



Advancing Frontline Women

Realizing the Full Potential of the Retail Workforce

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Our teams work across all sectors by partnering with leading foundations, businesses, nonprofits, and governments in every region of the globe. We seek to reimagine social change by identifying ways to maximize the impact of existing resources, amplifying the work of others to help advance knowledge and practice, and inspiring change agents around the world to achieve greater impact.

As part of our nonprofit mission, FSG also directly supports learning communities, such as the Collective Impact Forum, Shared Value Initiative, and Talent Rewire to provide the tools and relationships that change agents need to be successful.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Companies with greater gender and racial equity, at all levels of an organization, outperform their competition and capture value in multiple ways, including higher profitability, improved team performance and problem-solving, and a greater ability to attract and retain talent.¹ To date, corporations have focused largely on increasing the representation of women in the C-suite and the boardroom. **Much less attention has been given to increasing gender equity at lower levels of management and addressing the leaky pipeline of female leaders.** By not retaining, developing, and promoting more women from frontline positions, companies are experiencing high turnover costs and leaving some of their best talent untapped.

A focus on advancing women from frontline positions is particularly relevant in the retail industry, which is heavily female. Women control nearly 75% of all retail purchasing decisions, and women make up more than half of the retail workforce. Yet, because female frontline workers are promoted at much lower rates than their male counterparts, few retail managers are women. In an increasingly competitive landscape in which retailers are competing to attract and retain talent, there is a strong case for investment in the advancement of women from frontline positions.²

However, frontline women experience a range of barriers that negatively influence their career trajectory, including senior-level managers who lack an understanding of or commitment to gender equity, inequitable HR practices, challenging work schedules, sexual harassment, insufficient professional and social networks, and family and caregiving pressures. Frontline women are not a monolithic group, and some of these barriers have disproportionate impact, particularly on women of color.

Hundreds of companies have made high-profile national and global commitments—like the **CEO Action Pledge, Paradigm for Parity**, and the **UN's HeForShe campaign**—to increase gender and racial equity. But while many companies have committed to support and grow their female talent, they often do not know the best ways to do so. This report provides actionable and evidence-based practices that companies can implement **to move from commitment to action on gender equity.**

Our research, developed in partnership with researchers Frank Dobbin (Harvard University) and Alexandra Kalev (Tel Aviv University), identifies 12 evidence-based practices companies can employ that address the barriers women face in the workplace and that lead to the advancement of frontline female workers. By looking across 50 HR practices put in place by over 11,000 retail stores over the last 30+ years, we found that evidence-based practices on women's advancement fall into three primary areas:

1. **Leadership commitment and accountability** to foster an inclusive culture that enables all women to advance
2. **Company policies and practices** that advance gender equity
3. **Career and development opportunities** that help develop and promote women

While many of these evidence-based practices may seem like standard practice for employers, our research found otherwise. Many retailers employ these practices for employees in their corporate headquarters, but less than 50% of the 79 retailers in the study had implemented **even one** of these practices in stores.

Each of the 12 practices is effective at advancing women, and companies that are most successful at retaining, engaging, and advancing women employ practices that span all three areas. Companies that have been successful at increasing gender equity also articulate specific metrics on gender equity, regularly track employee data by gender and race, and provide training to employees to raise awareness of and reduce gender and racial bias.

FIGURE A

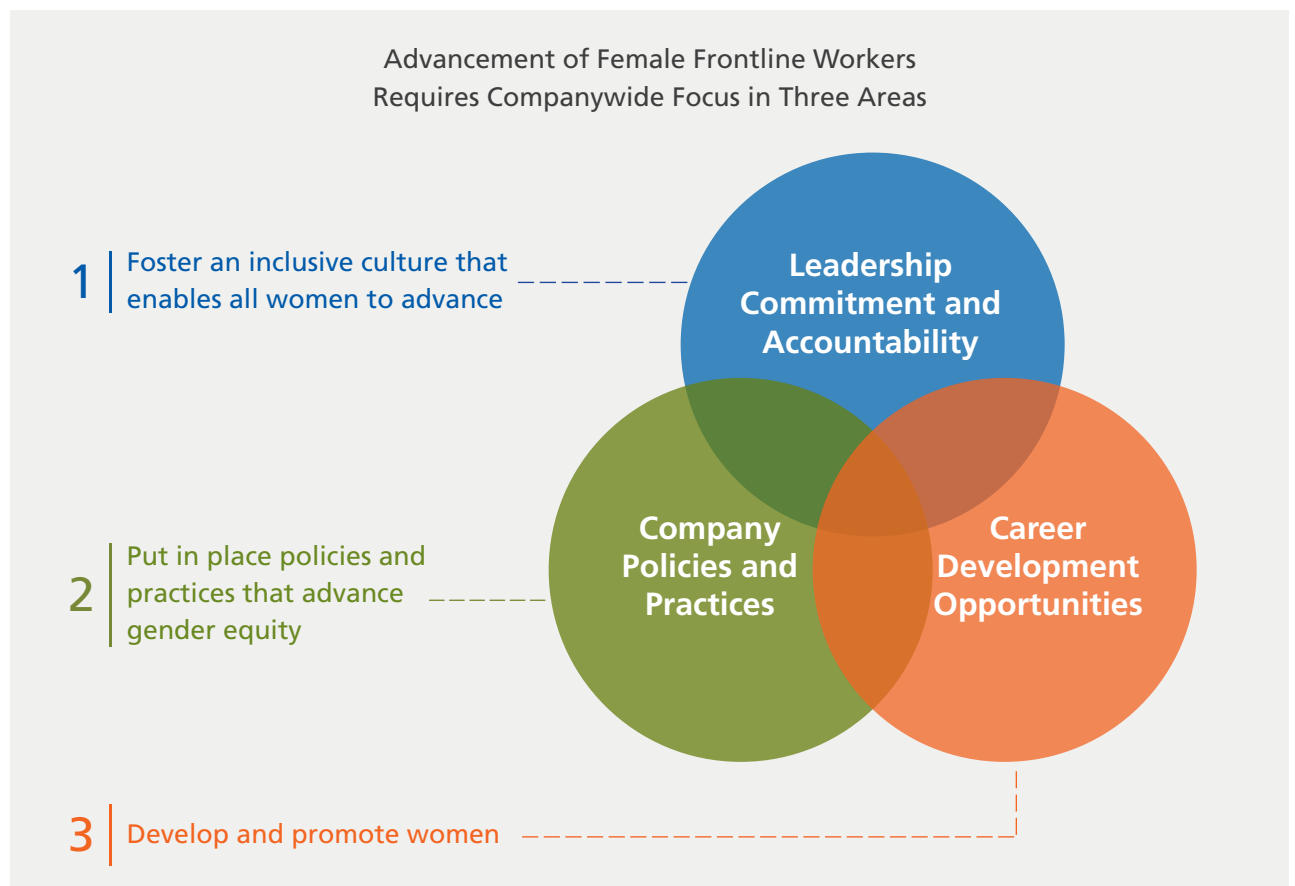


FIGURE B



Our research also shows that execution matters. In fact, we found that some practices intended to advance women can actually hinder advancement for women of color because of how they are implemented. Employers must carefully track the impact of their policies and practices to ensure that implementation supports all women. Successful implementation requires engagement from executive, human resource, and store operations teams. Our analysis revealed key steps that these actors can take:

- **Executives:** Retail executives play a critical role in creating a culture of supportive accountability in which their organizations can progress towards gender equity, raising awareness about and making strides towards reducing gender and racial bias.
- **Human resources:** HR teams are important agents in tracking data on the gender and race composition and distribution of a company's workforce and in helping guide the implementation of evidence-based practices.
- **Store operations:** Store operations teams, especially store managers, provide critical understanding of the experience of women in frontline roles that can inform decisions on which evidence-based practices to implement.

