

A close-up photograph of a man and a woman in professional business attire. The man, on the left, is smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman, on the right, is also smiling and looking slightly off-camera. They appear to be in an office setting, with a laptop screen visible in the lower-left corner. The background is a bright, out-of-focus cityscape.

**CHEFSACHE**

Driving Change - For Men and Women

# Rethinking talent development

A how-to guide for top management

# Content

<b>In brief</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction: Why talent development is so important</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Organization, management, talent</b>	
<b>Organization: How organizations contribute to equal opportunity talent development</b>	<b>13</b>
– Recruiting and onboarding	13
– Feedback culture	17
– Performance reviews: Data and standards for greater objectivity	19
– Internal career advice and coaching	25
– Talent programs	28
– Special projects and job rotations	32
– Filling key positions	34
<b>Management: How managers contribute to equal opportunity talent development</b>	<b>41</b>
– Informal talent management by proactive managers is especially effective	41
– Four factors encourage managers toward equal opportunity talent development	45
<b>Talent: How talents are forging their careers – Chefsache talent testimonials</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Actions to promote equal opportunity talent development</b>	<b>70</b>

## In brief

- This report published by the [Chefsache initiative](#) advocates fair and performance-based talent development. It reveals the inadvertent pitfalls that exist when it comes to promoting men and women. It also delivers easy-to-implement examples provided by Chefsache member organizations on how to avoid these and similar hazards.
- The percentage of women in senior positions remains low and is a clear sign of the need to pay special attention to equal opportunities: only 8% of board members in Germany are women, and even at lower levels, men are still disproportionately overrepresented.
- A survey conducted by the Chefsache initiative of more than 400 managers in Germany highlights the considerable gap between perception and reality: around two-thirds of those interviewed believe that talent development in Germany offers the same opportunities to men and women. However, on closer inspection there are signs that things are rather different in practice. For example, not even half of those surveyed said that talent development in their company is a systematic process. And despite the existence of unconscious biases, more than half had not yet given the issue any attention, or at least not in any great depth.

This report discusses how organizations, managers, and future talent can contribute to talent being recognized and nurtured, and offered the best opportunities. Organizations can secure objective and fair talent development by establishing clear standards and therewith lay the groundwork for equal opportunities. How successful this is depends on senior and top management commitment: an organization can only offer all talent a fair chance when managers coach and foster future leaders, serve as role models, and carry other managers along with them through training and incentives.



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Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel is an official sponsor of the Chefsache initiative.

# Foreword

Dear readers,

Equal opportunities for women and men on the path to top management is a matter for the C-suite! That's why our initiative is called „Chefsache“, and that's why managers at our member organizations are campaigning for balanced gender ratios in leadership positions.

The Chefsache network currently boasts 25 members from business, academia, media, and the public and social sectors. Our goal: to exploit new concepts and approaches to drive a cultural shift at the highest levels of management, as well as in society itself. In 2017, we published a how-to guide called „Flexibles Arbeiten in Führungspositionen“ ([Flexible Working in Leadership Positions](#)). Our 2018 annual report is devoted to equal opportunity talent management.

In this report, we concentrate on the pitfalls that exist in talent development and on actions to tackle them – which is often easier than you'd think. Our members have also provided some inspiring case studies to showcase how they are mastering the transition to more equal opportunities.

We hope that this report offers some useful takeaways as to how you can make a real difference in your organization by promoting equal opportunities in talent development.

With that in mind: enjoy the report!

Your Chefsache initiative

# Introduction

Why talent development is so important

Talent is an important resource in any organization – many would say the most important. Numerous studies, including those by consulting firm CEO.works, show that less than 5% of roles in a business account for 95% of its success. And they are not necessarily the ones at the top of the organigram. Identifying the real key roles and staffing them with the right talent is a top priority for CEOs.

Chefsache members want to establish an appropriate framework to secure the best possible talent development – for men and women. Equal opportunity talent development means that an organization encourages all of its talent and not just employees who have already successfully taken on management responsibility, but also young employees who show potential. But how are organizations supposed to recognize this talent? Are these people being systematically supported and promoted to suitable positions? Why have so few women made it to key roles?

Talent development that is truly focused on equal opportunities and based on objective criteria delivers an instant diversity shot to management. And that pays off: one „Women Matter“ study revealed that companies with diverse organizations are more successful financially: CEOs of especially successful businesses are 1.6 times more likely to have diversity as one of their top five priorities compared to their less successful counterparts (Devillard et al, 2016). This suggests that a „diversity

bonus“ is inherent in equal opportunity talent development. Quite apart from all the financial arguments, it is in the interest of fairness to offer women and men equal career opportunities and chances for leadership roles.

Many organizations have already acknowledged the importance of talent development. In one recent survey, 75% of companies stated that talent development is currently on the top management agenda (Kienbaum, 2018). This is good news, given that a lack of interest on the part of top management is the largest barrier to the success of leadership development programs (Desvaux et al, 2010; Korn Ferry, 2016).

That said, for 12 years now, the proportion of women in top roles at private companies in Germany has remained low and unaltered at 26% (Kohaut & Möller, 2017). Worse still, the proportion of women sitting on management and supervisory boards at Germany's 200 largest companies is a mere 8% (Holst & Wrohlich, 2018).<sup>1</sup> Clearly the available talent pool is nowhere near exhausted.

## How equal are the opportunities in German organizations?

For the purposes of establishing a solid fact base on the current state of equal opportunity talent development in Germany, the [Chefsache initiative](#) commissioned market research institute

Innofact with an online survey of more than 400 high-ranking executives in April 2018.<sup>2</sup> The results revealed that there is still a tremendous gap between perception and reality. Case in point: 68% of decision makers stated that they believe men and women in their companies enjoy equal career opportunities (74% of the men and 62% of the women). Nevertheless, and despite this overwhelmingly positive assessment, the facade begins to crumble on closer inspection.

For example, only 44% of those surveyed said that their company employs systematic talent management; in smaller companies with up to 500 employees that figure is barely 32%; and even in medium-sized companies employing between 500 and 1,000 people it is barely 34%. Only 29% of respondents reported standardized criteria being used to identify talent. Only 15% said that they use technology-based feedback systems, e.g., feedback apps.

As such, it is hardly surprising that only 27% of the executives surveyed named gender diversity as one of the ten most important challenges facing top management. The benefits of diversity were only clear to a minority of respondents: 67% said that when it comes to promotions and team setups, it is important to find people who work and think in a similar way to themselves. 53% of respondents were not aware of the concept of unconscious bias or had not explored it in any great depth. It appears that the door to

unconscious bias is wide open when it comes to HR decisions. Compensatory measures for promoting women are also relatively uncommon.

So how can an organization prevent its HR decisions being influenced by unconscious biases? By publishing this report, the Chefsache initiative hopes to illustrate various options for employers to tackle this particular challenge. Its recommendations are corroborated by a wealth of research and, above all, practical experience drawn from the Chefsache network. We have also included extracts from interviews with HR managers of Chefsache member companies – DAX Groups and SMEs, nonprofit organizations, the public sector, and academia.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding the finance sector; only companies that provided information on the composition of the relevant top management committees; data collected at year end.

<sup>2</sup> Those surveyed work in companies employing at least 250 people; 97% of respondents are executives or senior or higher-level public servants, 3% are directors.



## Unconscious Bias

As human beings, every decision we make is informed by our personal background, experiences, social stereotypes, and cultural context, without our necessarily being aware. Unconscious biases are preconceptions that we hold about certain groups of people (Bohnet, 2017). By enabling us to quickly assess a person or a situation, they make our day-to-day life easier and reduce complexity. But they also affect our ability to judge accurately and can lead to misperceptions. In a professional development context, they prevent both men and women making objective decisions when evaluating someone's potential and performance.

A broad range of biases exist that negatively impact how women's leadership potential is assessed. The following three biases are especially problematic:

I. **Attribution bias** was first discussed in the 1950s and 60s by psychologists such as Fritz Heider (Heider, 1958), and describes the systematic errors that people make when attempting to explain their own and others' behaviors. For example, successes achieved by men and women are often attributed to different causes: a man's success tends to be attributed to the person, while for women it is often attributed to external circumstances, e.g., being surrounded by a good team (Silverman, 2015). Therefore, attribution biases can have a detrimental effect when it comes to assessing a woman's performance.

II. The **double-bind bias** phenomenon describes the fact that women often have to decide whether they want to be liked or to be seen as professional. Being seen as more feminine means they might be well liked but people won't consider them professional. If they demonstrate more typically masculine behaviors, people will see them as competent but reject them at a social level (e.g., Heilman et al, 2004). Maxfield, Grenny, and McMillan (2015) were also able to demonstrate that certain attributes can be interpreted differently when portrayed by women and men: they discovered that women with an assertive, contentious personality are perceived far more negatively than men with the same attributes. The authors estimate that there is a 35% perceived loss of competence for women who demonstrate 'spirited' behaviors, while the figure for men is much lower.

III. The **mini-me bias** refers to the phenomenon whereby managers prefer to promote talent that are similar to themselves – starting with gender and ranging through origin, age, education, hobbies, values, and other personality attributes. This effect was described back in 1977 by US sociologist and professor at Harvard Business School, Rosabeth Moss Kanter,<sup>3</sup> following her studies on the career progressions of men and women (Kanter, 1977). This effect appears to occur more frequently at higher hierarchy levels. Given that men still make up the majority of managers, female talent tends to lose out.

<sup>3</sup> The term used for this at the time was "homosocial reproduction".



# Organization

How organizations contribute to equal opportunity talent development

Talented individuals face a long, uphill journey through an organization. The successful recruitment process is followed by onboarding, which involves orientation and training in their new role. Over the course of their career, they generally go through formal reviews that offer feedback on their behavior and performance. This evaluation process is frequently handled by line managers or dedicated committees. In organizations with a corresponding feedback culture, talent also receive regular informal feedback about their behavior and performance. In many cases, it is this feedback that determines their subsequent development options and supporting measures. An organization can base its staffing decisions on the capabilities that the talent already possess or have developed.

In this section, members of the Chefsache initiative outline a number of actions to eliminate biases from each stage of the talent cycle. These biases relate back to existing structural biases in talent selection and promotion, which often have a detrimental impact on women. All this leads to women being underrepresented in leadership positions. Therefore, many Chefsache

members believe it is justified to overinvest in promoting women in the short term.

## Recruiting and onboarding

Gender-neutral language in job ads and data-based candidate selection encourage people to make equal opportunity recruiting decisions. Moreover, the support offered during that initial period after joining makes it easier for the recruit to get to grips with their new role.

## Debiasing the recruiting process

### Job ads

Submitting a written application is typically the first step toward joining any organization. And that's where the dilemma begins for organizations looking to recruit more women: there are often more male applicants than female, especially for higher-ranking positions.

There are several indicators that women are put off by job ads containing detailed requirements and attributes that are commonly associated with men, according to, e.g., a study by the Technical

University of Munich (Hentschel et al., 2014).

Women tend to focus on whether they satisfy all the criteria whereas men apply even if they only fulfill some of the requirements. This was discussed, for example, by women attending an “Ask the Women” workshop at innogy.

