
LEAN IN
DISCUSSION
GUIDE

FOR MANAGERS

Current leadership team.

What is the ratio of men to women in your organization? What is the ratio on your leadership team? If the proportion of men in leadership positions is higher than in the organization as a whole, why is that the case?

Future leadership team.

As you think about your future leadership team, how many of the people you identify as future leaders are women? Are you investing in equal numbers of men and women? If the numbers are not equal, is it because there are not enough women in the pipeline? How can your organization start identifying and developing talented women earlier?

Who raises their hands?

When an opportunity opens on your leadership team or in your organization, do internal candidates volunteer for it? Do women raise their hands at the same rate as men? If not, what can you do to encourage them?

Leave before you leave.

As you think about people who are now on your team or have been in the past, can you identify a situation in which someone has “leaned back” before getting married or starting a family? Have you encouraged someone to stay in the workforce when he or she was thinking about leaving? Have you encouraged someone to keep taking on new challenges and responsibilities? What can you do to encourage someone to lean in instead of leaning back?

Sit at the table.

In meetings, do women sit at the table as frequently as men? Do they share their perspectives and opinions as often and as forcefully as men? How do others react to them when they speak up? Are their views given equal weight?

Attributing success.

Do all team members get appropriate credit for the work and results they deliver? Do all team members take appropriate credit for the work and results? Do all team members share praise and recognition as often as they should? When something goes wrong, are men more or less likely to take responsibility than women?

The dream and the eighteen-month plan.

To what extent do the people on your team discuss their career plans and aspirations with you? To what extent do you discuss their career plans and aspirations with them? When you think about your team, do you know what each person aspires to? If not, why is that?

Whom we mentor.

Have you ever mentored or sponsored a man? Have you ever mentored or sponsored a woman? How did these relationships come about? Have you ever worried about how

it looks when you spend time alone with a colleague of the opposite sex? How have you handled this? How can we encourage more men to coach, mentor, and sponsor women?

Speak your truth.

How would you describe your communication style? Do you use the same communication style with both men and women at work?

The myth of doing it all.

What boundaries have you set for yourself so that you can have a happy personal life as well as a happy professional life? Do you talk about those boundaries openly? Have you discussed the boundaries that are important to the women and men on your team?

Face time.

To what extent do you focus on measuring the results of your team versus their face time in the office? What would it take to create a more flexible culture in your organization?

Biases.

Do you think you are biased? (Trick question—everyone is.) What are your biases? What biases have you witnessed in your current organization? Have you ever raised concerns about bias? What was the reaction? How can you have a positive impact in your organization with regard to particular biases?

Create a coalition.

In your experience, have women been supportive of other women? What does it look like when a woman supports another woman? How is it similar to or different from when a man supports another man? What can you do to encourage everyone in your organization to help others?

Let's work together.

What more can you do to support the people on your team or in your workplace? Knowing that women face obstacles that men don't, do you think they could use more support? Are there moments when you realize now that you could have helped more but did not?

A better place.

Studies have shown that organizations with more senior-ranking women have a competitive edge. Do you think it would make a difference at your organization to have more women in the senior ranks? What, if anything, would change?

Looking toward the future.

Is there anything you will do differently going forward as a result of reading Lean In? Anything you will urge others to do differently?