in careers if they don't know the avenues for advancement? This is a problem of access to information; research on networks can help.

The first key insight from research is that weak ties (ties between acquaintances, rather than close friends) give individuals information they wouldn't otherwise have (Granovetter, 1983). That's because often these ties are with people who are different to us. The wider the network we have, the more diverse the information we get – weak ties within and outside their workplaces can help women find out about career opportunities.

A second and related challenge is gaining entry into rooms. Since a common stereotype about women is linked to their competence, women who want to advance have to persuade others of their competence. This is where having a mentor and sponsor becomes invaluable.

Kram's 1985 book on mentoring at work, and subsequent research by Thomas (1993) and Ibarra (1992; 2019), pointed to three key characteristics of effective sponsors in an organisation. Firstly, they need to be willing to use their own social capital to advocate for an individual. Secondly, they must be able to find opportunities to develop and showcase their mentee's skills in tasks that matter. Finally, a sponsor must actively bring their mentee and their work to the attention of those in positions of power.

While it's helpful if the sponsor holds a powerful position themselves, it's not the be-all and end-all. Prior research on women and minorities in organisations (Ibarra, 1992; Thomas, 1993) has shown that a key part of what mentors provide is psychosocial support. This form of support gives individuals the confidence to

grasp the opportunities they're given and to persist in the face of setbacks. Mentors also don't necessarily have to work in the same organisation as their protégées to provide social support, and they don't have to be more advanced in their careers either.

So for women to advance, it's important to pay attention to the diversity of their networks. We need both instrumental support (in this case practical career support) and social support (to meet emotional needs); these may come from different sources for men and women.

In a study of men and women at an advertising firm, Ibarra (1992) found that men acquired both forms of support mainly from the males in their network. Women, on the other hand, received social support from females and career support from males. Career support helps us become aware of the opportunities that exist, while social support gives us the courage to even consider those opportunities. Women need both forms of support and need to actively seek both sponsors and mentors.

Finally, why would anyone want to be a mentor or a sponsor? Recent research suggests individuals who see learning opportunities in the relationship are more likely to invest in mentoring or sponsoring others (Zhang, Wang and Galinsky, 2023). There are significant advantages for mentors and sponsors themselves. Women who are thoughtful of the needs of others – and especially of what they can help others learn – might be more successful in their own careers.

Khayala Eylazova: "Networking and relationships have played a really important role for me, but how you go about building relationships and the right connections can be challenging. One thing that's been key for me is giving back to the community and to my network. Successful networking and relationship building requires you to invest and give back."

Maxine Nwaneri's tips on cultivating networks, seeking sponsors and defining success

- **Seek out sponsors:** I regularly advise women to find sponsors, and to put yourself forward for opportunities. But you need to earn the right to sponsorship by seeking out high-impact, high-visibility initiatives where possible. I got one of my most influential sponsors by reaching out for a 15-minute executive information interview to find out more about them. During the conversation, I found out about an ambitious project they were working on; I offered to help, and they agreed. When an opportunity later came up to lead a similar project, my name was mentioned and they advocated for me – it went on to be a great opportunity.
- **Cultivate the right networks:** Cultivating relationships wasn't something I was good at growing up. When I moved to the UK from Nigeria as a child, I learnt the hard way that if you aren't intentionally cultivating your network, it might not be a positive influence. The road to building my life back up was heavily influenced by building much better relationships. Now I develop a vision of where I want

to go, then seek out colleagues, read books, attend conferences and use online networks like LinkedIn and other online communities that align with that vision.

- **Don't be scared to self-promote:** Sadly your hard work might not necessarily speak for itself, so make yourself visible. A lot of women I advise cringe at the thought of self-promotion, but with the right motives, self-promotion is actually an act of service. Decision-makers are often in need of help and pressed for time; one of the greatest acts of service you can do is to make your brilliance quick and easy to find.
- **Invite other women into rooms they might not know exist:** A powerful way women can stand by one other is to give other women opportunities they might not know about. There was a time some years back that I'd never even been to a conference, and didn't know this world existed. My mentor nominated me to go to an international conference, and it was transformational; I'm now comfortable speaking at conferences in the UK and internationally. These opportunities can be a great way for us to learn and stretch ourselves.
- **Embrace your own version of success:** It can be so easy to compare our lives to others – but even if we managed to do everything we see others doing, it might not feel fulfilling to us, because we're all different. I believe it's really important to know what "having it all" looks like to you personally right now, and knowing it's ok for that to change over time – and for it to look completely different to other people's versions of success. Once I have my vision, I live by what I call a success schedule; I fill my calendar with activities that lead me towards it, with holistic self-care activities going in first as a top priority.



SECTION 5: YET ... STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO

Tracey Horn

Director of Corporate Communications and Marketing, Cambridge Judge Business School; Executive Director, Wo+Men's Leadership Centre, Cambridge Judge Business School

Role of business schools in closing the gender gap

Gender equality is the unfinished business of the 21st century.

Elizabeth Broderick

We now understand better that a gap between genders in the workplace still exists in the 21st century because of a gender hierarchy built over centuries. Bias, while often unconscious, remains. This report helps to make the unconscious conscious and recommends steps to remedy the gender gap at both an individual and an organisational level, by taking a systems approach.