The workshop was intended to explore the reasons why women are disinclined to apply for management roles. Plus, the hesitation intensifies if the woman in question has suffered a career setback: a study by the Harvard Business Review demonstrated that women who received a rejection are 1.5 times less likely than men to reapply for a management role (Brands & Fernandez Mateo, 2017).

Organizations can counter this reluctance by using different wording in their job ads. One pilot project at Scania, a brand of the Volkswagen Group, aimed at rewriting a technical job ad for female workers. Besides outlining the requirements, the ad emphasized the benefits of the job. Responses to the revised job ad showed a higher ratio of applications from women (almost 40%) – nearly double the average at Scania for similar

recruiting efforts. The absolute number of male candidates remained the same. This example is clear evidence that simply restructuring job ads can help promote gender diversity. A guide to producing gender-neutral job ads is available on the [Chefsache initiative website](#).

### Selection process

Reviewing and evaluating written documentation is another important step in building a diverse workforce. The process calls for clear criteria and, ideally, data-based selection tools to mitigate existing biases, e.g., toward women (Bohnet, 2017) – however well intentioned the HR colleagues might be.

An example from an international service provider shows how, with the help of an automated process, the company reduced the costs of CV screening while boosting effectiveness and the probability of recruiting qualified women. In that specific situation, the business received around 250,000 applications every year. It had also set itself a goal of recruiting more women.

To that end, it leveraged historical data to develop an algorithm for personnel selection. The data included CVs from past female and male applicants, as well as information about which of them had been made an offer and which had accepted. Taking into account the company’s recruiting targets, the program identified the top 5% of all profiles with the highest recruitment probability and automatically invited them to participate in the selection process. Those applicants with the lowest probability of success were automatically rejected. 55% of the total applications received an automatic response via the algorithm, thus allowing the recruiting experts to concentrate on the remaining 45% of CVs. This mechanism also increased the number of women automatically issued an invite by 15%, compared to the number of women who had been selected manually (de Romrée et al., 2016). Of course, it is essential to ensure that the coding of these automated processes does not incorporate any systematic biases.

Of the Chefsache members, IBM is a prominent example of a company using artificial intelligence (AI) to offer more equal opportunities.

observe how candidates interact with both men and women. Second, the evaluation committee automatically becomes a diverse entity, which can help neutralize biases, such as the mini-me bias described before. It also has a clear and positive effect on the candidates’ well-being, i.e., they feel closer emotionally to interviewers of the same gender.

*“Digital transformations represent an opportunity to establish a culture of equal opportunities in a company. That’s why I’m pushing for AI to be used in HR processes. At IBM, for example, the application process involves automated candidate selection without any management input, as well as career consultations and developments that are professionalized with no regard to gender.”*

### Interviews

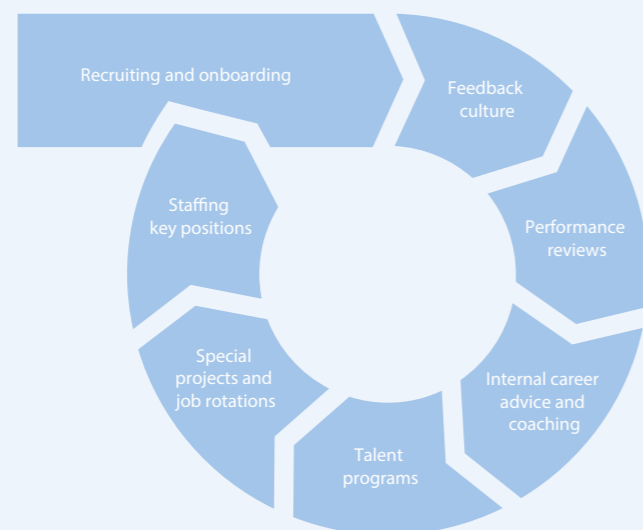
Moving on through the recruiting journey, it is equally important to eliminate biases from the interview stage. Allianz has examined various of its HR processes and selection tools for pain points relating to biases. The company utilized those findings to define new standards and minimize the risk of falling into the trap of stereotypes. Managers responsible for recruiting now have a manual on how to conduct interviews. They are required not to allow personal preferences to guide their decision making.

Several Chefsache members are also making efforts to run interviews as part of a multistep application process and to involve interviewers of all genders. First, this provides an opportunity to



NORBERT JANZEN  
Director Human Resources  
IBM and CHRO IBM DACH

FIGURE 01  
The talent cycle





*"Our guide to unconscious bias supports colleagues in keeping an eye on the requirements catalog when conducting interviews. This makes it much easier to make HR decisions based on real facts."*



DR. SANDRA PLATO  
Head of People Attraction and Talent Management at Allianz

**Support when taking on a new (management) position: Onboarding**

To make it easier for women to get to grips with a new role, several Chfische organizations pair up women in „tandems“ as part of the onboarding process. An experienced colleague supports the new recruit, for example, by helping reach out to contacts and answering questions. Siemens is confident that tandems are a valuable tool when settling into a new role. So much so that this year, every new female manager will be supported by an experienced female colleague during their onboarding. The program is currently being piloted in Germany.

McKinsey has adopted a similar concept. To lay the proper groundwork for a successful career early on, every new female colleague is assigned a „big sister“, a more experienced but equally qualified colleague, when they join the firm. The policy also applies to new male colleagues.

*"From the perspective of a 'little sister', the main benefit is feeling right from the start that you're not alone and that there is someone who you can ask all of those minor and banal questions without worrying. It often leads to a long-term mentoring relationship, or even a friendship, which is the case for me and my 'big sister'."*



CHARLOTTE MOSEL  
Consultant at McKinsey

**Experienced female tandem partner**

Women taking on their first leadership position at Siemens are initially supported by a female tandem partner for six months. The idea is to help them connect with other female managers, establish links between prominent women's networks and Siemens, and, where necessary, provide a safe, confidential space to discuss gender-specific issues. The tandem partner always works in a different area as a

means of maintaining confidentiality and automatically increasing the number of participants.

The process for matching tandem partners is run by one of the largest women's initiatives at Siemens. How the personal relationship actually develops is the responsibility of each participant.



**Feedback culture**

**Regular feedback helps talent develop their strengths and recognize development needs**

„Official“ feedback on personal performance as part of a formal feedback mechanism is important to create transparency on performance reviews and to provide different perspectives. However, according to Yee et al. (2016), women receive this feedback 20% less often than men. That said, the behavioral change triggered by formal evaluation meetings will only ever be very slow, since the observation periods for example, are very long and dominated by recent events and are often seen as nothing more than a formality. This is why they rarely trigger change in the people being evaluated.

This is where informal, development-based feedback comes into play. Observations shared promptly bring about rapid changes in how people act. This can be helpful in managing expectations and priorities, as well as in identifying strengths and improvement potentials. Feedback eliminates the fear of the unsaid and communicates a clear picture of the behavior that an organization wants to encourage.

Poor feedback is often a costly exercise. Managers sometimes develop their own performance criteria for evaluating their team, and those criteria do not necessarily align with the organization's strategy. Possible consequences include misguided commitment and suboptimal organizational performance. This can also contribute to an atmosphere of fear and remarks left unspoken, if even constructive criticism is not welcome. Over time, the quality of work in the organization can deteriorate.

Regular feedback from managers as well as colleagues helps people assess their own performance and identify strengths and

development needs. It can be especially valuable for women to regularly request informal feedback, as it can give them a better grasp of the context for their official reviews. Low-quality feedback also makes it likely that strengths and blind spots will not be detected, making it impossible to deliver targeted training and development opportunities.

There is a lot that an organization can do to embed a positive feedback culture as part of its overarching corporate culture: role models and senior managers should emphasize the value of feedback, give feedback themselves, and also request it from others. In addition, compensation should be decoupled from development-related feedback, trainings and tools should be installed to make it easier to give feedback, and feedback generally needs to be of a higher quality.

**CEO as role model**

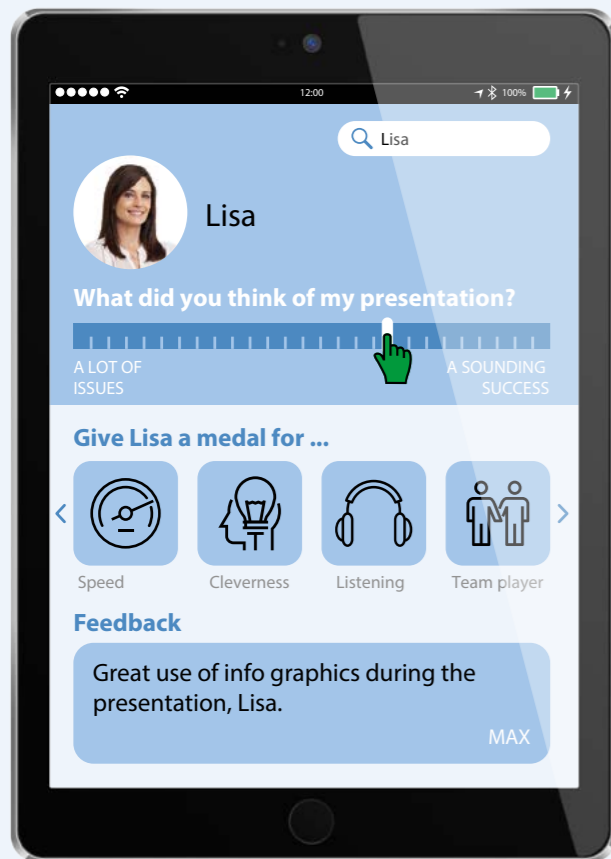
Given their vast reach, top managers have a special role to play when it comes to establishing a feedback culture. They can reinforce the feedback culture in their organization, for example, by regularly requesting their own comprehensive feedback, e.g., sending out a questionnaire to board members as well as direct reports. The key factor is that people go on to reflect on the feedback, e.g., among their fellow managers.

**Development-related feedback decoupled from performance reviews**

Many organizations have moved to separate development-related feedback from compensation. This encourages the growth of an open feedback culture, since the feedback giver does not have to worry about their evaluation affecting the recipient's pay. Additionally, the recipient is able to engage with the feedback openly and without fear. WAREMA has taken a two-pronged approach to this: not only has it

## Feedback apps

Feedback can provide valuable impetus for talent development. In practice, however, there are often hurdles that stop people from giving each other spontaneous, regular, and open feedback. Feedback apps are the answer. They make it possible to collect general feedback from managers and colleagues on a wide range of issues, and to track this feedback over time. The app makes it easy for everyone to submit feedback on various topics.



For example, a leading European online retailer is currently implementing a feedback app. This app allows for both structured and unstructured feedback in real time, for meetings, projects, launches, and campaigns. Everyone can request feedback from their manager(s), but also from each other and from „internal clients“. The app offers a logically structured, easy-to-use list of questions for each type of behavior for which feedback is requested. Users move the intuitive slider to give their answer on their smartphone or tablet. The app permits both positive feedback as well as slightly more critical remarks by way of its playful interface. The system weights the answers

according to the intensity of the collaboration between the person giving feedback and the recipient.

