



Korn Ferry Executive Survey: Continued Bias No. 1 Reason Women Don't Make It To The Top

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-- Majority Say Greater Gender Diversity Makes Their Company Perform Better –
but
-- Less than One-Third Say Women Are Well Represented in their Company's Leadership --

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 8, 2017-- A just-released survey by [Korn Ferry](#) (NYSE:KFY) reveals that executives express broad appreciation for the value women leaders contribute generally, while assessing their own company's ability to develop women leaders as weak. Continued cultural bias was cited as the top reason for the dearth of women CEOs.

Editor's Note: Survey Responses at End of News Release

Fifty-one percent of executive respondents say developing women leaders is important because "greater gender diversity makes companies perform better," and 47 percent say, "It allows companies to attract the best available talent regardless of gender." There was little support for other reasons, including "With more women leaders, workplace policies are likely to become more employee-friendly" (1 percent) and "Women leaders are important role models for other employees" (1 percent).

The survey was conducted in conjunction with The Rockefeller Foundation as part of its 100x25 campaign, a multi-faceted effort uniting organizations to help achieve the goal of advancing 100 women to the top role at *Fortune* 500 companies by 2025.

"Companies with more diverse leadership that includes women are more successful across several key measures," said Jane Stevenson, Global Leader for CEO Succession and Vice Chairman, Board & CEO Services. "Employees inside organizations understand this intuitively, based on their personal experience, but now research is broadly bearing this out."

When asked to assess the barriers women may confront in becoming CEOs, respondents are more critical of their own companies than of companies generally. They cite reasons including "continued bias against women" (43 percent own company vs. 39 percent generally) and "not sufficient opportunity" (33 percent own company vs. 21 percent generally). Few, however, believed that becoming CEO was "less of a priority for women" (7 percent own company vs. 8 percent generally). Despite the documented value of diverse leadership, nearly a quarter of respondents (24 percent) don't believe their companies make developing women leaders a priority for their organization, while 15 percent say they have heard developing more women leaders is a "general objective."

On balance, respondents indicated a belief that their organizations can do better at developing women leaders. Only 28 percent felt that "women are well represented among top leadership." Forty-seven percent agreed that "there are few women leaders" in their organization," and 26 percent said, "there are hardly any leaders who are women in their organization."

"Organizations that aim to attract and retain the diversity that will make them more competitive should increasingly focus on their leadership development process," said Stevenson. "Today's global marketplace requires a varied mix of skills, experiences, and backgrounds. Ensuring a highly visible process that is viewed as fair and accessible to all top talent is one of the best retention tools, and will build loyalty and sustained productivity."

Survey Results*

1. How would you rate your company's ability to develop leadership?

Way below average	23%
Could stand improvement	25%
Above average	34%
Excellent	18%

2. Can you identify people who are being developed as potential CEOs in your organization?

Don't know	25%
I could guess based on what I see and hear	20%
It's somewhat apparent who is being groomed for leadership	33%
Crystal clear, next-generation leaders are highly visible and given high-profile development opportunities	22%

3. When you think about the highest profile leaders in your organization, how many are women?

Don't know	0%
There are hardly any leaders who are women	26%
There are a few women leaders	47%

Women are well represented among top leadership

28%

4. What is the most important reason for companies to focus on developing women leaders (choose one):

It allows companies to attract the best available talent regardless of gender	47%
With more women leaders, workplace policies are likely to become more employee-friendly	1%
Women leaders are important role models for other employees	1%
Greater gender diversity makes companies perform better	51%

5. As you understand it, is developing more women leaders a priority for your organization?

I don't think so	24%
I've heard that this is a general objective	15%
There are specific initiatives to promote diversity in leadership development, including women	33%
The CEO and other leaders have made it clear that developing women for leadership positions is a priority	28%

6. If you believe it's harder for women, generally, to become CEOs, what would your top reason be?

Not sufficient opportunity	21%
Continued bias against women as CEOs	39%
Personal/family responsibilities interfere with work responsibilities	33%
It's less of a priority for women	8%

7. If you believe it's harder for women in your company to become CEOs, what would your top reason be?

Not sufficient opportunity (33)	33%
Continued bias against women as CEOs (43)	43%
Personal/family responsibilities interfere with work responsibilities (17)	17%
It's less of a priority for women (7)	7%

*Totals for individual questions may exceed 100% due to rounding.

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