FIGURE C



This report provides an overview of the business case for investing in women, the current state of women working in retail's frontline, and an overview of the multiple barriers women face in the workplace. To help guide employer's strategies for advancing women from frontline roles, we lay out three key areas of focus and provide 12 evidence-based practices that employers can implement. Company case studies bring these practices to life, and the appendix to this report includes a deeper look at each of the 12 evidence-based practices and additional resources. We also include stories from frontline women themselves to elevate their voices and illustrate the potential for their success. The report concludes with a call to action for the retail sector, with practical guidance for leaders at multiple levels of the company to advance women from frontline positions.

The evidence-based practices outlined in this report provide an important starting point for retail employers to move from *commitment to action on gender equity*. With thoughtful implementation, companies can develop customized and comprehensive solutions for supporting and advancing more women from the frontline, tapping into their full talent pool and unlocking significant business value.

STORIES FROM FRONTLINE WOMEN

Understanding the experiences of women at the frontline is key to developing strategies that work. To include women's voices in this study, we interviewed women working in frontline retail roles. Through their stories, we learned that even when they face barriers, both inside and outside of the workplace, women are advancing their careers and supporting others around them.

Some employers are already leveraging some of the practices highlighted in this report, including flexible scheduling opportunities, mentorship, and management training. The stories in this report illustrate the opportunities employers have to take action, tap into the female talent at their frontline, and develop strong leaders within their organizations.



THE CASE FOR INVESTING IN WOMEN

The experience of women in the workplace has never been more visible—workplace sexual harassment, the persistent gender wage gap, and the lack of female executive-level representation are in the news daily. The #MeToo movement and a national focus on women in the workplace have created an imperative for companies to take action on gender equity. Wall Street and investors are beginning to focus on women in leadership as more gender diverse companies outperform competitors.³ In response, leading companies are committing to increase diversity and to create more inclusive work environments through global commitments like the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion pledge.⁴

Despite the growing consciousness about gender equity in the workplace, most companies are not realizing the full potential of the women in their workforce. When companies invest in their female talent, the focus is largely on placing women into senior positions and board roles, rather than addressing the leaky pipeline of female leaders.⁵ McKinsey found that corporate America promotes men at 30% higher rates than women during their early career stages, and entry-level women are significantly more likely than men to have spent five or more years in the same role.⁶ **A lack of gender diversity, at all levels in a company, has implications for**

a company's financial performance—a 2016 Gallup study found that companies that had higher-than-average gender diversity and employee engagement also had 46% to 58% better financial performance.⁷

Gender equity also has implications in the fight for talent. In a climate in which **77% of CEOs globally see the availability of skilled talent as the single biggest threat to their business**, having an inclusive approach to talent is imperative for success.

The retail industry's success, in particular, depends on women. In the US, **women control or influence 73% of household spending, and women make up over half of the retail workforce.**

FIGURE D



By not retaining, developing, and promoting more women from frontline positions, retail companies are experiencing high turnover costs and are cutting off their talent pipeline, leaving some of their best talent untapped. In addition, they are missing out on key competitive advantages created by having women in frontline manager roles.

As online shopping continues to grow, retail consumers will demand and expect an in-store experience that is as streamlined, well-stocked, and seamless as online shopping. Customers' interaction with frontline employees in the store will drive their experience and purchasing patterns. And retailers that excel in driving a superior customer experience grow revenues 4%–8% above the market earning stronger loyalty among customers.⁸

Effective managers can significantly impact employee engagement, a major performance indicator in the retail sector, which in turn directly impacts customer experience. Data from Gallup, a global leader in workplace engagement research, indicates that managers are responsible for 70% of their employees' engagement. They also found that **female managers tend to be more effective at creating higher levels of engagement than male managers.**⁹ By advancing more women to managerial roles, retail employers can create a more engaged frontline workforce and ensure their consumers have superior customer experience. Increased employee engagement also leads to higher retention, another driver of profitability in the retail sector. At the same time, women who are promoted gain more economic mobility and agency in the workplace and are empowered to be leaders within their organization (Figure D). By investing in women in frontline and first level management roles, companies can realize value in both the short term and long term through improvements in financial performance, customer experience, employee engagement, and talent brand.



THE STATE OF WOMEN IN THE RETAIL WORKFORCE

Despite the clear business case for more women in management roles, pervasive gender inequities continue to pose barriers to women's mobility in the workplace. Traditional social norms lead to inequitable gender expectations, in which women often experience a larger burden of family and home caregiving responsibilities. These conditions can create pressures that push women out of the workforce at a higher rate than their male counterparts.¹⁰

A recent study of U.S. labor data found that between 2016 and 2017, 129,000 women left the retail sector.¹¹ In sectors with large numbers of female frontline workers, such as retail, health care services, or food services, this can result in high turnover costs and lost talent.

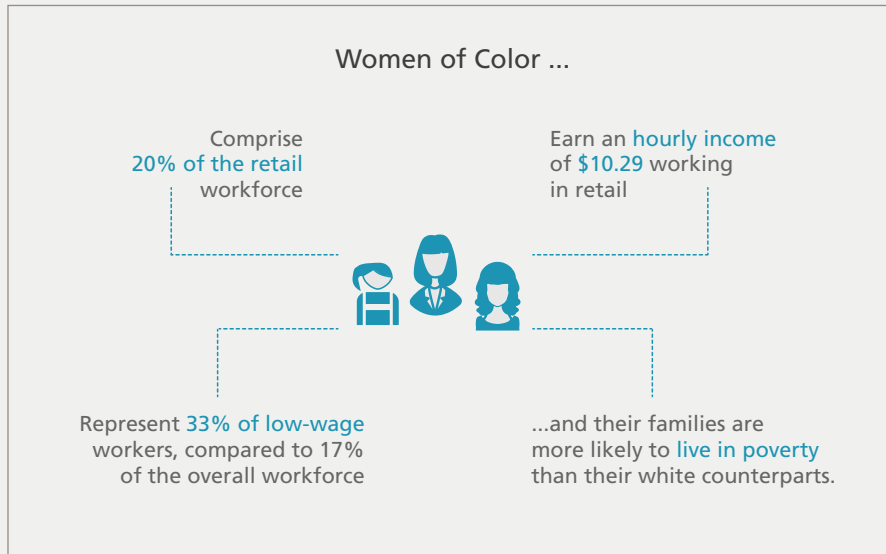
In retail, women comprise the majority of the workforce, yet they are consistently underrepresented at the manager level and above (Figure E). The industry's workforce begins with gender parity at the frontline, but despite greater attention to gender equity, the leaky pipeline of female leaders continues. In retail, an industry that traditionally promotes from within, this has important implications: only 9% of CEO positions are held by women.

Women in frontline positions are a heterogeneous group and have disparate experiences. Women of color are overrepresented in low-wage positions, and they often receive the least level of supports to navigate challenges such as income instability and higher levels of poverty (Figure F).¹²

FIGURE E



FIGURE F



Women of color, who comprise 20% of the retail workforce, are more likely to face systemic challenges, such as limited access to educational opportunities, and financial instability and insecurity, than their white counterparts.¹³ Seventeen percent of black and 13% of Latina retail workers currently live in poverty, compared to 9% of the retail workforce overall. While entry-level retail positions afford opportunities for workers to develop skills and a foundation for the future, career advancement

opportunities for women of color are often limited because they work in part-time roles or because mentorship and professional networks are not readily accessible. And while women overall face an earnings gap compared with their male colleagues, the gap is even greater for women of color (Figure G). As we discuss on page 27, it is critical for companies to disaggregate data by both gender and race and to pay attention to the impact that policies and practices have on women of color.