This form of data collection has several benefits. For one, it improves data quality: data collected in real time and in multiple dimensions is more accurate than yearly evaluations, during which both managers and employees struggle to remember details about the person being evaluated. Secondly, these tools save time that would otherwise have to be used inefficiently in searching for observations to discuss. By selecting the appropriate evaluation dimensions, it is also possible to collect specific feedback on personal development goals.

Feedback apps are easy and cheap to develop, and help organizations establish a feedback culture by reducing psychological barriers for the people giving feedback. They are a means to gathering ongoing feedback and opinions from many users. The aggregated data also makes it easier to identify high performers. Yet there are several challenges that need to be addressed: users could potentially try and game the system so that they land among the best 10% – for example, by deliberately downvoting their competition. Organizations also have to take seriously the very human, uneasy feeling of being constantly monitored, and take steps to relieve it (Ewenstein et al., 2016).

introduced regular informal feedback, it also holds „continuous development sessions“. These take place once a year, are always based on the WAREMA competency model for managers, and are completely detached from formal performance reviews. The goal is to continue developing every manager equally.

### Trainings and tools

Feedback is only useful when it is constructive and based on actual situations. Conventional training on giving feedback can support this. One innovative option to expedite prompt and situational feedback in specific dimensions is the use of a feedback app (see p. 18).

Apps collect timely and situation-specific feedback from team members, managers, and other colleagues with whom the person has worked. This generates a 360° perspective across multiple dimensions, which is especially beneficial to people who are less visible in their organization. Aggregating large volumes of data is a reliable means of identifying outstanding talent.

### Performance reviews: Data and standards for greater objectivity

Organizations are required to inform their employees about how they are performing, as well as about their strengths, weaknesses, and development needs. Evaluations of performance and behavior are often used to determine the extent to which targets have been attained, to structure the development process, and to identify talent, promotions, etc.

Generally speaking, the person's immediate manager handles their reviews. However, if only one individual is responsible for evaluating their progress, the results are reliant on a single opinion that could potentially be influenced by biases.

For this reason, organizations should ensure to gather opinions from multiple people for reviews, to eliminate as much bias as possible from reviews, and to calibrate reviews across all employees so as to provide fair feedback.

### Reviews involving multiple people

To create as broad a base as possible when evaluating employees, organizations need to consider more than just their manager's input. Feedback from colleagues at various hierarchy levels, team members, and „internal clients“ is vital. This will become increasingly important as the working world transitions to become digital and agile, a world with flexible working hours and location models, where managers spend less physical time with their team members. All this makes it difficult to evaluate performance fairly. But there are technical solutions available to help create a broader view of a person's behavior.

### From gut instinct to objective evaluation

When it comes to reviews, women frequently score worse than men, especially on their suitability for management roles: the likelihood that women will receive negative, subjective feedback about their past performance is 1.4 times higher than for men (Cecchi Dimeglio, 2017). Compared to their male colleagues, women tend to receive worse evaluations even if they possess similar attributes. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, attribution and double-bind biases can have a negative impact on how women are perceived (see p. 10). Secondly, flexible working from a home office and part-time work, which account for almost half of all women in employment (Crößmann & Mischke, 2016), also has a negative effect on the visibility of male and female employees. Yet many managers still implicitly place equal value on commitment and physical presence in the workplace and give part-time workers worse evaluations (Blessing et al., 2016).

## Unconscious bias training at Evonik – breaking down prejudices and making better decisions



Evonik manages its group-wide diversity activities through a Diversity Council. One of the council's five mission phrases involves sensitizing people to unconscious biases and states: „We are aware of our conscious and unconscious biases as an impediment to diversity and consistently work on methods and strategies to overcome them.“ As part of this work, the council has launched a worldwide series of workshops for managers and talent, which is designed to boost everyone's awareness of their own biases.

The goal of these workshops is for the participating managers to become aware of unconscious biases and highlight strategies for tackling them. They address a range of issues, including: How can I prevent prejudices

and automatisms arising in stressful situations? How can I better manage my own set of values toward my colleagues? What conscious actions will help us better utilize diversity? So far, more than 200 managers and talent have attended one of the worldwide workshops.

At Evonik, promoting diversity as a means to reducing unconscious bias is considered to be a vital contribution to the company's financial success: as a reflection of the varying expectations, mindsets, and perspectives in the markets and in society, diversity is a key driver of competitive ability and the power of innovation.

Both effects are amplified when managers are untrained and ill prepared to run feedback sessions and only hold them for appearance's sake. Their (spontaneous) opinion is based not on specific situations they have experienced, but on gut instinct. This can be triggered by the so-called „primacy-and-recency“ effect. We often have particularly strong memories of the first and most recent situation in which we encounter someone – and those override memories of their long-term performance. Furthermore, unstructured evaluations are a breeding ground for confirmation bias: people often only see what they expect to see, e.g., in terms of someone's performance and behavior. They go on to give feedback about those particular aspects disproportionately more often. Regularly scheduled reviews that follow a structured process offer fewer openings for these types of biases and help keep them in check.

Chefsache members have come up with a number of actions to make performance reviews more objective and to evaluate both women and men fairly: standardization and regularity, training on unconscious biases, transparency on evaluations, and data-based performance reviews.

### 1. Standardization and regularity

One key element when it comes to standardizing evaluations is the use of clear criteria. The majority of Chefsache members have developed a specific competency model with concrete examples of behaviors for the purposes of defining and evaluating their employees' key skills.

At Volkswagen AG, for example, managers conduct yearly evaluations as part of the performance reviews, using standardized criteria and a consistent rating scale. Full and complete transparency on criteria allows the employees being evaluated to prepare by gathering several of their own examples specific to those criteria.

Preventing confirmation bias requires that reviews take place at regular intervals. This way, the employee's performance is documented in the long term, and the performance review is guaranteed to have a broad enough basis.

### 2. Debiasing trainings

Trainings and courses that make managers aware of unconscious biases and how these function during performance reviews, and that also give them the tools to deliver objective evaluations, have proven to be highly effective. Many Chefsache members have reported excellent success in this area (see p. 20):

- Evonik and Volkswagen AG offer leadership trainings that discuss the relevant competencies, rating systems, approaches to observing and evaluating potential, as well as the associated biases. At Evonik, more than 200 managers and talents attended a global series of workshops designed to encourage better awareness of unconscious biases.
- innogy is introducing unconscious bias workshops for managers and for all its employees, with the aim of increasing awareness in their day-to-day work.
- Siemens developed a global online training on unconscious biases, targeting its entire workforce. Three months later, more than 160,000 employees around the world have completed this voluntary 30-minute training.
- At the Federal Ministry of Defense, evaluations are basically justiciable and demand a strictly formalized process. Managers also receive specific training on certain psychological aspects of perception.

### 3. Creating transparency on evaluations

Another action for sensitizing managers to potential biases in their evaluations involves creating transparency on their evaluations of men and women (see „Management“ section).

An analysis of the number of men and women achieving a certain rating revealed structural differences in evaluations and sparked further discussion. Germany's Federal Ministry of Defense (BMVg) is investigating its processes to identify equal opportunity evaluation behaviors and potential gender- or working-time-specific differences, and its intranet page provides a list of all rating levels to be published.

### 4. Data-based performance reviews

There is an ongoing debate as to whether reviews are more objective when they focus exclusively on someone's track record, i.e., their past performance, or an assessment of their future potential. According to at least one theory, assessing potential by way of an uncertain „glimpse into the future“ is significantly more prone to biases that disadvantage women. For example, one study showed that venture capitalists tend to think of young female entrepreneurs as „young and inexperienced“, while young male entrepreneurs with the same amount of experience are seen as „young and promising“ (Malmstrom et al., 2017). However, women are also often rated more critically based on their past performance than men (Snyder, 2014). This phenomenon is also known as the „performance evaluation bias“ (Desvaux et al., 2017).

Though there is no conclusive solution to this issue as yet, there are data-based tools available to foster greater objectivity: when performance-related data in an organization is comprehensively captured and analyzed, historical data can be used to derive success factors for the next steps in a person's career. By comparing these against the success factors for

## Merit-based selection provides opportunities for all talent



Bundesministerium  
der Verteidigung

The Bundeswehr abides by the principle of „merit-based selection“ as set out in the German constitution in Article 33 Para. 2 of the Basic Law (GG): managers must submit a very extensive and standardized assessment of performance and potential, including a development forecast, for each soldier and public servant requiring evaluation.

In the Bundeswehr talent roundtables, all male and female candidates who generally satisfy the requirements of the (specialist) departments that are actively recruiting, and who want to take part in the selection process, are systematically presented and ranked based on their three most recent evaluation results plus additional standard requirements profiles. Depending on the profile these can include, e.g., previous posts, qualifications,

physical prerequisites, foreign language skills, mobility, or deployment experience. They are transparent for everyone involved and also serve as information and guidance for the talent, helping them identify and focus on key requirements to be met and choices to be made to reach their own professional career goals.

These talent roundtables are attended by HR, the (specialist) departments that are actively recruiting, as well as independent, external parties (e.g., equal opportunities officer, representative from the staff element equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusivity). The entire panel provides input on the eventual HR decision.

the organization itself, not only can the talent's past performance be assessed more accurately, but also their future potential. This approach helps mitigate biases and can even reveal unexpected links between specific attributes or behaviors and a talent's success: evaluating potential becomes far more precise and more objective.

The advantage of data-based performance reviews becomes very clear if we look at sabbaticals, for example. Managers often unconsciously judge longer employee absences as being a sign of poorer performance. As a result, these employees might be overlooked when it comes to filling key positions. In actual fact, though, a sabbatical can have a positive effect on someone's future performance, since they return full of new energy, which is extremely useful in a leadership role (Davidson et al., 2010). Only longer-term analysis can show whether there are permanent trends being established here.

Another interesting example are the people who receive promotions in an organization – are they the ones with the best performance reviews? If there is no link between performance and the likelihood of being promoted, it is vital to investigate the organization's performance management system and promotion culture.

### From individual reviews to talent roundtables

Introducing talent roundtables that involve a larger group of managers discussing talent instead of using individual evaluations alone is another lever to boost objectivity and equal opportunities in talent management. Following an evaluation session, the managers submit their assessment of the talent's potential to an „evaluation committee“ or talent roundtable. This committee is made up of managers from various areas and should be as diverse as possible. The panel compares and calibrates the evaluations and qualifications of the people

being discussed, thus allowing for comparisons across departments and objective ranking. This in no way implies that there is forced (normal) distribution of evaluations – on the contrary, many organizations have switched their focus to identifying high and low performers. As such, talent roundtables are ideally suited to identifying the top talent in an organization and making them visible to management. The results of these calibration meetings are also used to identify people who should be placed and remain in talent programs, to trigger job rotations, international transfers, etc., and to make strategic decisions on promotions and succession.

