

PARTICIPATE **MEN HAVE** **ELIMINATING**
A CRITICAL **GENDER BIAS**
ROLE TO PLAY **PERSUASIVE** **DESIRE**
COMMUNITIES **CHANGE**
ESSENTIAL AMBASSADORS
FOR CHANGE IDEALS **INFLUENTIAL** **ATTITUDES**
EXPECTATIONS **TOWARD**
EQUALITY **TRAINING**
INCREASED **EFFECTIVE**
COMMITMENT **CHAMPION**

ENGAGING MEN IN GENDER INITIATIVES: Stacking the Deck for Success



About Catalyst

Founded in 1962, Catalyst is the leading nonprofit membership organization working globally with businesses and the professions to build inclusive workplaces and expand opportunities for women and business. With offices in the United States, Canada, and Europe, and more than 400 preeminent corporations as members, Catalyst is the trusted resource for research, information, and advice about women at work. Catalyst annually honors exemplary organizational initiatives that promote women's advancement with the Catalyst Award.

ENGAGING MEN IN GENDER INITIATIVES: Stacking the Deck for Success

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MEN HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives is a series about men. When it comes to diversity and inclusion efforts—especially initiatives to eliminate gender bias—men have a critical role to play, yet they too often remain an untapped resource. To address this gap, this series offers advice to change agents on effective ways to partner with men in ending gender inequalities in the workplace.

Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: Stacking the Deck for Success is the second report in the series and provides readers with:

- Information about factors such as critical pre-training attitudes that can heighten or dampen men's interest in acquiring skills to become effective change agents for gender equality at work.
- Recommendations backed by Catalyst research on how to communicate more persuasively with men about gender-related learning opportunities.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS REPORT

- **Diversity and inclusion (D&I) professionals:** This report aims to help D&I practitioners become more effective at engaging men in training opportunities that will, in turn, support those men in becoming more effective change agents for gender equality. Research has shown that employees' pre-training attitudes determine, in large part, what employees get out of training.¹ This report provides explicit guidelines for creating positive pre-training conditions that can pique men's interest in D&I training courses.
- **Individuals—especially men—who want to champion change:** Catalyst knows that many individuals, aside from those in formal D&I roles, are nevertheless active and serve as essential ambassadors for change. For these individuals, especially men, who potentially have considerable influence over their male peers, this report offers practical suggestions for getting male colleagues involved in and committed to D&I training.

MANAGING PRE-TRAINING ATTITUDES

CREATING AN OPENNESS TO TRAINING

The business case for gender equality is a clear one: by eliminating gender bias, companies can reap significant benefits, including improved access to and retention of top talent and higher employee commitment.² But achieving a gender-inclusive, bias-free workplace is not easy. To be successful, organizations need the full engagement and commitment of their entire workforce—both women and men.

Why do many dominant-group men have negative attitudes toward training? The short answer is that those with power often expect that they have little to nothing to gain from D&I training.¹⁰ Moreover, one could expect that those men who identify with or respond to dominant-group men would react in similar ways.

However, prior research suggests that men may not be as receptive as women to organizational efforts to eliminate gender bias.³ In the first report of this series, *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know*, Catalyst showed that increasing men's awareness of gender bias is an important first step in enlisting their support for organizational initiatives to correct gender bias.⁴

We also urged practitioners to pursue training as an effective way to boost men's awareness of gender bias and motivate them to become change agents for gender equality at work.⁵