FIGURE G



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red turtleneck sweater, is smiling and looking at a tablet computer. She is standing in a clothing store, with various garments hanging on racks in the background. The text "UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT" is overlaid in large white letters on the top half of the image.

UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

While many of the challenges that women face are created by systemic and social forces that are outside of employers' control, retailers can play a significant role in countering challenges that women experience in the workplace. **By more deeply understanding the experiences of frontline women, retail companies can shift corporate practices that get in the way of women's advancement and unlock significant business value.** Opportunities to understand these barriers, and the solutions that address them, fall into three areas (Figure H):

1. **Leadership commitment and accountability**
2. **Company policies and practices**
3. **Career development opportunities**

FIGURE H

Understanding the Barriers to Women's Advancement

- Lack of CEO and senior management buy-in
- Gendered mindsets
- Limited awareness of social and racial inequity
- Lack of goals and processes for tracking women's advancement
- Lack of awareness of the gender promotion and pay gaps



- Inequitable hiring, retention, and promotion practices
- Challenging work schedules
- Family and caregiving pressures
- Sexual harassment
- Limited availability of and assistance for navigating company-supported resources
- Insufficient professional and social networks
- Limited understanding of and access to career pathways and professional development opportunities
- Limited agency in the workplace to bolster self-confidence and leadership

1 LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Leaders set the foundation from which companies can ensure parity in women's advancement.¹⁴ When companies lack commitment from CEOs and senior leaders, there is often limited investment in gender equity, and even less for women at the frontline. Without strong commitment, it can be challenging for companies to develop **goals and processes for tracking women's advancement, let alone have a clear understanding of the social and racial inequities** that may exacerbate women's experiences at work.

This can result in company cultures and norms that perpetuate **gendered mindsets in the workplace**. For instance, women are more likely to be expected to handle the "household" tasks of work, such as cleaning up after a staff meeting, that are uncompensated and not a recognized contribution. Similarly, managers may assume that women are less ambitious or unavailable for advancement opportunities because of their lives outside of work (e.g., childcare, elder care), resulting in limited professional development opportunities.

2 COMPANY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Though many companies are adjusting their **hiring, retention, and promotion policies and practices**, some common practices are still not favorable to women's advancement. For instance, the **scheduling demands** of retail do not always align with the realities of women's lives; scheduling flexibility is limited, which affords little room for navigating childcare services, second jobs, or educational pursuits.¹⁵ Despite the fact that this is a consistently cited and well-studied challenge within the retail industry, few companies intentionally invest in developing scheduling practices that work for their frontline employees.¹⁶ This can have a compounding impact on women's ability to achieve stability in their lives, especially as women are more likely than their male counterparts to be expected to balance **family and caregiving responsibilities** with employment responsibilities. In a recent survey of opportunity youth working in frontline jobs, 34% of women aged 18–24 reported lack of access to stable childcare as their primary obstacle to finding a job, and 26% struggled to balance childcare and work.¹⁷

To relieve some of these pressures, many companies support work life balance and stability through benefits programs. However, these **benefits can be hard to access**, and many companies do not have the processes in place or the resources to help women to take advantage of them. For example, while many companies offer family leave programs, some employees are not encouraged to take advantage of this benefit, or may even be penalized for doing so. Others may not be aware of what resources and supports are available.

Lack of processes and systems for support go beyond benefits. In the retail industry, **sexual harassment** is pervasive: one survey found that more than one in three women in retail (36%) experience sexual harassment at work. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) found that 13.5% of all formal EEOC sexual harassment claims came from the retail sector, and that more than 79% of women who made claims left their jobs.¹⁸ Research suggests that women of color and low-wage workers, who may face greater risk when speaking out against harassment, experience higher rates of it in the workplace. Often, these workers have less bargaining power and are least able to absorb some of the day-to-day impacts of experiencing sexual harassment and seeking help, such as changes to their work schedules or task assignments.¹⁹

Additionally, other studies found that companies also face tangible business impacts as sexual harassment creates a toxic workplace culture that can lead to increased employee turnover and absenteeism, decreased job satisfaction, and a negative brand reputation. Nevertheless, companies do not always provide the proper mechanisms to report and address harassment due to a lack of manager support in dealing with such issues, the size of retail companies, and the decentralization of authority.²⁰



CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The workplace experience has direct implications for the retention and advancement of women in retail. Sexual harassment, lack of supportive managers, underlying bias, and limited professional development support can wreak havoc on a woman's professional confidence. In interviews with women working in frontline positions, women ranked **confidence and leadership** as the top skills they wanted to strengthen. And, while it is hard to measure or study, stories from women across the industry underscore that women, and especially women of color in low-wage roles, disproportionately face micro-aggressions in the workplace and feel that they are devalued and given limited agency in their work. These experiences erode their confidence that they can advance in their career.²¹

Women in retail, particularly those who work part-time, often receive **less training and fewer opportunities for advancement**.²² Coupled with the fact that there are fewer female mentors and sponsors—less than 26% of leadership positions at the executive level are held by white women, and even fewer are held by women of color—women have fewer opportunities to develop their careers in a systematic way. For many women, there are also limited entrées to **professional networks**.²³

Though they are not exhaustive, these challenges illustrate the complexities that women have to navigate in order to successfully advance from the frontline. Our research, however, shows that **there are proven, evidence-based practices that companies can undertake** to support women in their workforces, promote more women into manager positions, and create long-term business value.

Stories from Frontline Women

Eliana

Before her first job, Eliana was involved with the juvenile justice system. After being released on probation, she wanted a job to stay busy, so she dropped off her resume at her neighborhood pizza restaurant and was surprised to be offered a job on the spot.

She started in an hourly dish and lobby clean-up position, but the job quickly became stressful because her manager was impatient and didn't train her properly. She wanted to quit after only two weeks.

But soon her manager was replaced, and she got an "all-star" mentor who helped her to memorize the pizza menu and get faster at her job. She began to enjoy the fast-paced work, and was eager to keep learning more. Her new manager saw her energy and commitment to her team and her work, and worked with her to identify opportunities in the test kitchen, where she learned to cook. She also offered Eliana flexible scheduling so that she could attend her court dates and allowed her to make up hours so she could pick up extra shifts at other stores.

Eliana was committed to learning new skills and growing within the company, and after working for only a few months, her general manager asked if she'd like to be promoted to team captain. She agreed, and even though she was hesitant about leading a team of her coworkers



given her young age, she felt confident she could quickly learn what was necessary to be successful in her new role. Eliana is good friends with another team captain at the restaurant who is close to her age, and they exchange tips on delegation and leadership.

Stories from Frontline Women

Raquel

Raquel started her retail career 27 years ago at a large department store in Seattle. She began in an entry-level position selling shoes, a job she hadn't had much experience in. But Raquel was a quick learner and a successful salesperson—she hit all her sales targets each cycle and became a valuable asset to her team. She knew that she wanted to get into management and raised her hand for assignments that challenged and stretched her skills.

Her manager saw her potential and gave her ownership over an entire brand of shoes, which she grew quickly. She managed a small team in this role. She was a no-nonsense manager, and sometimes struggled to connect with her staff, but her regional director supported her development and worked with her to build strong leadership and communication skills so she could better empathize with her team.

After only four months, Raquel was promoted to assistant manager. She managed several teams and stayed in that role for over 14 years. Eventually, she moved to work in the flagship store as the store manager. She was nervous about the challenge, but trusted that her refined people skills would help her build strong teams and that she had enough floor and back office experience to lead the store successfully.



Raquel has been at the flagship store for five months. She loves the pressure and excitement of the high stakes location and is already leading efforts to bridge gaps across departments and connect her employees to opportunities through “breakfast clubs.”