When talent roundtables are carried out for the majority of the workforce, not only can all individual evaluations be fairly calibrated, but talent at all levels can be discovered early on. If it is not feasible to discuss the entire workforce during a talent roundtable, e.g., due to the organization's size, then the best use for a talent roundtable is to pinpoint those employees who show potential, track their development, and give the confirmed talent appropriate visibility in the company. Chefsache member Evonik is just one example of a company using its talent roundtables this way. BASF has opted to specify focal points when selecting the profiles to be discussed so as to give visibility to specific groups, e.g., all employees on parental leave or women at a certain level.

Chefsache members have identified the following factors to make certain that talent roundtable decisions are objective and to prevent biases: clear evaluation criteria, trained and diverse decision making committees, facilitation by third parties, close involvement of HR, and fair access to talent roundtables for talent.

### 1. Clear evaluation criteria

All evaluations, not only individual ones, need to be based on clear and consistent criteria, i.e.,

should stipulate the competencies a talent needs to possess in a specific role. Ideally, these are endorsed by specific behaviors. For example, the BMVg uses highly detailed standards to evaluate all soldiers at every level and in every function. Special guidelines have been put in place to help define consistent process structures and evaluation standards for talent roundtables.

### 2. Trained and diverse talent roundtables

For evaluations to be as impartial as possible, roundtable members must be trained to suppress biases in their own perception and when estimating potential (see p. 21). Making the roundtable as diverse as possible produces the broadest possible array of perspectives. Individual organizations have established operating criteria for talent roundtables, e.g., a minimum share of 50% women and minorities in management roles. Just how important the composition of evaluation committees can be is demonstrated by a recent study carried out on behalf of the North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Justice: the chance that female junior lawyers with the same past written grades as their male colleagues were being awarded the next-highest grade in the verbal examination was 2.3 percentage points lower if their examination board was composed only of men. However, that gap did not exist if the board contained at least one woman (Glöckner et al., 2018).

### 3. Facilitation by third parties

Independent, specially trained experts can serve as a neutral party to steer discussions and possibly mirror and challenge overly hasty (unconscious) perceptions. Involving third parties can therefore make talent evaluations more objective.

At BASF, as well as at Lufthansa and Volkswagen AG, talent roundtables are supported by HR consultants and HR business partners, and/or experts in diversity and inclusivity. They act as

mediators, interjecting during the discussion whenever they notice unconscious assumptions or other patterns in the session, and are explicitly tasked with challenging evaluations and HR decisions.

#### 4. Close involvement of HR

The HR department can support the implementation of development actions that are recommended for talent by a roundtable. At BASF, HR business partners have access to an overview of talent nominations as well as seminar registrations. This enables HR to systematically support the development of a talent.

#### 5. Fair access to talent roundtables

In most organizations, not every talent is discussed at a talent roundtable. As such, talent nominations generally depend on the person's direct manager, their reviews, and their motivation for being nominated. Various biases can then come into play and prevent a fair proportion of women being considered for inclusion in talent programs. Fixing a target quota can increase the share of women nominees. To counteract unconscious biases, Evonik has set itself a very clear target for the nomination of women into its groups of talented individuals. The urgency of this measure is highlighted by the company's move to reverse the burden of proof for a nomination: managers now have to provide explicit justification if no women have been nominated as talent from their area. This „reverse nomination“ process involves the HR department approaching the relevant manager and running through a list of all potential candidates. If the manager is unable to give any information about a particular woman, they are obliged to give special consideration to her the next year. This approach has already led to several female talents becoming a focus for their managers.

#### Clear communication of evaluations

At the end of the evaluation process, the person who has been reviewed is notified of their results. This typically forms part of the annual formal individual reviews carried out by their manager.

In Chefsache organizations, performance reviews with managers take place at least once a year, during which the results are discussed using clear criteria and logical benchmarks. A good review also includes elements of coaching: based on an evaluation of past performance, the manager can suggest various prospects for the talent, e.g., training or promotion.

Managers stay in constant contact with HR, which empowers them to tackle these conversations, e.g., at Lufthansa. HR provides information about career opportunities and options for career coaching. Managers can pass on this information to their talent. Embedding these conversations in the organization's culture makes it easier for people who are more reserved to clearly state their career wants, since they are actively encouraged to do so.

It is important that these meetings take place regularly and that there is follow-up on any actions agreed. Six-monthly meetings are ideally suited to discussing target agreements and development plans. However, they are not a replacement for more frequent informal feedback.

## Internal career advice and coaching

### Recognizing strengths and defining goals

When someone has a goal in mind, they can purposefully work in that direction and expand their network by adding good coaches and relevant decision makers. Professional career advice can help talent plan their careers. Career advisors support people in using the resources available to them in a targeted way, reflecting on their own strengths and, based on those insights, defining their career goals and the means to those ends. This increases their chance of achieving those goals. Chefsache members report that men take advantage of these services more often than women. As a result, several organizations have set up services specifically aimed at women to actively foster their advancement into leadership positions.

Career advice is often delivered by external service providers, but they rarely have sufficient insight into the organization and its leadership culture. It can therefore be helpful to offer career advice in-house as well. These types of advisory services are not reliant on the person's direct manager, but take into account specific circumstances and options available within the organization.

EnBW, for example, has extended in-house career advice since 2016. Participants of its CareerCompass program have given very positive feedback. They reported that the advice helped them refine their profile and come up with a solid strategy for their next steps toward a leadership role.

Coaching can also give clarity on development and career matters. Chefsache members have developed a wide variety of options here. As part of its global CareerGuru program, experienced managers at Google support their male and female colleagues in one-on-one sessions covering everything from work-life balance,

## CareerCompass: In-house career advice at EnBW



EnBW's CareerCompass program came into being in 2016. It is specifically aimed at women who have the potential to take on leadership roles given their past professional successes.

The program offers three separate consultations involving analysis of the person's CV and their understanding of leadership, as well as their personal strengths and competencies, identifying motives and goals, and defining suitable next career steps. Those who have completed the program have reported feeling encouraged by being able to discuss their own strengths and competencies with an external party. They also gave very good feedback on the planning aspects of the consultations. Doreen Piel, responsible for HR and consulting at EnBW Perspektiven GmbH, said: „All women who took part in the pilot said that they were able to refine their profiles, and now have a better strategy in place on their path to a leadership position. This reinforces their own sense of initiative while simultaneously sensitizing managers to talent development.“

Andrea Scharenberg completed the program and reported on her experiences: „Spending time on a deep dive into my career trajectory so far, my ideas about leadership, my talents, and how they compare with the reality of management was excellent preparation for me and took away a lot of my uncertainty. The three coaching sessions were really hard work but extremely instructive. The consultants asked a great deal of me and gave me some challenging homework assignments to complete between sessions. I also spent a lot of my free time carefully weighing up the final results.“



personal and professional development, role and location transfers, communication and image, to dealing with performance reviews and conflict resolution. The BMVg offers coaching specifically for managers. Siemens has a coaching program for women that was initiated by its female employees. Lufthansa offers specific coaching for women that helps them successfully make plans to rejoin the workforce. Volkswagen AG's KOMPASS program offers guidance to female talent aiming for a potential management career track in the company. As part of the program, participants have the opportunity to experience their capabilities as a potential manager through presentation, discussion, and conversation scenarios to run a project, to boost their visibility in their own department, and to identify their general strengths and potential development needs. The KOMPASS program focuses on the participants (mentees) sharing ideas and experiences with an experienced manager (mentor). The mentors pass on their own know-how, give advice on development tracks within the company, and offer support during orientation or with career planning. They also provide insights into formal and informal structures and help build relationships with new contacts.

Advice from HR experts can be accompanied by sponsoring as another way to help with career planning. Not only do sponsors support and advise young talent, they also create real-life opportunities, make connections, and actively open doors. Cornelius Baur, Managing Partner at McKinsey, proposes developing an ambitious multiyear plan as a fundamental component of any successful sponsoring relationship.

*„Having a career goal keeps your eye trained on the key steps in your own career. As a sponsor, I can help young talent formulate goals and define milestones. Afterward, I can support them in capturing those opportunities and successfully overcoming challenges.“*



DR. CORNELIUS BAUR  
Managing Partner Germany and Austria at McKinsey

## Grow2Glow at Siemens

In 2016, eight female employees at Siemens, all of them certified coaches, founded a volunteer coaching initiative called „Grow2Glow“ to promote the development of female talent at Siemens. The idea was to provide access to coaching for all women in the Group. And it was very well received: the initiative rapidly grew into a global network that now boasts 90 male and female coaches in 16 countries in all fields and divisions.

All certified coaches offer interested women in the target group three coaching sessions each to discuss their career development.

Efforts are made to ensure that there are no organizational ties between the coach and coachee that might impede the neutrality, objectivity, and confidentiality of the coaching relationship. Grow2Glow is self-organized and bases itself on Holacratic principles in relation to its own ongoing development and further growth of the network. As such, it is already role modeling a new work and leadership culture. The coaches do not know the coachee's manager, nor is there an existing hierarchical or business relationship between the two parties, which guarantees impartiality and objectivity and ensures that the sessions remain confidential.

## SIEMENS Ingenuity for life

Since 2016, almost 300 women have taken part in these coaching sessions that, by developing female colleagues, are contributing to greater diversity and innovation at Siemens. CHRO Janina Kugel is especially invested in training internal coaches, which has given a visible boost to the initiative's popularity and growth.

As recipient of the „Best 5 Spotlight Projects“ Werner-Von-Siemens Award, this initiative has won global recognition. This example proves that staff can make a significant contribution to female talent development even where it is not institutionalized, if only the organization gives them the necessary freedom to do so.

*„It's amazing what you can achieve in three coaching sessions. I was able to really get to grips with my own ambitions, which gave me a lot more confidence. My next step will take me to our US office in Orlando. The coaching network is absolutely fantastic!“*



CORA HERRMANN  
Sales Representative, National Sales

## LUFTHANSA GROUP

### Coaching at Lufthansa: A “business plan” approach to rejoining the workforce following parental leave

When people take parental leave, they often have no idea what will happen when they return. Concrete planning and working with management to jointly develop an approach to both the leave and reentry creates clarity for everyone involved. And even though this “business plan” is bound to change over time, it establishes common ground on which to build commitment on both sides.

The “business plan” typically contains five elements:

- How long will parental leave last?
- Who will handle your duties during that time?
- How will we stay in touch during your leave? How often and for how long will we contact each other?
- How do you plan to keep up to date with the latest news and developments?
- When you return, do you want to work full-time or part-time?

Supplemental coaching with an external coach before and/or after parental leave can be helpful in supporting the person's specific situation and facilitating a smooth transition and return to work.

## Coaching top performers in the Bundeswehr



The program „Agenda BUNDESWEHR IN THE LEAD – Active. Attractive. Alternative“ comprises training and development activities for leaders, which are closely interlinked and advocate a shift in consciousness within the Bundeswehr. The first step is to prioritize „good management/leadership“ at the most senior level of management. To this end, coaching teams made up of internal army representatives and external parties spend a day shadowing the respective manager on-site. They use 360° feedback completed in the person’s operational environment to develop individual, tailored concepts.

Follow-up is also available to the managers in the form of individual coaching sessions, as well as participation in specially developed two-day compact seminars. These cover current issues relating to leadership and leadership behaviors, including talent development (candidate selection, evaluation, potential assessment, equal opportunities, unconscious bias), as well as giving attendees a chance to reflect on stress and conflict situations and share their experiences.