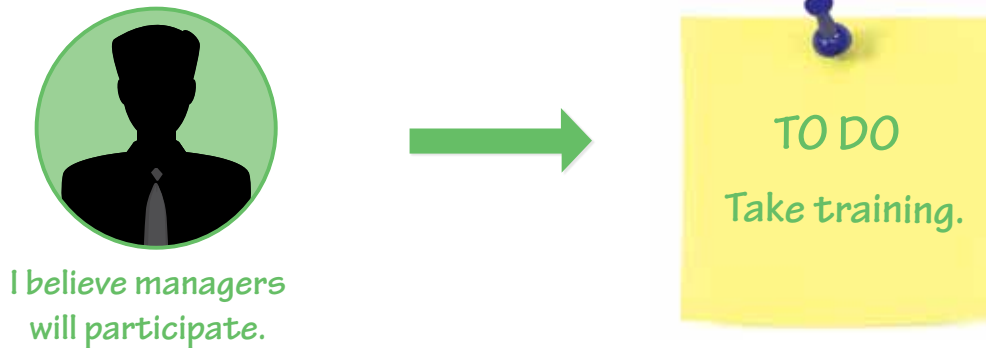
In this report, we offer practical advice for managing a critical success factor for D&I training: employees' pre-training attitudes.⁶ These attitudes—especially employees' prior conceptions or misconceptions about the value of training—are a significant determinant of training effectiveness.⁷ **Specifically, research shows that men, in particular, may be prone to holding negative pre-training attitudes,⁸ which can limit what they learn during D&I training.⁹**

Catalyst believes that the best defense against the negative impact of pessimistic pre-training attitudes is a strong offense. D&I practitioners must be skilled at building a compelling case for D&I training, one that convinces employees—especially men—of the value of training so that they participate willingly and enter into training with positive expectations. But how do practitioners reach men, one of the most powerful stakeholder groups in many organizations and the group least likely to embrace training opportunities?

To find answers, we surveyed 294 men. Invitations were issued to an online panel recruited by Opinion Research Corporation. Participants were screened so that only individuals who 1) identified themselves as men, 2) reported having a position within five reporting levels of their company's chief executive officer (CEO), and 3) worked for companies with 10,000 or more employees could complete the survey. Participants were asked about their willingness to participate in a proposed D&I training course for middle and senior corporate managers and were told that the purpose of the course would be to equip managers with expertise in creating inclusive work environments for both women and men employees. To gain insight into participants' interest (or lack thereof) in the proposed course, we assessed their perceptions about a number of factors, including the reactions of others in their organization to the course, the impact of the course, how relevant the course was to their current job, and whether organizational efforts to increase gender diversity would cause men to lose jobs. Finally, we asked respondents to provide personal demographic information regarding their age, nationality, and current work experiences.

BUILDING A COMPELLING CASE—WHAT MATTERS MOST TO MEN¹¹

The most important and powerful predictor of whether respondents expressed an interest in D&I training was their perception of how interested other managers in their organization would be in taking the training.¹² The more respondents believed that the average manager in their organization would participate in the proposed D&I training, the more they expressed a desire to take the training themselves.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CHANGE AGENTS

Leverage influential managers: Because men's *own* interest in training was so dependent on the level of interest they perceived *other* managers would have, Catalyst recommends leveraging the influence of powerful figures—especially managers—to win wider support and enthusiasm among men throughout the organization for D&I training. We suggest practitioners do the following:

- Have influential managers, especially men, play an integral role in inviting employees to participate in D&I training via a variety of media. This outreach should include not only emails and employee broadcasts, but also in-person meetings where influential male managers can share positive experiences and outcomes related to training.
- Involve influential managers in the delivery of training content where appropriate. Managers who have already participated in the training and have received appropriate coaching can help facilitate directed discussions as part of the training curriculum. Let attendees know that they can expect to interact with respected company managers as part of the training experience. Such strategies can help increase men's confidence that training is valued and supported by management, helping to improve their attitudes regarding participation.

The second-most powerful predictor of men’s interest in D&I training was the impact they perceived the training could have on making improvements outside the business—that is, on improving the external communities in which their businesses operated.¹³ The more respondents believed the proposed D&I training could help managers build skills that would allow them to better serve the communities in which their businesses operated, the more they expressed a willingness to sign up for the training.



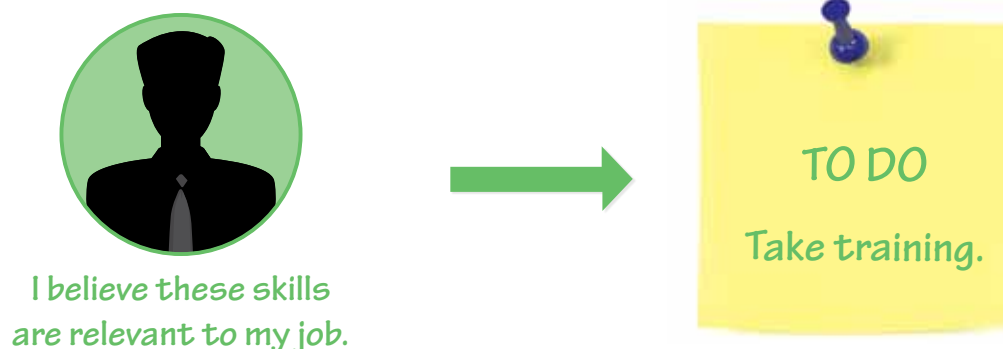
WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CHANGE AGENTS