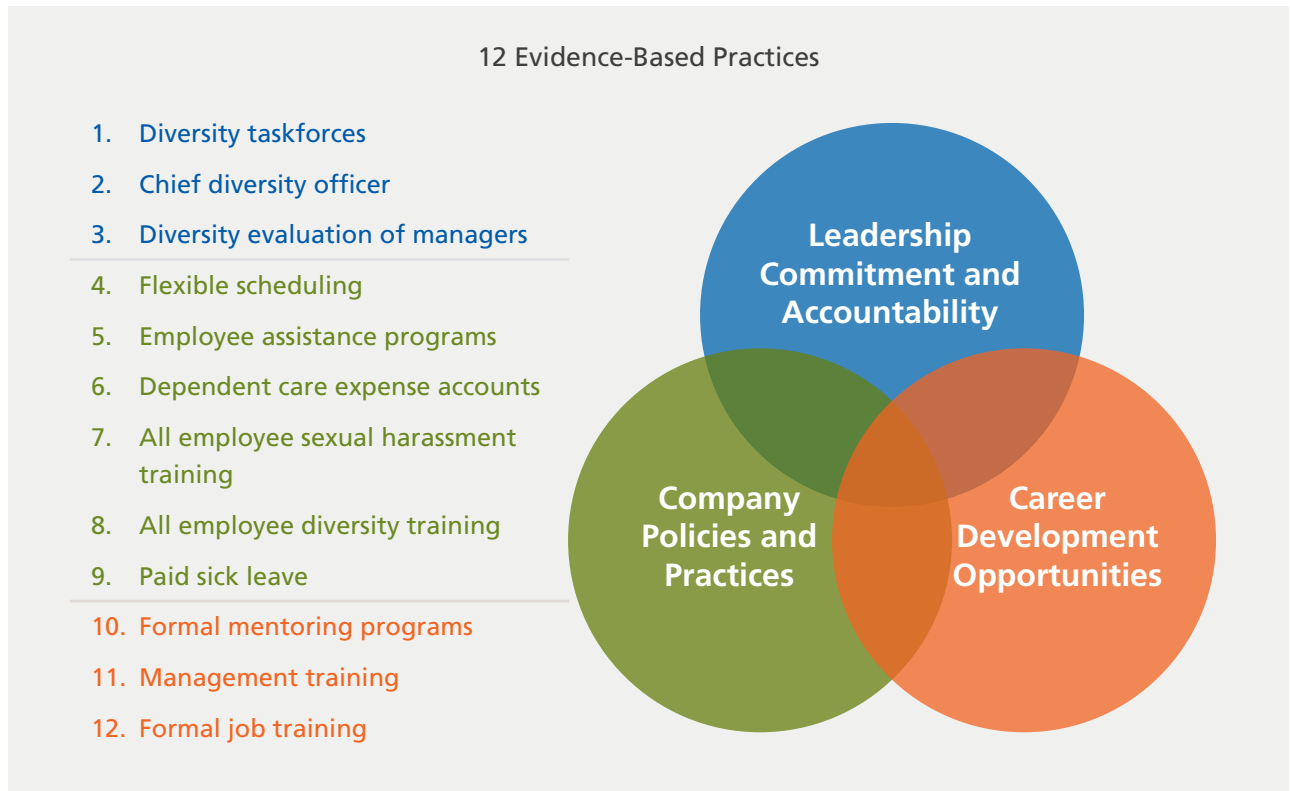
PRACTICES THAT WORK: ADVANCING WOMEN INTO MANAGEMENT ROLES

While the business value of supporting women in the workplace is clear, many companies shy away from focusing on issues of gender equity. For some, the potential for legal liability leads to universal approaches to workforce management that do not always support women. Some consider the investments needed too expensive, too problematic, or too polarizing. Others do not track the necessary metrics to understand the unique characteristics or challenges frontline women face or feel that these issues will resolve themselves with time based on shifts in broader societal norms. As public attention and scrutiny around gender equity increases, more companies are ready to take action, but are not sure where to begin.

So where can companies begin?

Using a new analysis of over 30 years of EEOC reports and qualitative surveys of 79 large retail firms, FSG partnered with Harvard University's Frank Dobbin and Tel Aviv University's Alexandra Kalev to identify a set of **12 evidence-based practices that advance frontline female workers in retail stores** (Figure I). We also conducted a secondary research scan and found a robust base of evidence that further supports the effectiveness of these practices.

FIGURE I



Our research found that companies can advance frontline women in three main ways, which directly address many of the barriers described in the previous section. These three areas are:

1. **Leadership commitment and accountability** to foster an inclusive culture that enables all women to advance
2. **Company policies and practices** that advance gender equity
3. **Career and development opportunities** that help develop and promote women

Many of these evidence-based practices may seem standard for employers, but our research found otherwise. While many retailers employ these practices for employees in their corporate headquarters, less than 50% of the 79 retailers in the study implemented **even one** in stores.

While each of the 12 practices is individually effective, companies that are most successful at retaining, engaging, and advancing women employ practices across all three of the areas. It is necessary to underscore that that no single practice is a silver bullet. To advance women, a company must evaluate its own context and needs to determine the best mix of practices and interventions. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that impact is not always seen immediately. To see positive impacts, strong processes for evaluation and dedicated opportunities to learn, reflect, and adapt are necessary.

Case Study

Walmart Canada's Women in Retail (WIR) Field Development Program for Store Leaders

In 2010, Walmart Canada saw a stagnant point in its leadership pipeline: between 2005 and 2010 female representation amongst store managers consistently remained near 15.5%. With the support from their CEO, Walmart Canada's dedicated diversity and inclusion team led an initiative to understand how they could support the successful advancement of more women into these leadership roles.

The diversity and inclusion team began by **connecting directly with female store managers** during their annual Year Beginning Meeting to discuss what women felt they needed in order to advance into more senior roles. Forty-five women, representing each of Walmart Canada's 29 markets, joined a focus group and became the first cohort of what would become the Women in Retail (WIR) Field Development Program. To support the program, **the team built a strong business case from available market data.** It found that women, who make up half of Walmart Canada's talent pool, were not receiving sufficient investment and were an untapped pool of potential leaders; that Walmart Canada's key customer base is predominantly female, and having a workforce that reflects that population is critical; that companies with female leaders are more profitable and efficient; and diverse teams lead to more innovation and better decision-making.

With this strong case for increased investment, the WIR program focused on management training to address the **key leadership skills** that are required to advance into increasingly senior roles, such as confidence, public speaking, and brand management. The program was built upon four guiding principles: articulated **commitment from senior leadership** and individual participants, intentional communication processes, established and well-defined measurement, and **accountability systems to evaluate leaders and managers' performance** relative to diversity and inclusion.

Each WIR market within Canada is led by a female Team Leader, typically a store manager. The Team Leader facilitates discussions and ongoing **dialogue about relevant workplace issues based on materials from LeanIn.org.** WIR participants include all female store managers and selected co-store managers and assistant managers (within each market) who are nominated by direct supervisors. These nominations identify high-potential female leaders with the core competencies and soft skills that are not always captured by HR data and performance metrics. Throughout their engagement, participants focus on identifying areas for personal development and on building customized development curriculums. They join

a community of practice and receive leadership training and mentoring. Additionally, participants engage in workshops focused on empowerment and learning how to gain influence.