The coaching sessions have consistently received positive feedback. Top managers have called them „very efficient“ and „enriching and beneficial on a personal level“. Additionally, soldiers and civil contractors on the ground have confirmed that they have seen a significant improvement in their managers’ individual leadership competency.

### Talent programs

Chefsache members define a talent program as the systematic selection and development of talent. Talent programs give organizations a chance to recognize and further develop the potential of their top talent. Although there is often much heated debate about the targeted selection of talent, talent programs do offer a wealth of benefits:

- Talent needs to be discovered, networked, and encouraged early on to prepare them for strategically important roles. This includes building their core competencies as well as their networks and commitment to key issues and projects within the organization.
- The people who are part of a talent program automatically form a talent pool, which creates transparency on talent throughout the organization and across business areas, and makes it easier to establish a structured succession process. It can also increase an organization’s diversity, e.g., through teams with diverse setups.
- Being accepted into a talent program means being acknowledged for your past performance, and it highlights new prospects. This binds talent to the organization.

Talent programs typically contain multiple formats, e.g., training to build management competencies, coaching, networking events, and special project tasks. WAREMA produces and constantly updates development plans as part of its talent program, with the aim of consistently fostering talent. Participants in this program have a choice of career track (specialist, project, or management track), and this is reflected in their individual development plans.

It is vital that the talent pool remain dynamic. New talent must be able to join at any time, and there must always be an option to remove someone from the talent pool. However, it seems that “fair access” to these talent programs is not a given in every organization: women are frequently underrepresented in talent programs. Chefsache members believe there are two reasons for this. First, women are not considered as often for nomination and inclusion in talent programs. In several member organizations, significantly fewer women are nominated for talent programs than men – the percentage is even lower than the percentage of women in the workforce as a whole. Second, the programs are not focused enough on the needs of female talent and so women are not as interested in them. Talent programs often require international placements or frequent relocation. Young parents sometimes find it difficult to move home on a regular basis. Instead, they would prefer individual career solutions to maintain a balance between work and family. One of the resulting challenges that organizations are facing is therefore to tailor talent programs to the needs of the talent and to get the timing right for nominating participants.

Chefsache members are trying various means of increasing the share of women in talent programs:

#### Self-nomination

When employees are given the opportunity to nominate themselves for a talent program, they are able to attract attention on their own, which makes them less reliant on their manager’s opinion. This option is particularly helpful in organizations where talent and management do not work in the same location, and so, talent are easily overlooked. TÜV Rheinland is one of many organizations that have had very good experiences with the concept of self-nomination for development

## Self-nomination for talent programs at TÜV Rheinland



Managers use objectifiable indicators of potential to identify talent in their area of responsibility and propose them for the appropriate development programs. Since 2016, talent in Germany have been able to nominate themselves for the program. The Young Professional Conference (YPC) shows that this approach can also affect the composition of the participant base. YPC is a two-day conference for 40 to 50 talents that involves, for example, discussions and workshops about strategic topics at TÜV Rheinland as well as individual feedback from the company’s leading male and female managers. While the proportion of women attending this event in 2015 was a mere 30% (12 female attendees), this rose to 35% in 2016 and to 48% in 2017 with 23 female attendees total – almost twice as many as in 2015. It’s important to note that both self-nominations and nominations by a manager are subsequently validated using a standardized diagnostic process, known as a „potential check“.

activities. Self-nomination was introduced for a talent conference among other events in 2016. The overall attendance rate for female talent in 2017 was almost double that in 2015.

#### Nomination quotas

To make evaluations more objective and thus improve access to talent programs, several organizations are also introducing assessment centers in addition to the process outlined in the section on evaluations. Assessment centers are intended to provide the most objective evaluations possible of the nominated talent. In an effort to avoid biases, Evonik, for example, calls on external providers, and its internal decision-making committee has also completed training on how to estimate potential. As soon as talents are added to the talent pool, they are subject to regular

## „Young and Wild“ EnBW talent program



How can we encourage talent in a highly technical environment? One example is the „Young and Wild“ talent program at Netze BW GmbH, the largest grid company for electricity, gas, and water in the EnBW Group. This program gives talent a chance to think outside the box of their own frontline roles to grow their own networks and to boost their visibility to management and the board.

Every 18 months, the program looks for one to two employees – male or female – where possible from each of the 15 departments at Netze BW and who have been with the company for no longer than five years. The one-year project starts with a project mandate agreed between the project coordinator and overall management. One of the board members is responsible for mentoring. The young team is required to look beyond the limits of their own areas to develop creative, unconventional solutions, check whether they are viable, and drive them forward.

The team is recruited from among the nominations made by management. Selection criteria include competency, motivation, and willingness to perform their frontline activities. A variety of methods are used to sensitize managers to the need for equal opportunities for women and men in projects and leadership positions:

- At staff meetings, special attention is paid to ensuring that a report is available concerning the percentages of part-time workers and women.
- Diversity is a key agenda item at management forums and leadership events.

And the results have been impressive so far: women make up 41% of the latest „Young and Wild“ cohort. Both of the previous cohorts boasted similarly high figures at 33% and 41%. That’s an incredible accomplishment given that women account for just 18% of the entire workforce at Netze BW GmbH.

individual assessments that are calibrated in multistep talent roundtables. EnBW also continuously sensitizes its managers to matters of diversity. One positive example that demonstrates diversity is the internal talent program „Junge Wilde“ („Young and Wild“).

### Diversifying talent programs

Several Chefsache members have developed programs with different focal points intended to boost the appeal of talent programs to women. Fraunhofer, for example, offers four talent programs that address different target groups. One of those programs is specifically for women. Tailored programs can also serve as a recruiting tool that shines a light on opportunities for female candidates within an organization. Fraunhofer was able to corroborate the success of this women-only

talent program by way of a “twin study”: participants generated more scientific output and were promoted to higher-ranking positions more frequently than their peers.

### Getting the timing right

Finding the right time for nominating talent calls for an organization to find a balance between the talent’s potential and previous experience, and their maturity for new duties with greater responsibility. The criteria for promotion can also be placed under the microscope. Several Chefsache members are weighing up whether to remove international placements as a mandatory criterion for promotions. Volkswagen AG has gone one step further, creating an option for talent to have their parental and care leave recognized as a potential criterion for being promoted into management.

## Correctly evaluating the effectiveness of career programs



„Fraunhofer TALENTA“ is a targeted and integrated support and development program to recruit and develop female scientists. The program has three tracks that address the different levels of career progression. The primary aim of the program is to offer financial support for the organizational units to recruit and continuously develop female scientists and managers. It also hopes to pull focus onto the career development of individual female scientists at Fraunhofer.

In 2017, Fraunhofer reviewed the effectiveness of TALENTA to come up with solid evidence about the program’s contribution to increasing the share of female managers. The main concern was to survey the institute’s directors and highlight the value of the program to the institutes from a decision maker’s perspective. When it came to rating the program, however, the final results also incorporated opinions about success factors, stumbling blocks, and consequences from the point of view of the participants and their managers. They were also surveyed in the course of program monitoring and during a focus group workshop. The goal of the review was designed to allow any perceived effects to be traced back to TALENTA rather than to other factors.

For this reason, criteria such as scientific output, promotion into higher-ranking positions, and the perceived career success of each TALENTA participant were compared against one man and one woman at Fraunhofer. These particular Fraunhofer employees did not take part in the program but were similar to the participants before they entered the program in terms of age, education, specialism, and job title.

The review findings were overwhelmingly positive and revealed that TALENTA participants are promoted into higher-level positions disproportionately more often, produce significantly more scientific output, and have considerably more positive views of their career success so far. The program also played a key role in employee retention for managers.

As such, the review was a resounding success that managed to identify the program’s strengths and effective levers, and opened up additional paths for its ongoing development.



## Supervisory boards need more women

Since early 2016, German listed companies and companies subject to full co-determination have been obliged to reach a fixed quota of 30% of the respective underrepresented gender for new postings to supervisory boards. That usually means a quota for women.

When electing people into supervisory board roles, the pool of top managers is often the first port of call. Given that this pool is usually predominantly male, the number of potential female supervisory board members seems rather small. This trend runs contrary to the purpose of the Corporate Governance Code that mandates greater diversity in supervisory boards. Furthermore, Chfsache members are proud examples of the fact that there are many highly qualified women with an interest in leadership. Traditional approaches to staffing (e.g., supervisory board members only come from the finance department) should therefore be subject to rigorous testing.

It might be possible, for example, to expand the pool of female candidates by creating potential lists of previously verified top female managers when appointing people to vacant positions.

Deutsche Telekom has installed extra support in the form of its „Supervisory Board Readiness Program“ – training specifically for female managers to prepare for posts on the supervisory boards at its subsidiaries. In this program, women and several men spend six months preparing for a position on a supervisory committee. That experience is then reinforced through a „Keep the Readiness Training“, which prepares the participants to satisfy future requirements and tackle future issues. At the same time, these programs create a pool of potential candidates for supervisory board positions at the parent companies.

innogy is also making efforts to smooth the path to supervisory board roles for women. The company offers needs-based training to that effect. So far, the training program has run four times with a majorly positive outcome: two-thirds of the participants have taken on a supervisory board role following this training.

## Special projects and job rotations

Many organizations spend an inordinate amount of time and effort attracting external talent (e.g., employer branding, recruiting, headhunters), often to the neglect of their internal job market. Yet there are many possibilities available for seeking out future leaders in-house.

It is just as important for talent to be visible through successful work in key projects outside their own department, making them eligible to take on additional duties. However, experience among Chfsache organizations has shown that in many places, women are less frequently nominated to special projects. For example, they are less noticed by managers and are routinely overlooked when it comes to filling management positions.

Generally speaking, it is the manager who decides whether a talent should be considered for a new task or special project. Whether the talent is actually nominated depends on several factors, including:

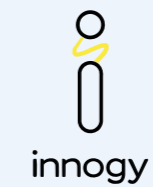
- **Fear of loss:** managers sometimes worry about losing talent if they nominate and make them available for projects outside their own department.
- **Access:** whether the manager even hears about a key project typically depends on how good their own network is within the organization. In this instance, whether a talent is nominated or not is simply down to luck.

Another challenge for talent is the increased workload that often appears when they take on a project. And that is something that affects both men and women: a Women Matter study (Devillard et al., 2013) revealed that women (64%) and men (61%) barely differ in their willingness to sacrifice a part of their personal life for the



From left to right: Dr. Joachim Schneider, Andrea Dorsch-Kellermann, Annette Grabbe, Marie to Baben

## Job rotations at innogy



At innogy, the job rotation model is not just an international or cross-departmental mechanism. Managers also try out other roles across hierarchies to continue developing themselves and their leadership skills. One pilot project saw a female manager take over the division head's role while the latter went on vacation. A consultant handled her duties for the duration.