Do appeal to men’s “higher” ideals: It is often assumed that social responsibility and/or value-based arguments for D&I are less compelling to men than profit-oriented arguments. Our findings suggest it is wise for practitioners to rethink this assumption. Men’s interest in D&I training was linked to beliefs that the training would enable managers to develop skills that would improve the external communities in which their businesses operated. And while we recognize that community interests and business interests are linked, such that stronger communities can mean more profits for the businesses that service them, we found no evidence that the promise of financial profit was a significant motivation behind men’s interest in D&I training. Rather, Catalyst research suggests that pro-social concerns about the “greater good” can play a role in men’s desire to help create more inclusive workplaces. In addition to the research presented here, *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know* demonstrates that men who displayed a stronger sense of fair play—that is, those who expressed broad concern about issues of fairness and the distribution of resources in society—were significantly more likely than others to be identified as champions of gender equality in their companies.

Given these findings, it is clear that when making the case for D&I training, practitioners should not be shy in appealing to men’s “higher” ideals of making the world a better place for communities as well as business. Practitioners should:

- Include opportunities for community outreach as part of the D&I training curriculum and explicitly advertise such opportunities for making a community impact as a benefit of participating in training.
- Frame D&I as both a business and social issue and articulate the explicit benefits that the company and the community it serves can derive from an increased commitment to building an inclusive workplace.

The third-most powerful predictor of interest in D&I training was men's perceptions of how relevant the training was to their current job.¹⁴ Respondents who perceived that the proposed D&I training was highly relevant to their current job expressed greater interest in participating.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CHANGE AGENTS

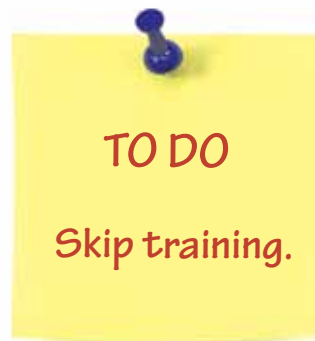
Do align training content and goals with participants' job responsibilities: The finding that men were more inclined to participate in D&I training if they believed the training was relevant to their work makes a clear case for ensuring that D&I training content aligns closely and explicitly with participants' day-to-day responsibilities and tasks. Furthermore, the notion that D&I training can help improve job performance is one that practitioners should communicate to would-be participants. Practitioners should:

- Collect and share credible and honest testimonials from previous training participants about how they applied the skills they learned during training to their jobs.
- Reinforce the job relevance of training by including specific D&I skills and competencies—those taught as part of the D&I training curriculum—in your organization's formal performance evaluation criteria.
- Be sure that the training curriculum includes ample opportunities for participants to discuss and reflect on true-to-life job situations where the skills they are being taught can be applied. Include on-the-job assignments as "homework" where participants can practice these skills.

The fourth most powerful predictor of men's interest in D&I training was zero-sum thinking.¹⁵ The zero-sum belief that advances in gender diversity ultimately mean losses for men was a key factor in men's interest (or lack thereof) in the proposed D&I training. Specifically, the *more* respondents believed that men suffer job losses on account of efforts to increase gender diversity, the *less* likely they were to express an interest in participating in D&I training. Conversely, the more respondents *disagreed* with the notion that gender diversity efforts disadvantage men, the *more* inclined they were to participate in D&I training.