What has been the impact to date? Between 2010 and 2016, Walmart Canada recorded an **increase in female store leaders of over 60%**, from 15.5% to 25.4%, making it one of the leaders in female representation at this level across Canada. WIR has grown from an initial 45 female store leaders in 2010 to include 245 participants who are active in the field. Through listening sessions, Walmart Canada continues to implement structural changes to increase and sustain participant and leadership

interest and engagement with the program, and has worked to create more opportunities for women to connect online. The success of the Walmart Canada WIR model has seen significant scale: recently the company launched a new program at the home office and for Walmart Canada Logistics, and nine other countries to date have taken the WIR model and adopted it to their markets.

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Twelve Evidence-Based Practices in Action

When implemented intentionally to meet the distinct needs of women of color and white women, these 12 evidence-based practices can help companies to mitigate the barriers that limit women's advancement from the frontline. Some pioneering companies are already implementing some of these practices as part of their efforts to achieve greater gender equity—and have seen measurable results.

1 LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Companies that have successfully advanced women have strong leadership commitment to gender equity and have internal systems and structures that enable learning and accountability. This includes committing necessary resources and developing and establishing clear goals regarding women's advancement.

In 2015, IKEA **publicly committed to achieving companywide gender parity**—50% male/50% female representation at every level in the company—by 2020. Former IKEA global CEO Peter Agnefjäll commented, “That our business is equally led by men and women is essential for our future growth and for being a great place to work. Diversity opens new perspectives, creativity, and innovation.” IKEA leadership understands that gender equity is central to the company's financial performance, customer loyalty, and talent acquisition and is fully aligned with its organizational values.

Some companies, such as Ikea, are seeing the value of **diversity taskforces** that can help build structures that support the push for increased accountability regarding diversity and inclusion across various levels of an organization. Leveraging these and other gender-focused strategies, Ikea was able to increase the representation of women in frontline manager roles from 32% to 52%.²⁴ Research supports that building structures for accountability, particularly for **diversity evaluation of managers**, can help curb implicit bias that can harm women's advancement.²⁵

Walmart Canada's **CEO and the diversity and inclusion team** piloted a successful on-the-ground development program for women in retail stores—the Women in Retail Development Program. Leveraging soft-skills training and authentic mentorship relationships, the program helped boost the number of female store managers by 60% between 2010 and 2016.²⁶



Company Policies and Practices

Policies and practices like **paid time off, flexible scheduling, and dependent care expense accounts** are beneficial for all employees but they are particularly helpful for women, who are more likely than their male counterparts to be expected to balance family and caregiving responsibilities with employment responsibilities. Employee benefits are consistently cited by HR professionals, researchers, and women on the frontline as critical supports for employees that lay the groundwork for advancement.

In January 2018, Starbucks—whose workforce is close to 70% female and more than 40% members of racial and ethnic minority groups²⁷—announced an expansion of their **paid sick leave** policy. Through the policy, all Starbucks hourly employees can accrue one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, a benefit previously offered only to employees in states where laws required sick leave policies.²⁸

To tackle scheduling needs, the University of California Hastings partnered with Gap Inc. to study **effective scheduling** practices for employees in stores. Their research found that sales, productivity, and overall employee satisfaction were higher in stores where managers and entry-level associates had more autonomy and control over scheduling than in storefronts with inflexible and unstable scheduling practices. About three-quarters of the participants in the study were women, who leveraged the effective scheduling practices more often and were more successful at obtaining and covering work shifts than their male counterparts.²⁹

When implemented intentionally, **sexual harassment and diversity trainings for all employees** can help build awareness of the disparate experiences and implicit biases that hinder women's advancement.³⁰ These trainings can be effective at improving the workplace experience of all employees, including male employees.



Career Development Opportunities

Offering formalized and structured career development opportunities for women, such as mentorship and trainings, is essential for strengthening core skillsets, building professional networks and accelerating advancement.

Sodexo's IMPACT, a formal year-long leadership and development **mentorship program**, emphasizes cross-gender and cross-race/ethnicity connections between junior staff and managers.

Between 2005 and 2010, 30% of women and 27% percent of racially/ethnically diverse women who participated in IMPACT received promotions.³¹

Formal job trainings and focused management trainings that build soft and hard skills for participants have also been adopted by many companies. Safeway employs a three-pronged strategy through the Retail Leadership Development initiative (now the Leadership Development Program), a 21-week program that trains retail employees, particularly women, to be store managers or assistant managers. Since 2000, there has been a 40% increase in the representation of women in store management ranks overall, with a 34% increase in the representation of white women and a 65% increase in the representation of women of color.³²

Putting these practices in place is an important first step, but our research shows that intentional implementation is critical for success.

TAKING AN INTENTIONAL APPROACH TO ADVANCING WOMEN OF COLOR

Women of color often face the most challenging barriers to advancement. These workers are less likely to be full-time employees, face a higher burden for child and elder care, and are more likely to be the primary earners in their household than their white counterparts.

Women of color comprise a significant percentage of retail's talent pool, and companies that do not support their development are missing potential business value. Supporting women of color requires attention, because even some of the most common workplace practices can perpetuate poor advancement outcomes for women of color. Our research showed that some evidence-based practices which had a positive impact on the advancement of white women had a negative impact on women of color because of how they were implemented. For instance, a recent study by our research partners Dobbin and Kalev

showed that managers targeted for diversity trainings can feel shamed or punished, and are more susceptible to developing negative and retaliatory behavior toward people with marginalized identities.³³ Internal job postings and written evaluations, which are considered strategies that level the playing field for all employees, can actually open the door to implicit biases that favor white men and women over women of color.³⁴

The key to effectively retaining and advancing women of color—and to supporting all employees—is to intentionally implement interventions with a deep understanding of those women's unique experiences. It is critical that companies examine the context and ways in which different interventions are implemented and measure how interventions may yield unanticipated negative impact, particularly on those most vulnerable to bias and systemic barriers.

HOW YOUR COMPANY CAN SUPPORT THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN OF COLOR

- ✓ **Create strong channels of communication between women of color and leadership.** Get to know your workforce. Create mechanisms that allow women of color to share experiences and provide opportunities to raise concerns with leaders. Work directly with women of color to determine how best to foster and enable their growth and advancement.
- ✓ **Use data to understand the impact of implicit bias.** A strong body of work on women in the workplace suggests that it is important to create accountability loops that can help mitigate the impact of implicit bias (e.g., diversity trainings for all employees).³⁵ Use data collected across the organization to reveal if, and where, bias exists. Establish baseline measures to be able to compare future interventions.
- ✓ **Track implementation and impact, and learn as you go.** Interventions that might reflect and/or perpetuate implicit bias are often common practice across an organization (e.g., job postings, review and evaluation processes, targeted diversity training programs). It is important that an organization examines these practices, tracks disaggregated data that elevates disparate outcomes, and identifies new solutions.³⁶



TAKING ACTION

Retail companies have an opportunity to unlock the full potential of their workforce by implementing the evidence-based practices that address the unique needs of the women in their frontline. Putting these practices in place and moving towards gender equity is not solely the responsibility of one department. **Executives, human resources, store operations, and diversity and inclusion taskforces each play a critical role in advancing frontline women in retail** (Figure J).

