



WHAT WILL IT TAKE: EQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP BY 2030

Media & Communications Action Plan

The Transforming Women's Leadership Pathways event and the development of Plans took place online, and on Gadigal and Bidjigal land (Australia). We recognise the peoples of the Eora nation as the traditional custodians of the land (Australia). We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge that this land has long been a place of teaching, learning, and creating. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

Arizona State University's four campuses are located in the Salt River Valley on ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples, including the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) Indian Communities, whose care and keeping of these lands allows us to be here today. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN

Aspiration 2030

That the range of broadcast, print and online platforms reflect the diversity and range of opinions of their audiences, with women represented in 50% of executive leadership positions by 2030.

Women are a key consumer component in media and communications, so it is simply good business to aim for equal representation of women in executive leadership by 2030.

There is also an obligation for an industry whose task is to inform the public to employ best practice on equal pay and job parity in its own workplaces. Progress on both fronts could spur action elsewhere because of the enormous influence of the media, communications, and entertainment industries in society.

The current state of of the media and communications professions - key findings and power statistics

Media and communications encompass news, information, public relations and entertainment companies. As major consumers of these products, women are a vital customer base. However, even with the corporate world's increased focus on ensuring gender parity, women in this industry experience a more hostile workplace than men and face a glass ceiling that prevents them from reaching top leadership roles.

Women move up the ladder more quickly than men, but progress slows the closer to senior levels a woman gets and hiring at senior levels is skewed towards men. This has dual consequences because the industry plays a critical role in how women are perceived globally, and gender imbalance is evident in how women are portrayed in entertainment. Top management determines the stories that are covered, how they are covered and the language that is used, so it is essential that gender balance is achieved in C-suite roles (executive-level roles such as CEO).

Barriers and opportunities



BARRIERS



Despite the opportunities opening up as a by-product of the #metoo movement and resultant disruption in the industry, this also creates hazards for women because they are taking charge in a distressed environment.



OPPORTUNITIES



The #metoo movement has highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment in this sector, and the damage it has caused. Complaint and whistle-blowing policies allow employees to come forward. Disruption in the media business has inadvertently created a fast track for women to achieve leadership positions as male managers take buyout packages.



Governments and industry are implementing quotas and standards which will see improvements in inclusion. For example, California in the US requires public companies with their executive base in the state to have at least one woman on their boards, with an increase in numbers for companies by 2021.



The explosion of on-demand streaming has created opportunities for women in scriptwriting, development and directing. Companies such as Netflix and HBO invest heavily and have successfully expanded their audience and generated new subscriber growth. Increasingly, diverse women are successfully leading or establishing large media companies: Sheryl Sandberg of Facebook, Susan Wojcicki of YouTube, Anna Wintour of Vogue, Oprah Winfrey, Arianna Huffington, Alex Mahon of Channel 4, Carolyn McCall of ITV, Cecile Frot-Coutaz of Fremantle, and Eva Chen of TrendMicro are just some examples.

Recommendations

PUBLIC AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUITY

Government

- Enforce and monitor laws and regulations promoting gender equality.

Industry

- Commit to publishing a public declaration of actions that will be taken to improve gender equality for the benefit of those inside and outside the sector.

- Establish gender-equality action plans in departments or government-funded organisations with involvement in the sector.

- Promote and facilitate partnerships and collaborations between government, industry and academia aimed at overcoming barriers to women reaching their full leadership potential.

- Establish a transparent communication system (blog/website/newsletter) that publishes responses to ideas so that all employees at all levels know their perspectives matter at work.

TRACKING AND PUBLISHING DATA/SETTING SPECIFIC GOALS

Industry

- Lead the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the sector via a Gender Responsibility Index that reports on the gender-equality performance of media, communications and entertainment organisations. Co-designed with government and industry support, this should be measured against national and international benchmarks that include gender ratios in senior leadership roles and board positions.

Government

- Commit to publishing data on gender, pay and promotions.

- Publish data on salaries, promotions, hiring patterns (and even assignments that employees are given, complaints, firing processes - HR data)

TRAINING AND MENTORING

Industry

- With female mentors few and far between, companies should commit to a mentoring program, beginning with onboarding, by establishing formal programs for women in leadership positions to recruit and mentor prospective female leaders.

- C-Suite Training: Mandate contractual obligations that include training for C-suite and board seats for women who are on track & express interest in promotion to the C-suite and board seats.

Universities

- Provide education and networking opportunities such as courses, mentorships and clubs that prepare women for success in business management and entrepreneurship while they are in school. These can be funded internally as well as with non-profit and/or government support.

Government, Industry and Universities

- Train people to be effective at running meetings, being 'meeting monitors' and mentors in a way to ensure that everyone is heard and people, particularly women, are not cut off.

PUBLIC AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUITY

Industry and Universities

Campus Recruitment: recruiters must be required to stipulate that they are looking for women not only for entry level jobs but also to support these recruits for leadership positions e.g. fast-track programs.

Government, Industry and Universities

Establish clear recruitment policies meant to attract female leaders, particularly women of colour, who represent their communities and people where they work.

Provide a package of readily available support, such as paid parental or family leave.

Create deliberate retention and succession planning programs.

Promote and support employees with a package of services (or with funds to pay for such services) that meet their needs, such as balancing their work while caring for their families.

Speak to new employees about their needs as part of their induction and personnel reviews. This is particularly acute in a 24/7 business such as media.

INCREASING VISIBILITY OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Industry

Use the Gender Responsibility Index created by academia to publicly highlight companies that are leaders in diversity and inclusion, as well as leaders in funding companies started by women.

Working Group Leads



Susan Lisovicz
ASU



Jacquee Petchel
ASU

Working Group Participants

Mi-Ai Parrish
Julia Wallace
Kathy Bail
Paul Ramadge
Dr Wing-Fai Leung
Dr Stephanie Janes

Arizona State University
Arizona State University
UNSW Press
PLuS Alliance
King's College London
King's College London

Critical Friend

Professor Kristin Gilger
Interim Dean, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University

Student Ambassador

Nelson Better (ASU) & Eunmin Na (KCL)