Annette Grabbe, Head of Finance & Controlling and Sales Steering at Netzservice and innogy Telnet, reports on her week standing in for division head Joachim Schneider, who basically left his phone in the office safe while he went on vacation: „That was an incredible show of trust and really impressed me, but it was also a little daunting,“ says Annette Grabbe. It forced her to step outside her comfort zone. After all, the job didn't just mean sitting at Schneider's desk. „From the start I had enormous respect for the fact that I was making decisions on his behalf. But even the division heads work with routines, templates, and fixed decision-making paths.“

Marie to Baben had a similar experience. She took on a consultant role for Annette Grabbe's grid development team for the duration of the rotation, which meant that she was in charge of 13 team members. And it was a completely new

experience: „At the first meeting, I was still asking myself how people were going to deal with this role swap. But everyone was super open. Several team members approached me during the week to ask my opinion. That was a fantastic feeling,“ she says. And the most important thing: „Every night I went home with a million new thoughts to consider and a smile on my face.“

In addition to having many positive experiences, Annette Grabbe and Marie to Baben also identified improvement levers, such as how to structure routine processes more efficiently. They shared their thoughts with each other at the end of the experiment. Although that was not the end of the process: „I'm going to spend a few days shadowing Annette in the near future,“ says Marie to Baben. She hopes that this will help her better understand her colleague's decision making.

„Seeing things from someone else's perspective enriches you on a professional level and a human one. Everyone benefits from that. The feedback from the people who temporarily take over our jobs helps us rethink many of our own patterns of behavior,“ says Annette Grabbe. Both she and division head Joachim Schneider plan to loan out their desks again soon.

sake of rising up the ranks to top management. Nevertheless, working on projects represents a significant challenge for part-time employees, i.e., mainly for women (Holst & Friedrich, 2017): they are often unable to complete the extra work during their limited work hours.

Shoring up the internal job market can help mitigate managers' fear of loss and simplify access to projects: a portal listing current vacancies creates transparency for interested talent as well as for their managers who, in certain circumstances, might need to recruit someone new. Precisely defined processes for identifying talent and filling vacancies, as described above, also increase objectivity within staffing processes and support ease of access.

*„It's not just about professionals looking outside the confines of their own departments. It's more that our employees benefit from personally getting to grips with new challenges and responsibilities and growing in their role from trainee to employee or manager.“*



UWE TIGGES  
CEO innogy

Besides working on key projects, future managers can improve their competencies and visibility through job rotations in other areas or countries. There are several potential advantages, including the fact that „rotation chains“ can help prevent vacancies in the first place, which reduces the fear of loss among management (see „Management“ section). Talent can also prove their worth in

other contexts, building their reputation among a larger circle of managers. This type of rotation does not require any additional work. innogy is one of many Chefsache members to have introduced job rotations.

### Filling key positions

Objective evaluations can help appoint new people to key roles and promote talent.

From the organization's perspective, though it is important to support talent in their development, it is also essential to specifically nurture them to take on those positions in the organization that create the most value. The talent evaluations outlined above are ideally suited to this purpose. Talent roundtables can discuss any positions coming open in the medium term and begin the search for suitable candidates early. Once the time arrives to appoint new people to those positions, the process is quick and easy. This lowers the risk to the business.

Many organizations see the appointment of successors as one-off events that are usually triggered by managers leaving the company unexpectedly. Replacing them is often a reactive effort that has nothing to do with systematic talent development. There are several risks in this approach: potentially suitable talent can be overlooked or not developed in time, which can lead to stoppages due to job openings and untapped potential. It is impossible to match available people in the pool to requirements this way. According to Korn Ferry (2015), organizations currently only look at around 13% of „skilled professionals“ and 38% of experts in middle management during succession planning, thus neglecting significant sections of the talent pipeline.

Less institutionalized succession planning favors biases in the appointment process. These frequently put women at a disadvantage. If jobs

are only advertised pro forma and are tailored to people who have already been selected, employees who are not highly visible stand little chance of success.

So how can we institutionalize succession planning? Chefsache organizations have identified multiple success factors to secure equal opportunity succession planning for strategically relevant positions while giving particular consideration to women: transparent job ads, candidate lists focusing on diversity, diverse decision-making committees, easier access to talent platforms, and options for self-nomination.

### Transparent job ads

Producing job advertisements that are fully transparent – in contrast to recruitment that happens „behind closed doors“ – is a prerequisite to ensure that all candidates have a fair chance at the role. And that is not just true of senior positions: from middle management upward, the proportion of women is often no higher than in top management, meaning that suitable female candidates can be cultivated here as well as for top positions. Therefore, it is especially important to consider every potential candidate for positions at this level.

### Candidate lists focusing on diversity

To ensure that they have a diverse pool of candidates from which to recruit, various Chefsache members have specifically addressed candidate lists. At BASF Corporation in the US, half the employees on a short list have to satisfy the criterion „diverse“, e.g., with regards to gender or ethnic minority. innogy also requires that at least one woman be on the candidate list for succession appointments at the highest levels of management.

Reminder: There's a promotion waiting for you!



Google opened up promotions in technical departments to self-nomination several years ago. Statistical analysis indicated that career starters with three to five years' professional experience nominated themselves far less often than all other employees.

The company subsequently decided that an experienced and highly respected manager should send out e-mails to actively encourage this group to apply for a promotion. This action increased the level of self-nominations to match that of the other groups.

### Trained and diverse decision-making committees

As explained previously, trained and diverse committees make more objective decisions.

### Easier access to talent platforms

Making it easy to access talent platforms increases transparency for male and female talent. Organizations can offer talent the option to use online tools to update their own profiles (including development plans and professional background). HR constantly monitors the profiles as a control mechanism (Desvaux et al., 2017). And any company following in the footsteps of Deutsche Telekom, which also gives its managers access to talent platforms, will find it easier to seek out talent. This also helps grow the talent pool beyond those people that managers know personally.

### Options for self-nomination

As in many industries, Chefsache members have had good experiences with offering self-nomination options. These give talent with

minimal visibility thus far a chance to call attention to themselves. When it comes to promotions, Google has noticed that young women in particular are less likely to take advantage than their male peers – though it has managed to offset this effect by using e-mail reminders.

## Talent to value: The critical 5%

The most important roles in an organization make a disproportionately large contribution to its success. In one study, O'Boyle and Aguinis (2012) analyzed performance across various fields, from academia to competitive sports. The authors discovered that „10% of productivity originates in the top percentile, and 26% of output is generated by the best 5%. That means the „top 1% generate ten times the average output, and the top 5% generate more than four times as much as average“.

In large organizations there are probably just a few hundred people who are truly critical to its success. As a rule of thumb, they account for less than 5% of the roles in an organization (Charan et al., 2018). These roles are too important to fill with the wrong people.

Thus, the first step is to identify these key roles. This is no mean feat given that they are not necessarily located at the top of the hierarchy. According to Charan et al., (2016), 70% of experienced managers wrongly identify the most influential positions in their organization.

Among that critical 5%, there are people who solve the organization's most urgent issues, develop vital innovations, have built informal relationships within the organization, and are therefore able to drive change and promote collaboration, thus making the organization healthier and more productive. One such critical role might be a long-established manager to whom future talent turn asking for advice. Or perhaps an experienced senior analyst who possesses valuable insights into data that has been collected. Or maybe just someone who is highly charismatic and makes his/her own working environment more attractive to others as well.

As soon as the key roles have been identified, the organization can move on to check whether the right people are in those roles. To that end, the core competencies for each role need to be defined alongside the competency profiles for managers.

CEO.works has implemented this „talent to value“ approach for its clients and developed a tool called „TalentMatch“ that pairs suitable profiles with the requirements for key roles. This application stores information about the key roles and the requisite skill profiles. It can also host employee profiles containing information about their specific skills and leadership personalities. An algorithm then uses a traffic light system to suggest various staffing options as a basis for talent discussions. A „green“ talent has a profile that is suitable for the respective role. Red means that the person is not suitable for a specific role given the facts available.

Talent profiles can be anonymized, i.e., have any images, names, and gender removed to prevent biases in the subsequent discussions. This increases the level of objectivity when evaluating profiles and positions. TalentMatch can also help boost visibility for talent in middle management if their profiles are stored in the tool. Women especially can benefit from this as they are more heavily represented in middle management.

## Working World 4.0

Digitization is paving the way to a cultural and structural shift.

The flexible structures available through Working World 4.0 present a myriad of opportunities to realize the potential of talent. These include the possibility of mobile workplaces – so people can work anywhere, any time – as well as internal communication platforms and virtual conference rooms. These developments make it easier to deploy new working models such as reduced full-time hours or job sharing.

*“Flexibility facilitates performance, especially for women, thanks to the additional options for participating. This in turn reinforces intrinsic career motivation, a primary driver for women.”*



PROF. DR. ALEXANDER KURZ  
Chefsache member and Executive Vice President Human Resources, Legal Affairs and IP Management at Fraunhofer Gesellschaft

The keyword is flexibility. In 2018, the Chefsache initiative partnered with market research company Civey to survey 5,000 employees. Findings showed that 46% of women think that flexibility as regards time and location – both core elements of the new working world – is the main advantage of digitization. That is 5 percentage points higher than for men.

In this context, flexibility means more than simply moving workstations from the office to people's homes and issuing all employees with a mobile phone and laptop. It is more a structural, cultural transformation. It extends beyond workplace design to cover management mindsets and behaviors. Management has to be

convinced of the benefits of flexible working. Otherwise it is impossible to arrive at a leadership and evaluation culture that values results over physical presence.

Additional help comes in the form of creative solutions and an openness to sharing responsibility. At BASF, Group leadership works part-time and each member is assigned both male and female deputies. These deputies can stand in during the remaining working hours while simultaneously gathering management experience. Lufthansa provides a central budget that can be used to set up co-management roles. One exemplary use for this budget is to finance, for a limited time, the potential additional costs generated when there are two 60% positions covering one position.

*“The concept of Workspace 4.0 is breaking down the old structures and driving cultural rethinking within the organization. Open-office structures with flat hierarchies are changing talent development and contributing to equality of opportunity.”*



DR. CHRISTIAN P. ILLEK  
Member of the Board of Management for Human Resources and Legal, Deutsche Telekom

Talent being less physically visible to managers is often a barrier to promotion. A study by the University of St. Gallen surveyed 1,166 employees at various levels of management at leading Swiss companies. Of those, more than one-third said that flexible working models negatively influence career development (Sander, 2016). And in a representative Chefsache survey of 5,000 employees, more than half the men and women questioned agreed that flexible working damages your

career (57% of women, 55% of men). Until now, the majority of employees who work part-time has been female (Crößmann & Mischke, 2016), which is why the flexibility of the new working world will be especially valuable to them. However, there is still some room for improvement: only 15.7% of the more than 400 managers surveyed in another Chefsache survey said that they actively encourage part-time work.

In an effort to drive this cultural transformation, Deutsche Telekom has instituted its four-pillar „Future Work“

model: topic-specific collaboration in open-plan offices, a management style that focuses on results and trust, desk sharing to increase efficiency, and mobile offices to enable flexible working and a better work-life balance.