“Achieving a critical mass of representation of both genders is the first step in creating a gender-intelligent organization, but this is just the beginning. The work to build an inclusive culture where both men and women can bring their uniqueness to IKEA every day continues beyond gender parity in numbers.” — IKEA

FIGURE J

Goals and Interventions by Department

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP GOALS

- Set the tone for gender equity across the company
- Create an accountability infrastructure for gender equity

INTERVENTIONS

- > Realize corporate commitments to diversity and inclusion
- > Establish and support companywide goals for gender equity and inclusion
- > Demonstrate the business case for diversity and inclusion
- > Model commitment to all employees, and encourage male leaders to advocate for gender equity



HUMAN RESOURCES GOALS

- Develop a data-driven baseline of the current state
- Support the development of data-driven goals and the implementation of evidence-based practices

INTERVENTIONS

- > Work with store leaders to set location-specific goals and test drive advancement practices
- > Track the impact of evidence-based practices and share findings across the organization
- > Provide real-time guidance and support continuous learning and improvement



FIELD OPERATIONS & STORE MANAGEMENT GOALS

- Ensure business goals are met and employees are retained and developed
- Elevate the voice of women at the frontline to guide implementation

INTERVENTIONS

- > Model and support increased buy-in of company goals toward gender inclusion
- > Understand frontline women's experience
- > Pilot new practices to advance women to store management roles
- > Observe implementation outcomes and share what is working with HR team



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION TASKFORCE GOALS

- Help activate both men and women across different levels and functions within an organization to advance gender equity
- Serve as a centralized resource to facilitate cross-team learning, analysis, and sensemaking



RETAIL EXECUTIVES: SET THE TONE FOR GENDER EQUITY

Retail executives play a critical role in building a culture of gender equity. This can include committing to CEO-level pledges and setting gender parity goals for the company, as well as creating the accountability and internal environment for successful implementation. **Senior leaders can set the tone and create a sense of urgency around advancing women.** Strategic decision-making resides with executive and senior leadership; having support and direct action from these leaders is critical to securing the necessary investment, infrastructure, and culture that allows companies to shift deeply embedded gender norms, articulate the business imperative of gender diversity, and focus on learning and iteration.

This role is not the responsibility of women in leadership alone. Given their disproportionate representation, as well as the skills and experience they can offer, **men in leadership roles play a key part in advancing the discussion on gender equity, advocating for and sponsoring women leaders, and modeling commitment to gender equity across an organization.**

HUMAN RESOURCE TEAMS: CATALYZE A DATA-DRIVEN AND EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO GENDER ADVANCEMENT

HR teams, especially those that have dedicated diversity and inclusion leaders, are critical to strengthening retail's leaky talent pipeline. **The HR team can begin by developing a data-driven understanding of its workforce and practices.** HR teams can disaggregate workforce data at every level of the company across important demographic factors, especially at the store level, to better understand the different experiences employees face. In addition, HR teams can catalogue the range of practices that are currently in place to understand what's working and what's not and guide companies to track where progress is being made. With this data and a common understanding of the current state in hand, HR teams can empower executive leadership teams, diversity and inclusion taskforces, and operational leaders to develop data-driven goals and implement new policies and practice to meet them.

In addition, with HR teams' birds-eye view of the company they are well-positioned to track the implementation of evidence-based practices. Serving as a centralized data center and providing real-time guidance on the impact of evidence-based practices on frontline women's retention and advancement, **HR teams can help to identify and course correct the company's strategy when implementation has unintended consequences, and to accelerate the company's progress towards realizing the business benefits of women's advancement.**

FIELD AND STORE OPERATIONS: USE THE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES OF FRONTLINE WOMEN TO DRIVE STRATEGY

Retail operations and store management teams are responsible for ensuring that business goals are met and employees are continuously being engaged, retained, and developed. Additionally, they are the on-the-ground agents who make a company's gender advancement ambitions a reality. Leaders in these roles are critical to both building increased awareness of the experience of women in frontline roles and implementing practices that work.

It is essential that field and store management teams are given the support and resources to focus on frontline women's advancement and to be able to share back what they learn to complement the HR team's analysis. Field and store operations leaders can help to guide implementation by paying close attention to the needs of different groups. Field and store managers that learn to understand the experiences of frontline women in their particular context through focus group discussions, surveys, and one-on-one meetings are better positioned to inform implementation and highlight what is really working to advance women. Additionally, as the local leaders within a store, they can serve as key ambassadors for driving company goals on gender inclusion and can help empower all employees to support these efforts.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TASKFORCES

Advancing frontline women from entry-level roles to management roles requires the active leadership, engagement, and iteration of men and women across multiple levels within the company. By activating each of these roles, companies can create a culture of continuous learning, experimentation, and risk-taking that is complemented by data-driven feedback and the direct experiences of women. A network of diversity and inclusion committees in headquarters and in the field can serve as a centralized resource to facilitate cross-team learning, analysis, and sensemaking. Dedicated diversity and inclusion taskforces are most successful when they include people with experience implementing evidence-based HR practices, leaders that influence resource flows for experimentation and scale, and frontline women themselves.



CONCLUSION

The case for investment in retail's female workers is clear. Women comprise the majority of the retail workforce, and by investing in them employers can reduce frontline turnover costs and leverage untapped talent for manager positions. Women hold significant value for retailers, from helping to build an inclusive talent brand, to increasing employee engagement and enhancing customers' experience, the industry will need to meet the future demands of work. The evidence-based practices outlined in this report provide a starting point for retail employers to develop customized and comprehensive solutions for supporting and advancing more women from the frontline. They also provide an opportunity for organizations to engage more authentically with the women in their workforce. As the examples in this report suggest, developing and adapting internal company culture and business models is key to improving outcomes for women. It is notable that these practices are positive for all retail employees, and when implemented well, hold significant benefits for male employees as well as for women. With thoughtful implementation and an orientation towards learning and improvement, companies can begin to advance more women, achieve greater gender equity and inclusivity in their workplace, and gain significant business value.



APPENDIX 1:
BEST PRACTICES
DEEP DIVE

PRACTICE 1:

DIVERSITY TASKFORCES

What are they and why are they important?

Diversity taskforces are composed of members from different roles and functions that help communicate and lead diversity efforts across different levels of an organization. They can create lines of communication from operators in the field to different arms of an organization and leadership. Additionally, diversity taskforces can elevate barriers to diversity, devise solutions, chart progress in hiring and promotion, and report observed trends, all of which are necessary for understanding changes in women's advancement rates and outcomes. Additionally, they are often tasked with promoting increased buy-in for diversity efforts across an organization and empowering all employees to own and improve diversity efforts.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Include individuals that have perspectives from the organization's operations and business (e.g., HR managers, store managers, and frontline workers) and leverage the committee to provide input on how different practices are put into place and tracked.
- ✓ Create consistent and clear lines of communication between the diversity committee, leadership, and the organization to share findings and recommendations.

Resources for further reading

Diversity Councils, Catalyst

Diversity as Strategy, *Harvard Business Review*

PRACTICE 2: CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

Who are they and why are they important?

A chief diversity officer is an individual at a senior or executive level that is appointed or hired to explicitly focus on diversity issues within a company. They have a bird's eye view of an organization and can put in place a formal system of accountability to track progress against established goals (e.g., set targets for the number of women promoted into managerial positions). Additionally, diversity officers can help build the case for focusing on issues of racial diversity and gender equity in order to create a companywide culture and commitment to advancing diversity that is necessary to support women's advancement. In addition to supporting accountability systems, diversity officers often provide oversight for hiring and promotion decisions across a company. Using these various levers, diversity officers can guide implementation of diversity programs and practices and directly provide support to leaders implementing these in the field.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Ensure the leader has a diversity of experiences that reflects the diversity of the organization (e.g., the individual has professional experience in HR but also understands frontline work).
- ✓ Create formalized connections between managers in stores and the diversity leader so that they have a direct line of sight into implementation across multiple levels of the organization (e.g., through a diversity committee).
- ✓ Hold the diversity leader accountable for meeting goals for gender equity.

Resources for further reading

Companies Hail New Chiefs (of Diversity), *The Wall Street Journal*

PRACTICE 3:

DIVERSITY EVALUATION OF MANAGERS

What is it and why is this practice important?