I believe men
will lose out.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CHANGE AGENTS

Don't portray D&I as a zero-sum game: We found that men's interest in D&I training was linked to whether or not they believed that men often lose jobs as a result of company efforts to advance women. This finding suggests that it is important for practitioners to help dispel the belief that gender D&I is a zero-sum game where women's gains always mean losses for men. Toward this end, practitioners should be sure to:

- Communicate the personal benefits men can gain from a more gender diverse and inclusive workplace and the costs men experience as a result of gender bias. (For a list of benefits of gender equality and costs associated with gender bias, reference *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know*).
- Articulate that gender D&I efforts are about making the workplace better for both women and men. Care should be taken to include men in communications about gender initiatives, including training, rather than conveying an exclusive focus on addressing women's issues in the workplace.

THE BIG PICTURE: BUILD A MULTIFACETED CASE, AND SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

In any business enterprise, it is important that there be a compelling business rationale for D&I initiatives. However, while the business case offers a critical rationale for organizational change, practitioners should not overestimate how powerful this sort of rationale is for motivating *individual-level* change. More than having an impact on company profitability, our findings reveal that a host of other factors predicted individual men's interest in D&I training, from the attitudes of other managers in

their companies to zero-sum thinking. Practitioners should build a multidimensional case for why employees should participate in D&I training and become more engaged in organizational efforts to increase gender D&I. This case should include a business rationale, but also should spell out how engagement will improve communities and the professional and personal lives of individual employees.

SETTING REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

MAKING TRAINING WORK: OTHER ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to building a multidimensional case for D&I training, there are several other essential steps practitioners should take to ensure a return on their training investments. These include:

Setting realistic expectations: More than simply being compelling, communications about D&I training should be credible and realistic.¹⁶ Practitioners should be careful not to inadvertently engage in false advertising about what the training experience will be like and what participants can expect to gain from it. At its best, D&I training can be a challenging experience for some men, and their expectations should be set accordingly.

If practitioners set unrealistic or overly positive expectations of the training experience, they risk engendering more negative attitudes towards training if these expectations are not met.

Avoiding common pitfalls in content, design, and delivery: Of course, the impact of any training depends in large part on its design and content. As noted earlier, when poorly conceived or executed, D&I training can have undesirable results, increasing resistance and backlash towards organizational change efforts.¹⁷ The table below identifies some common pitfalls associated with D&I training initiatives.

COMMON PITFALLS ASSOCIATED WITH D&I TRAINING¹⁸

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training content reinforces group stereotypes.• Training is too brief, only allowing for superficial treatment of issues.• Only members of dominant groups (e.g., men and/or whites) are expected to change.• Trainees are treated or viewed by trainers as “the problem.”• Trainers are only advocates for specific minority or under-represented groups or are perceived as such.• Trainers are not responsive to the individual learning styles or views of trainees.• Trainers fail to acknowledge and address trainee resistance.• Trainers fail to conduct needs assessments as a means of tailoring the training to organizational gaps or circumstances. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of coercion or shaming techniques.• An “us vs. them” atmosphere is created between employee groups.• Trainers use a didactic style that is unsuitable for adult learners and do not allow trainees adequate opportunities to examine and reflect on their own beliefs.• Inadequate post-training support in which organizational policies and practices do not support trainees in applying knowledge and skills acquired from training.• Trainees from under-represented or minority groups are burdened with having to teach trainees from dominant groups.• Inadequate attention paid to identifying optimal diversity compositions (homogenous vs. heterogeneous) among trainee groups. |
|---|--|

Practitioners should:

- Audit current training programs to ensure that these problems are not undermining program effectiveness.
- Consider these pitfalls when screening or selecting trainers to design and deliver training programs.
- Determine whether, based on interviews with trainer references *and* previous trainees, prospective trainers have been successful in avoiding these common training mistakes.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT PROFILES

METHODOLOGY

Survey procedure: Respondents received a survey invitation via email, and those who opted to participate were asked the three screening questions referenced in the “Creating an Openness to Training” section. Those who met the screening criteria were given the following instructions: *“Employees consider a number of factors when making decisions about which professional development opportunities they want to take advantage of. Companies need to understand employee interests and priorities so that they can develop training courses that are both appealing to their employees and relevant to the work they perform. We would like your opinion about the following training course. Please read the description on the following page and review the accompanying chart.”* Participants were then randomly assigned to read one of four different rationales for participating in a proposed D&I training course that had a specific focus on gender (see Table 2). All participants received *identical* descriptions of the proposed course content, format, and learning objectives (see Table 3). After participants were given a chance to read the information about the course, they were asked to respond to a number of questions.