A culture of results over presence – it’s an urgently needed revolution that can be especially beneficial to female talent. A toolkit for structuring flexible working models is available in the 2017 Chefsache report „Flexibles Arbeiten in Führungspositionen“ (currently available in German only).



## Part-time managers at Aktion Mensch



Carolin Nierhoff is Head of Asset Management & Controlling at Aktion Mensch and works part-time. This 42-year-old business economist is married and has two children in elementary school.

### Can you tell us about your career so far?

After completing my vocational training as a bank clerk, I went on to study business management and train as a CFA charterholder. My career began at a management consultancy and then the treasury department at a pharmaceutical firm. I’ve been working at Aktion Mensch since 2010, always part-time, and right now I have a 60% role. In 2014, I moved into a management position in Controlling, which came with added HR responsibility. Since then my role has grown steadily, with several new areas of responsibility, and over time, my team has expanded to five people.

### What conditions have to be met for part-time management to function successfully?

Flexibility in terms of working hours and location is important, both on my part and on the part of my employer. At home I need to be super organized with regards to my family, but of course modern technology and being able to work from my home office are a huge help there. Another vital factor is trust – my manager has to trust me, and I have to trust the members of my own team. The team doesn’t see me working part-time as a disadvantage.

### How else has Aktion Mensch supported you in your role as a manager?

The company’s attitude is very important. For Aktion Mensch, equal opportunities for men and women is a prominent issue. Aktion Mensch advocates permeable structures and equal career opportunities. A tailored range of part-time models supports women, and obviously men as well, in management positions to achieve a better balance of work and family. And everyone agrees that management does not mean constant physical presence. This family-friendly environment is the reason why part-time work and management do not rule each other out. The diverse training and coaching available also helped me prepare very specifically for my new role, as did the intensive support from my manager and the HR department.

### What do you think is your contribution as a role model and pioneer for other women in management positions – given your part-time role?

Basically, the fact that I am actually living that life proves that it works really well. I hope that my example helps empower other people who work part-time, especially women, to consider taking on a management position.

### What would you recommend other people looking to follow a similar track?

The first step is to make sure that you don’t exclude the idea of a management role from the outset. Instead, think about whether it might be an option for your ongoing development. It makes good sense to plan well and communicate openly about processes and priorities. The nature of part-time work means it is extremely important to coordinate with managers and colleagues about how you want to communicate with each other, who will take on which tasks, and what substitution policies are in place. That also calls for transparency within the team.



# Management

How managers contribute to equal opportunity talent development

Most organizations today have countless tools at their disposal for developing talent. Yet many employees feel that their development is inadequate. Management plays a major role in this perception: according to one survey, four in five respondents stated that they did not feel adequately supported by their direct manager (Rochus Mummert, 2016).

Managers clearly have the power to energize talent development in their organization. Therefore, organizations need to guarantee that managers actually use the tools provided. This section begins by discussing informal talent development tools where the impact depends largely on the manager using them. It goes on to profile four levers that can be deployed by organizations to motivate management toward equal opportunity talent development.

## Informal talent management by proactive managers is especially effective

Alongside more formal mechanisms, informal tools are a key element of successful talent

development. They help managers address each talent's individual needs.

Below we highlight the three most important informal talent development tools for managers: situational feedback, mentoring, and sponsoring.

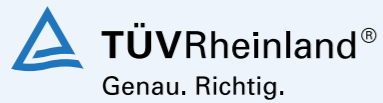
### Situational feedback

Through situational feedback, managers can make a significant contribution to the success of a talent, as long as the feedback is constructive and based on actual observations. The less time that has passed between the situation and the feedback, the easier it is to accept and implement.

As explained in the "Organization" section, positive feedback can raise the mutual esteem held by the talent and their manager. It simultaneously builds trust because the team member knows that they will receive feedback on their activities. This has been confirmed by a relevant study: it was discovered that employees feel a closer bond with their company when managers conduct regular performance reviews (according to the Gallup Engagement Index 2016).



## TAFF mentoring at TÜV Rheinland



„The networking and feedback from my mentor was the perfect support for me!“

Dr. Dagmar Carmele (35) holds a PhD in physics, joined TÜV Rheinland in 2013 as an expert on radiation protection and waste management for radioactive waste and, one and a half years later, took part in the TAFF mentoring program as a mentee.

„When a colleague told me about TAFF, it piqued my interest right away. Since I'd previously spent a lot of time on-site with clients, it was important to me to gain some deeper insights into TÜV Rheinland as a company, and to explore potential development opportunities. But I was also personally intrigued by the workshops, such as ‚Communication and Self-Marketing‘ and ‚Self-Management and Time Management‘. My training in the natural sciences didn't really afford me much insight into those areas.

During the mentoring sessions, the views expressed by my mentor, the managing director of a TÜV Rheinland company, pushed me to analyze my own issues from a different perspective and to improve my self-image. The personal feedback was extremely helpful for my development. Early this year, I added a level of international responsibility through my role as Global Business Development Manager Industrial Components. And the contacts I made during the TAFF program are still helping me in my current position.“

### Mentoring

Mentoring relationships often emerge organically, e.g., when people have similar interests or work together, this builds a corresponding trust base. Mentoring is typically a job for experienced employees in the organization who share their knowledge with future talent, known as “mentees”.

Drawing on their own experience in the organization and working world in general, the more experienced colleague can give the talent valuable advice on their career and personal development. Mentoring generally also includes practical coaching: the mentor is able to critically and impartially assess a talent's strengths, goals, and conflicts as well as point out new prospects and development opportunities.

The deciding factor is that the mentor is aware of their function as a role model and willingly shares their knowledge with the mentee.

To reinforce this awareness and establish a culture of mutual support, Google, for example, relies on a network comprising more than 6,000 of its employees. They support each other in their development and learning. This “Googler toGoogler” network lets volunteers spend a certain proportion of their work hours offering one-on-one mentoring to colleagues, producing learning materials and teaching courses in their specialist field.

Several organizations support the growth of mentoring relationships – particularly for women – through a formal matching process. For example, innogy has developed the “MINT” mentoring program to specifically support women with backgrounds in the natural sciences and technology with their personal and professional development to foster the sharing of knowledge and experiences and to intensify internal communication across

hierarchies, organizations, and departments. TÜV Rheinland has taken a similar approach: the company launched its internal mentoring program “TÜV Rheinland Angebot für künftige Fach und Führungsfrauen” (TAFF) in late 2013. 75 participants have since completed the program, and the fifth round started in April 2018.

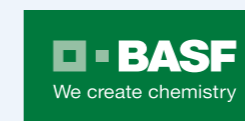
A formal matching process has the advantage that people can be connected with each other who might otherwise never have met. Everyone benefits from fresh input and new perspectives. Where mentoring has come about on a purely informal basis, the sense of mutual trust is usually stronger, since both sides are building on a previously established personal relationship.

### Reverse mentoring

Companies including Allianz, BASF, Siemens, and Deutsche Telekom offer role swaps in the form of reverse mentoring. Managers get to learn more about what makes their talent tick. Reverse mentoring encourages knowledge transfer across and between all hierarchy levels, enhances mutual understanding, and opens up new perspectives on one's own role.

Deutsche Telekom, for example, brings together digital natives and the Group's top managers. This enables junior staff to pass on their expertise to a senior manager in a modern and agile environment. Not only does this increase visibility, it is common for the official program to

## Reverse mentoring at BASF helps people understand parents



Gender-diverse mentoring relationships can help generate a better understanding of female and male young talent perspectives, and take account of these as part of talent management. Furthermore, reverse mentoring can also raise awareness of the needs of parents at work. BASF's Career Plus mentoring scheme matches young talent in the family-building phase of life with an experienced manager. The manager works in a conventional full-time role and is someone who has not yet considered flexible working models or family roles. As part of this reverse mentoring, the senior manager is afforded a first-hand glimpse into current working models for young parents, e.g., part-time management or job sharing.

*„When it comes to talent development, we think it's important for our employees to look outside their own areas and experience as many different points of view as possible – whether by working in another country or department, or sharing knowledge and experiences with their colleagues in different phases of life. Mentoring programs have been a boon to us – for promoting female talent in particular, but also in boosting our managers' awareness of ways to balance work and family.“*



MICHAEL HEINZ  
Member of the Board of BASF

lead to additional sessions in which participants continue sharing experiences and coaching. Allianz has launched a similar program that emphasizes the associated opportunities for mentees to expand their personal network into top management and get to know the business environment outside their own field. BASF uses this to make experienced managers more aware of the living situations and needs of parents.

### Sponsoring

Sponsoring is a step beyond mentoring. A sponsor serves as a champion for talent within the organization and actively campaigns for their advancement. We briefly mentioned sponsoring in the previous section, but only from the organization's perspective. And there is room for improvement there: studies have shown that although female talent often benefit from mentoring, that is rarely true of sponsoring (Carter & Silva, 2010). This makes it all the more necessary for managers to be conscious of their responsibility in this respect.

Male and female sponsors can, for example, recommend talent to be involved in key projects so that they have a chance to prove their

capabilities. In practice, however, it is vital to prevent long-established networks and "insider" cliques being reinforced that do not promote equal opportunities.

## Four factors encourage managers toward equal opportunity talent development

If managers want to successfully develop talent, they need to master formal and informal tools and use them purposefully. Four factors are especially helpful in motivating managers to adopt these behaviors (see Figure 02). All four factors are equally essential to success (Basford & Schaninger, 2016). As such, all four must be considered so as to embed equal opportunity talent development as an integral part of the management role.

### 1. Understanding and conviction: Managers engage more actively in talent development when they are convinced of its benefits and understand what actions they can take

Equal opportunity talent development is only a priority to managers who understand the advantages it offers. This includes added value for the organization as a whole: the organization becomes more attractive to high performers, which generates financial benefits through improved performance. The manager's own department also reaps rewards of equal opportunity talent development. Active talent management helps managers get to know their team better so they know how to optimally deploy and motivate them. The department delivers better results, which has a positive effect on its image and on the manager's own advancement. The department also becomes more attractive to highly motivated colleagues and draws in new talent – which further improves the department's performance. Active and regular communication of these benefits through various channels and by the CEO increases awareness throughout the organization. An appeal for fairness can also increase engagement with talent development.

In many companies, people's understanding of the benefits of talent development is overshadowed by their fear of loss – their fear that talent, once developed, will leave the department to reach the next rung on their career ladder. Therefore, a manager's own interests can stand in the way of talent development.