Diversity evaluations are formalized metrics and discussions on topics related to diversity and managers' effort in advancing diversity that are integrated into managers' performance rating system. Managers are critical to frontline employees as they often make hiring, scheduling, promotion, and task/role assignment decisions and are the most aware of the skills and talents of frontline employees. Research indicates that bias, especially implicit bias, flourishes in unstructured environments where people make quick decisions without oversight or scrutiny. Establishing clearer systems and implementing measures for accountability, such as a diversity evaluation, can help correct for implicit bias and ensure that managers are aware of these issues and are providing equitable opportunities for women and women of color at the frontline.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Provide real-time support, resources, and coaching to managers and encourage them to have discussions about diversity in non-evaluation contexts (e.g., during coaching and mentoring discussions).
- ✓ Work with managers on the ground to help define and determine relevant metrics for evaluations to increase commitment to meeting diversity goals (rather than implementing set metrics from headquarters).

Resources for further reading

The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organizations, Sloan School of Management, MIT

Diversity Accountability Requires More Than Numbers, Society for Resource Human Management

How Walmart's Chief Diversity Officer Gets Talent-Development Results, Diversity, Inc.

PRACTICE 4: FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

What is it and why is this practice important?

Flexible scheduling policies include compressed work weeks, where individuals work their normal set of hours within fewer days (typically 3–4) or flextime policies in which employees have increased flexibility to regularly arrive and leave within a set window of time. Women in frontline retail positions often face more challenges with balancing the scheduling demands of their work with other life responsibilities — family/caregiving, education, other employment — than their male counterparts. Allowing flexible scheduling policies and compressed work weeks can enhance transparency and afford female frontline workers agency and flexibility over their time, which supports great stability, both at home and at work. While these practices are particularly effective at supporting women’s advancement, having flexible scheduling policies helps foster inclusive workplaces that support all employees.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Offer a suite of flexible scheduling policies that allow women to manage their time and schedule.
- ✓ Encourage managers to promote flextime policies among staff and support managers to have discussions about schedules and resources.
- ✓ Provide a user-friendly scheduling interface/processes for employees (e.g., online scheduling platforms).

Resources for further reading

The Retail Staffing Model Gets a Makeover: Digital and Dynamic, Accenture

Stable Scheduling Increases Productivity and Sales: The Stable Scheduling Study, University of Chicago and Center for WorkLife Law at UC Hastings College of the Law

Flexibility for Success: How Workplace Flexibility Policies Benefit All Workers and Employers, National Partnership for Women and Families

PRACTICE 5:

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

What are they and why is this practice important?

Employee assistance programs are tools that connect employees to external resources (e.g., child care, counseling, health care, housing resources) through resources navigators, onsite or through “hotlines.” Women in frontline retail are more likely to be single parents/caregivers and more likely to be racial/ethnic minorities than their male counterparts — and almost half are the sole or primary source of income for their family. Given these conditions, employee assistance programs can provide invaluable support for women attempting to access child care, health care resources, and other services for themselves and their families. Alleviating the pressure from life challenges can support women pursuing development opportunities to advance in their careers. Additionally, EAPs provide resources that benefit all employees.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Intentionally and consistently communicate availability of employee assistance programs (EAPs) in all retail locations and employee communications.
- ✓ Consider offering on-site EAP counseling, which can help create even more customized support for female employees.

Resources for further reading

Recruitment and Retention of the Frontline and Hourly Wage Worker: A Business Perspective, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Managing Employee Assistance Programs, Society for Human Resource Management

PRACTICE 6: DEPENDENT CARE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS

What are they and why is this practice important?

A dependent care expense account, in which employees can deposit pre-tax earnings to pay for a variety of dependent care expenses, can be a highly relevant benefit for women. Women in frontline retail positions are more likely to be single parents and almost half of them are the sole providers for their household. Providing this resource can support increased stability and flexibility for parents/individuals navigating dependent care and can promote increased retention and subsequent advancement of women from the frontline.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Encourage managers to promote the use of this benefit by all employees to mitigate against any negative stigmas associated with using the resource.
- ✓ Provide easy support (e.g., via resource navigators) to answer questions and support employees utilizing the care expense accounts.

Resources for further reading

2014 National Study of Employers: Child Care Assistance, Families and Work Institute

Caregiving and the Workplace: Employer Benchmarking Survey, Northeast Business Group on Health

PRACTICE 7:

ALL-EMPLOYEE SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAININGS

What are they and why is this practice important?

A 2016 EEOC study found that 79% of sexual harassment targets left their jobs after reporting harassment, inhibiting their career progression and development. All-employee sexual harassment trainings (for all workers including leaders, managers and frontline workers), in which employees gather in small, in-person sessions to build awareness about sexual harassment, can help create forums to educate employees on how to identify sexual harassment, equip all employees with the tools to help address sexual harassment in the workplace, and promote healthy and supportive environments for white women and women of color.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Include relevant and engaging trainings that support and empower all employees to be able to identify sexual harassment (such as bystander intervention programs) and address the variety of ways sexual harassment might occur (e.g., between employees and customers, between coworkers).
- ✓ Provide accessible resources that cover different paths for reporting harassment in the workplace, such as open door policies or anonymous reporting systems.

Resources for further reading

Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace, U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission

Why We Fail to Report Sexual Harassment, *Harvard Business Review*

21 Harrowing Stories of Sexual Harassment on the Job, *Huffington Post*

PRACTICE 8: ALL-EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY TRAININGS

What are they and why is this practice important?

All-employee diversity trainings provide opportunities for employees to learn about and discuss topics related to diversity, bias, and processes for improving workplace culture. These can help highlight the value of diversity and can empower individuals to champion diversity and the unique assets each employee brings to the workplace. Additionally, diversity trainings can elevate instances in which bias may create unsupportive workplace environments, hinder access to opportunities, and limit the career development of women and women of color.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Design trainings that provide explicit explanations of how discrimination and bias play out in the workplace and negatively impact women (not simply building awareness) and ground trainings and recommendations on research and data.
- ✓ Engage employees in interactive sessions and use positive messaging (e.g., provide role playing activities).
- ✓ Do not target trainings to any one group (such as supervisors or managers) to avoid the potential for backlash.

Resources for further reading

Two Types of Diversity Training That Really Work, *Harvard Business Review*

Hacking Tech's Diversity Problem, *Harvard Business Review*

PRACTICE 9: PAID SICK LEAVE

What is it and why is this practice important?

Across most industries—particularly retail and food service—entry-level employees are offered very few or no designated paid sick days, or leave that is not considered disability insurance or paid vacation time. Policies that offer paid days off can ameliorate the added burden and challenges female retail workers face in balancing work and family demands, lead to increased engagement and retention, and better position them for advancement.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Publicize this benefit with all employees via multiple channels and formats (e.g., online, in different languages) and provide accessible and clear processes and resources for employees.
- ✓ Support managers with resources to enable them to talk about paid sick leave with employees.
- ✓ Support managers juggling workflow challenges related to unexpected employee leave.

Resources for further reading

The High Cost of Not Offering Paid Sick Leave, *New York Times*

Paid Sick Days: Good for Business, Good for Workers, National Partnership for Women and Families

Paid Sick Days: Significant Benefits, Low Costs, Institute for Women's Policy Research

PRACTICE 10: FORMAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

What are they and why is this practice important?

Formal mentoring programs are typically run by HR teams and are programs through which leaders and protégés volunteer to participate and are matched with people across departments who are at least two levels apart (e.g., a store manager and an hourly worker). Across most industries, research shows that women get passed up for promotions more often than their male counterparts. In interviews, women working on the frontlines noted the importance of having a mentor/sponsor (often a manager) to leverage for professional development and as an advocate for new opportunities.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Provide formalized goals and resources for both mentors and protégés to facilitate effective and culturally competent mentorship and sponsorship.
- ✓ Pair women with mentors who can also be sponsors, or advocates for their development; encourage mentors to actively highlight strengths in performance and help identify new opportunities for their protégés.
- ✓ Connect women and women of color with male (not just female) mentors with shared work interests and to help increase the diversity of employees' professional networks.