Survey items: Participants were asked to complete eight survey items assessing their reactions to the proposed training. Using a seven-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements pertaining to their own interest and others’ interest in taking the course, the perceived impact of the course, the relevance of the course to their current jobs, and their beliefs about whether men lose jobs due to organizational efforts to increase gender diversity. Finally, respondents were asked to indicate their age, nationality, functional background (line, staff, or both), and employer industry (see Table 1).

Survey analyses: A linear regression was conducted with respondent interest in the course as the dependent variable and the following as predictor variables:

- Respondent age group.
- Number of reporting levels from the CEO.
- Type of course rationale participants were given.¹⁹
- Respondent perceptions about:
 - The level of interest the average manager in their company would have in the course.
 - The impact the course could have on the external community or company profitability.
 - The relevance of the course to their current jobs.
 - Whether efforts to increase gender diversity result in job losses for men.²⁰

RESPONDENT PROFILES

Work-related demographics: Most respondents held positions within two (26 percent) or three (30 percent) reporting levels of their companies' CEO. Almost 20 percent of respondents said their positions were within four reporting levels of their CEO, while 13 percent were within one and five reporting levels of their company CEO.

More than half of respondents (55 percent) classified their jobs as having both line *and* staff responsibilities. Among those who characterized their responsibilities as predominantly staff or line, 27 percent said they had staff roles, and 18 percent said they had line roles.

Most (56 percent) respondents worked for small to mid-sized companies with 10,000 to 50,000 employees. Thirty-one percent worked for companies with workforces of 50,001 to 100,000, and 13 percent of respondents worked for companies with workforces of 100,000 or more employees.

Finally, the industries with the highest representation among respondents were manufacturing (12 percent), high technology/computers/software (9 percent), retail (9 percent), and healthcare (7 percent).

Personal demographics: Nearly 43 percent of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 44 years old. The age group with the second highest representation was the under-35 category, accounting for slightly more than 30 percent of respondents. The remaining age groups, the 45-to-55 and over 55 categories, accounted for 16 percent and 9 percent of respondents, respectively.

All respondents included in the analyses were United States citizens.

TABLE 1

Respondent Profiles

WORK-RELATED DEMOGRAPHICS	
Number of reporting levels from the CEO	Percentage (Number) of Survey Respondents
1	13.3 (39)
2	25.9 (76)
3	29.6 (87)
4	18.4 (54)
5	12.9 (38)
Current Job Function	Percentage (Number) of Survey Respondents
Line	18.0 (53)
Staff	27.2 (80)
Line and staff	54.8 (161)
Employer Size (based on number of employees)	Percentage (Number) of Survey Respondents
10,000-50,000	55.8 (164)
50,001-100,000	31.3 (92)
More than 100,000	12.9 (38)
Top Four Employer Industries	Percentage (Number) of Survey Respondents
Industrial Manufacturing	12.2 (36)
Retail	8.8 (26)
High tech/computers/software	8.8 (26)
Healthcare	7.1 (21)
PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS	
Age	Percentage (Number) of Survey Respondents
Under 35	31.6 (93)
35-44	42.9 (126)
45-54	16.3 (48)
55 or over	9.2 (27)

TABLE 2
Course Rationales

RATIONALE A

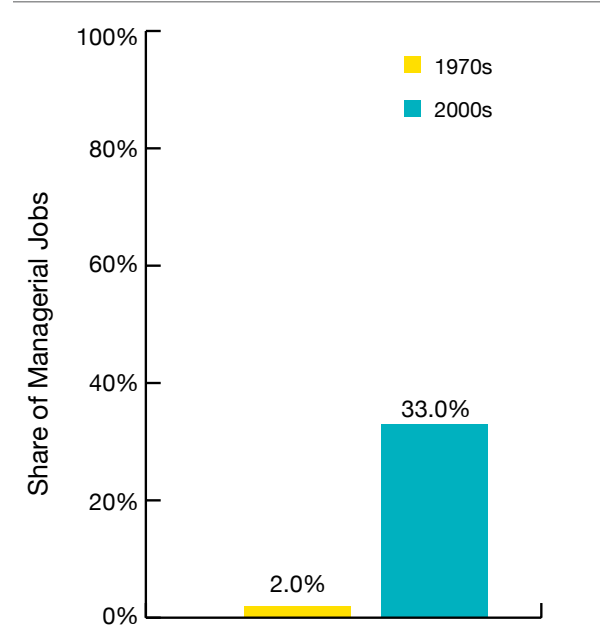
“Full utilization of the total available workforce—both men and women—is critical to profitability. In order to serve shareholders better, more and more businesses are considering it vital to cultivate leaders who are competent at attracting and retaining both men and women employees.”