Business schools have a crucial role to play to erase the gender gap. By integrating theory and practice, they can raise awareness of this pervasive issue. At Cambridge Judge, we leverage academic research and practical experience from faculty, industry leaders, and experts. This practice-based research approach equips:

- individuals to become more effective and inclusive leaders, to explore the benefits of female leadership and develop a proactive, strengths-based approach to their careers, and
- organisations to develop pro-social solutions that promote gender equality within their structures with advanced techniques and to create lasting, strategic change for gender parity.

As a part of Cambridge Judge's pledge to closing the gender gap, the WLC is committed to developing innovative programmes and workshops designed for both degree and executive education, with the goal of preparing women to excel in senior leadership positions and helping organisations effectively manage gender diversity. For example, we offer Executive Education courses like Cambridge Rising Women Leaders Programme and Leading Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Research is a core area of focus and the WLC is quickly becoming a world-class research group within the University of Cambridge through impactful reports and thought leadership white papers.

We believe that with collective consideration and action, steps already taken will turn into great strides, so we may create a new story, together, to close the gap once and for all. Let's break this bias and make the workplace more inclusive and successful for all.

Anne Robinson's tips on shaping success



- **If you're recruiting, target diverse communities:** Target diverse communities with job opportunities, and take a risk on someone who might not necessarily fit the profile perfectly. Elevate different groups in the workplace, and ensure everyone's voice is heard. Look at your personal LinkedIn network – do you see any gaps when it comes to diversity? Check yourself, and inspire others to do the same.
- **Be open to new experiences:** One of my biggest pieces of advice is to not shy away from new challenges – it might be a little different from the career path you think you want to have, but if you take little side journeys along the way and try something a little different, it will only give you a richer background.
- **It's ok to say no:** I think people often don't realise you're allowed to say no – but it's so important to be able to do so. There are two primary drivers for saying no – time and appropriateness. You only have a certain number of hours in the day. Setting boundaries on your time allows you the opportunity to effectively balance your life in the dimensions that are important. Sometimes you might be asked to do things less appropriate for your role. For example, there's a really bad habit of asking the youngest female in the room to take notes in a meeting. Unless there's a compelling reason to do so, you have a right to say no. People will often respect you more for recognising if something is beyond your capacity or time.
- **Apply for jobs even if you feel under-qualified:** Raise your hand for the job you want to have, even if you don't think you have the full skill set. When I ran big analytics teams and we used to put out job descriptions, it was like we were looking for the perfect 'unicorn' employee – when really we just hoped we'd get some subset of those skills. It's unlikely there's anybody out there that will match all of those exact qualifications, so throw your hat into the ring – you can always learn these skills.
- **Find good mentors:** I believe strongly in the power of mentorship, and not necessarily just having one mentor. Throughout my career, different people (both men and women) have helped me to develop different leadership factors. Think about the dimensions that are important to your career path, and approach people in your network who have those particular characteristics, then nurture those relationships over time.
- **Challenge imposter syndrome:** It's amazing to me how many people think, 'everybody else here knows more than me', when everybody else there is probably feeling the exact same way. Remember that you deserve your seat at the table – you were invited in, so believe in yourself and take advantage of your position. It's the collective pieces that everybody brings to the table that advances our disciplines forward. We should cherish those diverse voices, because they're fundamental to success.



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR SPEAKERS

Read up on business and leadership with our speakers' top picks



Switch, Chip and Dan Heath: "This is about change management, and it's a great read for anyone interesting in pivoting or learning about how the heart and head react during times of change," says Anne.



The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey: "This is the book that has influenced me most in my career; its messages are about empowerment and confidence, and working with others to bring the best out of them and yourself," says Dorothy.



Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action, Simon Sinek: "I think this is a powerful book to help leaders understand how being clear on one's purpose can be the biggest key to success," says Maxine. She also recommends *Atomic Habits* by James Clear, which "helps us to see how we can make big changes around equality and other areas with small, manageable steps," and *Believe It* by Jamie Kern Lima. "This is about how resilience and self-belief in the face of adversity can help us succeed as women and leaders in business," she says.



The Future is Greater: A Working Mother's Guide to Finding Balance, Maxine Nwaneri: "This relates to working mothers and the motherhood penalty, where women's contribution and compensation tend to suffer significantly when they have children," says Maxine. "In it, I explore and provide strategies to tackle what I have found to be the eight main barriers to mothers continuing on their leadership trajectory."



That's What She Said: What Men Need to Know, Joanne Lipman: "I recently read this and it was fascinating," says Rina. "It's a really good read for anyone interested in understanding and addressing gender inequality in the workplace. Joanne Lipman navigates the complexities of gender dynamics, offering practical solutions for both men and women to bridge the divide. It's a great book to give male colleagues!"

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Dame Sandra Dawson: “Transformation needs sustained change in Thought, Word and Deed. This report deals with just that: changing how we think, what we say and above all what we do, with courage and conviction on a foundation of listening and learning.”

Dame Sandra Dawson, is a KPMG Professor Emerita and an Advisory Board Member at Cambridge Judge Business School. Dame Sandra was the first female Director of Cambridge Judge Business School from 1995 to 2006, Master of Sidney Sussex College from 1999 to 2009 and one of the Deputy Vice Chancellors of the University from 2008 to 2012.

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Wo+Men's Leadership Centre
Cambridge Judge Business School
University of Cambridge
Trumpington Street
Cambridge CB2 1AG
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)1223 339700
www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/women