Resources for further reading

Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women, *Harvard Business Review*

These Companies Run Mentorship Programs That Actually Work, *Fast Company*

Mentors and Sponsors: What is the difference? (Infographic), National Center for Women & Information Technology

PRACTICE 11:

MANAGEMENT TRAININGS

What are they and why is this practice important?

Management trainings are professional development opportunities that help employees develop strong leadership and people-management skills. Research shows that women, particularly women of color, are not always provided with sufficient professional development opportunities to help position them to advance in their careers. By intentionally taking part in management trainings, women can indicate their interest in advancement to managers and employers. Employers can also leverage management training opportunities to encourage managers to tap more women, who otherwise may not connect to the resource, to participate. And when managers are included in these trainings, participants can forge new connections that can help bolster their professional networks.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Articulate the value of participating in the trainings from a career trajectory perspective, particularly for women.
- ✓ Actively recruit women of color to participate in management trainings (e.g., leverage mentors/sponsors to encourage mentees to participate, provide incentives for employees to participate).
- ✓ Provide interactive management trainings that are accessible to all employees and focus on developing key leadership, communication, confidence and other soft skills.

Resources for further reading

Important retail manager skills needed to succeed, Monster

PRACTICE 12: FORMAL JOB TRAININGS

What are they and why is this practice important?

Formal job trainings for specific roles that provide initial (quickly following an individual's hiring) or continuous (throughout an individual's time in a role) skills-building significantly impact the advancement of women from the frontline and into management roles. Job trainings provide opportunities for both women and men to not only build core competencies for their roles, but also begin to develop the relevant skills necessary for promotion within the company and beyond their current employer. Enhanced core skills can result in higher productivity, even within the same role, which can yield positive business value. Additionally, by providing relevant and effective training programs, employers signal commitment to their employees' development and strengthen organizational cultures that encourage full and equal development for female and male employees.

Critical success factors:

- ✓ Provide interactive trainings that are accessible to all employees and support the development of peer cohorts that employees can leverage for continuous skills- and network-building.
- ✓ Make trainings accessible for all employees (e.g., schedule trainings during work hours, on-site rather than off-site).

Resources for further reading

Why It's Crucial to Train Your Employees, *Business Insider*



APPENDIX 2: METHODOLOGY

For this statistical analysis Dobbin and Kalev collected 30 years (1971–2002) of EEOC data from a sample of 79 representative, large national retail firms with over 11,000 branches.* The EEOC requires self-reported disaggregated data on the race and gender distribution of a firm's workforce across defined roles, including frontline retail salespeople and management roles (first/ mid-level managers). In addition to the EEOC data, Dobbin and Kalev collected qualitative data through an annual employer survey between the same 30-year period. The self-reported survey recorded employers' implementation of 64 HR practices and interventions at the headquarters, as well as the retail establishment level.

Through rigorous statistical analysis, Dobbin and Kalev correlated these two data sets and observed changes in the workforce, particularly shifts in the share of white women and women of color in management positions in retail establishments after the implementation of the specific interventions. To prove statistical significance, the analysis isolated the effects of each practice from the effects of other organizational and labor market features, including the implementation of other practices and internal organizational changes as well as larger societal and labor workforce shifts. The 12 evidence-based practices that resulted are all statistically significant within a 5% margin of error and positively impact women of color and white women's advancement in retail stores.

*Note: Large retail firms are those with 50 or more establishments.

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- 2 Female advancement refers to vertical movement within an organization's frontline employment (e.g., advancement from clerk to store manager position), which may result in increased compensation and responsibility.
- 3 **Why It Pays to Invest in Gender Diversity**, Morgan Stanley, *The Atlantic*, May 2016.
- 4 **CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion**.
- 5 **Breaking down the gender challenge**, Alexis Krivkovich, Eric Kutcher, and Lareina Yee, *McKinsey Quarterly*, McKinsey & Company, March 2016; **Pipeline seen as overlooked part of push for women on boards**, Andrea Vittorio, *Bloomberg Law*, Bloomberg, May 2018.
- 6 **Time for a new gender-equality playbook**, *McKinsey Quarterly*, McKinsey & Company, February 2017.
- 7 **The Business Benefits of Gender Diversity**, Sangeeta Bharadwaj Badal, *Gallup Business Journal*, Gallup, January 2014.
- 8 **The Five Disciplines of Customer Experience Leaders**, Frédéric Debruyne and Andreas Dullweber, Bain & Company, April 2015.
- 9 **Why Great Managers Are So Rare**, Randall Beck and Jim Harter, Gallup, March 2014; **The Five Disciplines of Customer Experience Leaders**, Frédéric Debruyne and Andreas Dullweber, Bain & Company, April 2015.
- 10 **Women in the Workplace: A Research Roundup**, *Harvard Business Review*, September 2013; **Pay Equity & Discrimination**, Institute for Women's Policy Research; **Educated women quit work as spouses earn more**, Tiziana Barghini, *Reuters*, March 2012.
- 11 **Decline in Retail Jobs Felt Entirely by Women**, Institute for Women's Policy Research, December 2017.
- 12 **Low-wage Jobs Held Primarily by Women Will Grow the Most Over the Next Decade**, Katherine Gallagher Robbins and Julie Vogtman, National Women's Law Center, April 2016.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 **Women in Leadership: Tackling Corporate Culture from the Top**, Rockefeller Foundation and Global Strategy Group, July 2017.
- 15 **Workflex in Retail, Service and Hospitality Guide: Cooperative Scheduling, Beyond Bias**, Jaime Leick and Kenneth Matos, Families and Work Institute, March 2017.
- 16 FSG interviews and analysis, July–September 2017; **Schedules that Work for Working Families**, Katherine Gallagher Robbins and Shirin Arslan, Center for American Progress, December 2017.
- 17 *What "Ready-To-Work" Opportunity Youth Need and Want for Job Success*, Hart Research and FSG, 2017. For further reading on opportunity youth and strategies to support entry-level retention, see **How to Improve the Engagement and Retention of Young Hourly Workers**, Kimberly Gilsdorf, Fay Hanleybrown, and Dashell Laryea, *Harvard Business Review*, December 2017.

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- 19 **Reality Check: Seventeen million reasons low-wage workers need strong protections from harassment**, National Women's Law Center, 2014.
- 20 Select Taskforce on the Study of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, U.S. EEOC, 2016; **"Training Programs and Reporting Systems Won't End Sexual Harassment. Promoting More Women Will,"** Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev, *Harvard Business Review*. For further reading and resources on addressing sexual harassment in the workplace, see California Department of Fair Employment and Housing Workplace Harassment Guide for California Employers, 2016; **"Sexual Harassment Is a Constant Plague in Retail,"** Nandita Raghuram, *Racked*, May 2018; **"Brand Response-Effects of Perceived Sexual Harassment in the Workplace,"** Jeremy Sierra, Nina Compton, and Kellilynn Frias-Gutierrez, *Journal of Business and Management*, January 2008.
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- 29 **Stable Scheduling Increases Productivity and Sales: The Stable Scheduling Study**, J.C. Williams, S.J. Lambert, and S. Kesavan, 2018.
- 30 **Training Programs and Reporting Systems Won't End Sexual Harassment. Promoting More Women Will**, Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev, *Harvard Business Review*, November 2017.
- 31 **Sodexo Making Every Day Count: Driving Business Success Through the Employee Experience (case study)**, Catalyst, 2012.
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