-Male, senior manager, age 43

Why you should consider this proposed course:

Hiring qualified women is vital to profitability. In the face of talent shortages and rapid globalization, full utilization of available talent—from the pool of both men *and* women—is a critical source of competitive advantage for corporations. Companies that become just as successful at attracting and developing women as they are men will ultimately outperform those companies that rely primarily on male talent pools. The graph illustrates that opportunities for hiring female talent are increasing.

Women's Share of Managerial Jobs



RATIONALE B

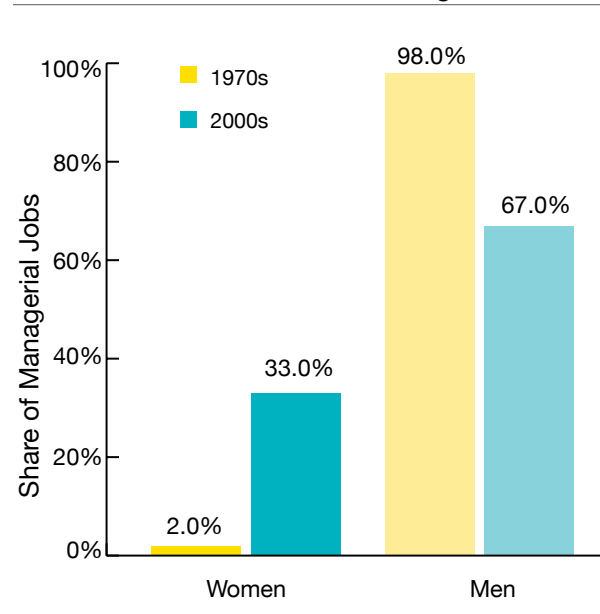
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Women's and Men's Share of Managerial Jobs



RATIONALE C

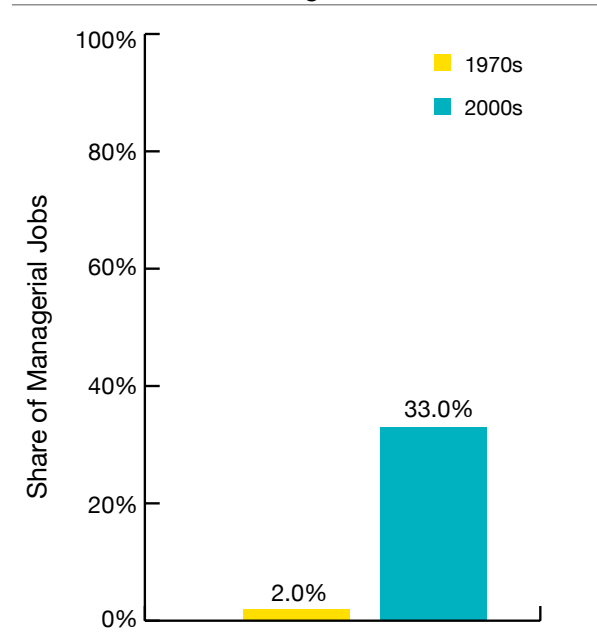
“Full utilization of the total available workforce—both men and women—is critical to community development. In order to better serve the communities in which they operate, more and more businesses are considering it vital to cultivate leaders who are competent at attracting and retaining both men and women employees.”

-Male, senior manager, age 43

Why you should consider this proposed course:

Hiring qualified women is vital to community development. Communities thrive when the talents of women and men are equally tapped. Full utilization of available talent—from the pool of both women *and* men—is a key way that businesses can help reduce gender inequity and build stronger communities. Companies that become just as successful at attracting and developing women as they are men will ultimately serve their communities better than those companies which rely primarily on male talent pools. The graph illustrates that opportunities for hiring female talent are increasing.

Women's Share of Managerial Jobs



RATIONALE D

“Full utilization of the total available workforce—both men and women—is critical to community development. In order to better serve the communities in which they operate, more and more businesses are considering it vital to cultivate leaders who are competent at attracting and retaining both men and women employees.”

-Male, senior manager, age 43

Why you should consider this proposed course:

Hiring qualified women is vital to community development. Communities thrive when the talents of women and men are equally tapped. Full utilization of available talent—from the pool of both women *and* men—is a key way that businesses can help reduce gender inequity and build stronger communities. Companies that become just as successful at attracting and developing women as they are men will ultimately serve their communities better than those companies which rely primarily on male talent pools. The graph illustrates that opportunities for hiring female talent are increasing.

Women's and Men's Share of Managerial Jobs

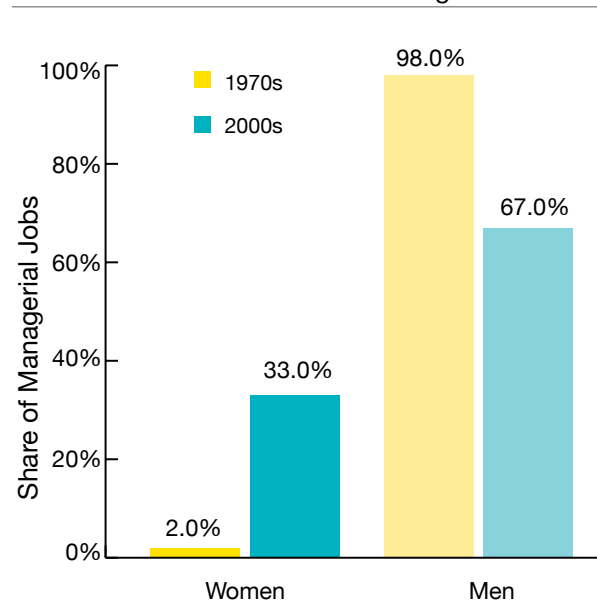


TABLE 3
Course Description

What the course will cover:

This course is being developed for middle- and senior-level corporate managers. Emphasis will be placed on developing expertise in creating an inclusive environment for both men and women employees. Enrollees will:

- Participate in guided discussions with renowned experts and scholars, exploring the impact of gender on men’s and women’s lives.
- Learn best practices for mentoring and managing a gender-diverse team.
- Participate in same-sex learning circles led by senior corporate managers who have been successful at leading gender-diverse teams.
- Develop male-female mentoring relationships to gain and share insights into the experiences of each gender group in the workplace.

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8. Holladay et al.
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11. The findings discussed in this section include results of a linear regression with men’s expressed interest in taking a D&I course as the dependent variable, model adjusted R2 = .70 (see the appendix for analytical and sample details). Only the statistically significant predictors are discussed here.
 12. $\beta = .39, p < .05$
 13. $\beta = .31, p < .05$
 14. $\beta = .24, p < .05$
 15. $\beta = -.13, p < .05$
 16. Hicks and Klimoski; Tannenbaum et al.
 17. Flynn; Kulik et al.; H.B. Karp and Hael Y. Sammour, “Workforce Diversity: Choices in Diversity Training Programs and Dealing with Resistance to Diversity,” *College Student Journal*, vol. 34, no. 3 (September 2000): p. 451-458.
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 19. The effect of the course rationale was tested with three variables. One variable corresponded to whether participants were given an argument based on business profitability (see rationales A and B in Table 2) or community development (see rationales C and D). Another variable captured whether participants were given a graphical display that showed only an increase in women’s share of managerial jobs (see rationales A and C) or a graphical display that showed both an increase in women’s share of managerial jobs and a decrease in men’s share of managerial jobs (see rationales B and D). Finally, a third variable was included as an interaction term to assess whether the effect of the other two variables were interdependent.
 20. Each of these variables was measured by a single survey item.

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