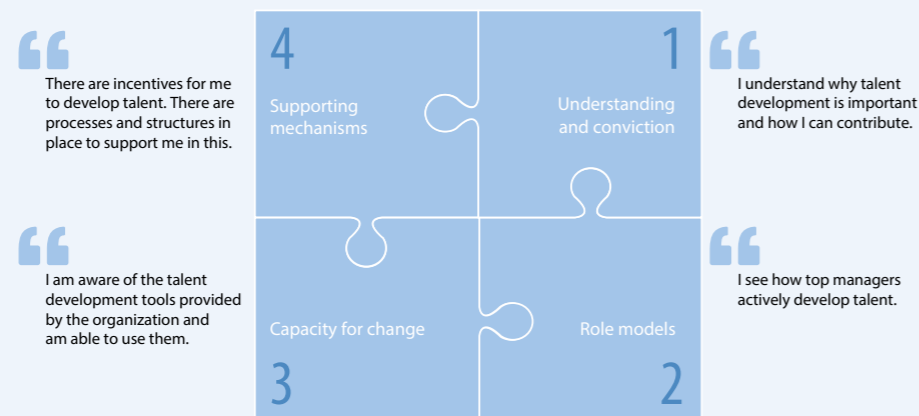
There are several options to mitigate the fear of losing hard-won talent. One approach is to simplify the succession process. Managers at Deutsche Telekom, for example, have had access to a company-wide talent pool since January 2018. When a talent leaves a department, the pool makes suggestions as to who could replace them. For a pool like this to function efficiently, it has to have a logical structure, e.g., talent is sorted by expertise, hierarchy level, language, and location.

Another option would be a fund-like solution, such as that implemented by one company in the pharmaceutical industry, to compensate for talent who switch departments. Every department pays a fixed annual sum into a common fund. When a talent leaves a department, e.g., for a job rotation or secondment, the department is paid a kind of settlement from the fund to offset the loss of talent. This money can be used, e.g., to finance recruiting activities or a temporary replacement, or to run trainings.

The success of female managers is tangible proof that equal opportunity talent development is workable. Klöckner & Co. regularly profiles successful women leaders on its internal communication platforms. Not only does this create visibility for the women within the organization, they also serve as role models for female managers and prove that women can lead successfully in typically male-dominated industries.

FIGURE 02

The influence model: Four factors that turn managers into real talent developers



## 2. Role models: Top management acting as role models for equal opportunity talent development helps motivate other managers

Managers often emulate top managers, either consciously or unconsciously. Top managers serve as role models when it comes to mindsets, behaviors, values, image, and actions. Which makes it even more important for them to continue exercising that role model function in talent development. By shifting their own focus to equal opportunities, they can motivate other managers to do the same. In this way, top managers have a key role in establishing equal opportunity talent development.

Every member of the board needs to visibly give priority to the subject of equal opportunities and diversity. Evonik has set up a Diversity Council, a Group-wide steering committee to develop and steer Evonik's overarching diversity efforts.

Angela Broer, a manager at ZEIT, explained just how important this role is. Observing role models helped her derive the guiding principles for her own leadership style. Plus, visible and active talent development automatically places expectations on other managers.

Organizations can create opportunities for managers to fulfill their function as role models. For example, senior managers at the BMVg serve as mentors to future leaders. This gives them a chance to develop talent while simultaneously communicating how important it is to obtain management commitment.

The key factor is that the members of an organization's board realize their role model function. Various formats are available to visualize this commitment. For example, a CEO could express their willingness to mentor a small, select group of talent for a year.

When managers pursue mentoring of potential candidates, it is a chance to bind talent to the organization early on. For example, Chefsache members Lufthansa and McKinsey, along with five other companies, are currently inviting young talent to enter a "Digital Shapers" competition in which teams are tasked with developing solutions to challenges in a digital context. As they work to develop their solutions, these future leaders are supported by digital experts in top management at the companies hosting the event. These top managers also sit on the judging panel and offer individual mentoring to the top-ranking entrants.

## Diversity takes priority at Evonik



The Diversity Council instills diversity at Evonik at an organizational level. The committee comprises members of the board, representatives from the executive boards, and other senior managers. It steers the continuous development of Evonik's diversity strategy and ensures that effective measures are implemented in the company as a whole. The placement of this issue on the top management agenda is a signal to the entire organization of diversity's high priority at Evonik.

## A visible success: Female managers at Klöckner



The number of women in management at Klöckner & Co., an international steel and metal distributor, is rising steadily. By 2020, the company wants one in five managers to be female. Klöckner & Co. are relying on various communication channels to make this evolution tangible throughout the company, including its internal network, Yammer, and the employee magazine INSIDE. These recurring reports about the Group's female leaders are already having an impact: managers go to great lengths to profile their female employees and generally afford it a higher priority on their agendas. Female managers are also actively engaging and making themselves available to be profiled. This development will be accompanied by

a number of other activities and will be discussed on social media channels.

The chairman of the board is also an important ambassador. Gisbert Rühl constantly refers to the importance of female leaders to the company. In addition, various policies are now in place to ensure that women have the strongest possible representation. Management at the first level has global, qualitative gender diversity targets, and headhunters are asked to present 30% female profiles when recruiting externally. This approach has put the company on a good path. The share of female managers has grown from 8% to 15% and one thing is very clear: this is just the beginning.

„Role models helped me derive the guiding principles for my personal leadership style.“

Angela Broer, 45, is a full-time managing director at ZEIT Akademie and leads the Business Development division at ZEIT Verlag. She lives in Hamburg with her husband and two sons, aged five and seven.

„I have gone through multiple development programs, especially early in my career in strategy consulting, and they all helped me in terms of specialist expertise. I never had a mentor. But over time, I worked with some fantastic women who became my role models. I watched my personal role models carefully and tried to identify their most outstanding attributes and adapt them for myself. That's also my advice to young talent: „Even if you don't have the opportunity to take part in mentoring programs, watch how other people work. Discover those aspects that you think are great and combine those insights with your own strengths to arrive at your personal leadership style. Management has a lot to do with intuition and that, combined with other women's experiences, can be an excellent foundation for a successful career.“ I also strive to communicate those ideas at the ZEIT Akademie. The lecturers who we sign up for our seminars are women and men who are role models. Their specialist expertise along with their personal experiences make them exceptional. Practical tips, first-hand reports, and even life hacks help develop close ties between them and the participants.“



DIE ZEIT





„I consider it a duty to share my experiences.“

Uwe Janssen is married and has been VP Innovation & Research at Deutsche Telekom since 2011.

### For you as a manager, how important is talent development to the company?

Developing talent for specialist and management roles is one of the core aspects of my function as a manager. After all, we will only be successful if we retain the best people and consistently support and encourage them.

### According to a survey by Rochus Mummert, four in five respondents stated that they did not feel adequately supported by their direct manager. What do you do differently from your colleagues?

Talent management is pretty much a dilemma in itself. On the one hand, the best people are always heavily involved in tasks and projects and are essential to the company's success. On the other hand, talent development takes time and requires having the freedom to continue developing skills and experience. It's the manager's job to make it clear that development is now a mandatory component for specialists and managers alike. Massive support in this respect comes from a company's tools, such as target management, as well as platforms that encourage networking, enable job visits, and offer coaching and mentoring.

### Would today's talent be able to follow in your personal career footsteps? As a manager, what advice would you give to your talent?

My own career has been supported by a talent management program. So for me it's a duty to share my experiences – with the talent to be developed, and with managers who themselves need to foster talent.

*“It should be laid out in every manager's job description that they support employees to the absolute best of their ability.”*



DR. SILKE WECHSUNG  
Head of HRD & Diversity,  
TÜV Rheinland

Managers can also exercise their role model function by positively highlighting their commitment to talent development. The organization can support this, e.g., by offering incentives and awards.

Gratitude for one's own development journey ideally leads to reciprocal behavior toward the younger generation. For example, Uwe Janssen at Deutsche Telekom emphasizes how his managers' role modeling of talent development helped shape expectations of his own management style and the need to “give something back”.

Role models help establish an understanding of leadership in which equal opportunity talent development is a given. Chefsache members expect talent development to play a more important role the more that role models visibly engage in this area. Step by step, talent development will anchor itself in managers' understanding of their role.

### 3. Capacity for change: Tools and trainings for equal opportunity talent development

Managers need training to be able to encourage and develop talent with an equal opportunity mindset: How do I identify talent? What criteria are important in evaluations? How can I avoid unconscious biases?

If talent is only identified based on gut instinct, the resulting decisions are especially prone to bias, frequently to the detriment of women. For example, the mini-me bias is more prominent in the talent selection phase the more unclear the requirements of a talent, and the more leeway is afforded in how managers interpret talent development.

Trainings on how to select talent and estimate potential are of primary importance. Managers must get to grips with the relevant tools and be sensitized to the topic of equal opportunities. Many Chefsache members have introduced unconscious bias training (see the “Organization” section). The BMVg has incorporated the topic of equal opportunities into its army-wide training for both military and civilian top personnel, making it a fixed component on the management curriculum.

In some organizations, however, managers are less willing to attend this type of training. Given their function as role models and their considerable impact on evaluations, that is highly problematic.

For one, their noncompliance sends the wrong message to other managers. Second, they fail to develop the necessary talent development competencies. These patterns must be shattered to empower a critical number of managers to deliver equal opportunity talent development. For this reason, several Chefsache members oblige their managers to take part in these trainings once a year.

A slightly more subtle alternative to increase demand for these trainings is to integrate (equal opportunity) development capabilities into the criteria catalog for evaluating managers. Google, for example, runs annual 360° feedback among its teams in which it asks about the quality and regularity of their manager's development activities. The BMVg has added gender and equal opportunity competency into performance reviews for managers and established them as a fixed element in job ads.

If an organization has no internal resources available to run the relevant trainings or talent development programs, outsourcing to external

## Equal opportunities in management training in the Bundeswehr



Topic-specific trainings teach „equal opportunity competency”, empower managers to conduct evaluations without discrimination, and boost awareness of gender-specific communication in the course of approval and feedback sessions.

In this way, the Bundeswehr's training on gender and equal opportunity competency enables managers to identify and evaluate gender-relevant facts, evaluate them, and

translate the resulting insights into actions to promote equal opportunities for female and male employees and/or to actively work towards similar actions. A certificate of attendance can be relevant to the manager's career as well: when advertising official posts with management responsibility, equal opportunity competency is usually part of the required personality profile and is presumed to be present in subsequent interviews.

providers or women's networks is a good option. The latter can work with management to offer their members coaching formats for female talent, workshops, and networking events. This also allows an organization to offer comprehensive mentoring.

**4. Supporting mechanisms: Processes, structures, and incentives encourage managers toward equal opportunity talent development**

Cleverly placed incentives can motivate managers to actually use the available talent development tools. This calls for formal mechanisms that reward managers for equal opportunity talent development and acknowledge its importance.

Supporting mechanisms like these are fairly uncommon and rarely institutionalized. The result: many managers do not see equal opportunity talent development as a priority. In fact, only 5% of board members at global firms reported running effective talent development and embedding it within the corporate culture. They have no incentive to drive these efforts and break old patterns of behavior (Kehoe et al., 2016).

Establishing incentives in existing structures, processes, and systems helps encourage managers toward equal opportunity talent development. Institutionalization itself also sends out a clear signal inside the organization. Chefsache members have suggested three incentives to specifically drive the development of female talent: gender metrics in target agreements, transparency on gender metrics, and nonmonetary incentives.

**Gender metrics in target agreements**

Several companies have found that gender metrics in target agreements for managers create incentives to develop female talent. Other companies have explicitly decided against them. Companies that have target agreements

report that managers are more conscious and engaged with their responsibilities and function in talent development. As a result, they make more targeted decisions about development activities for female talent, thus increasing the share of women in management roles. The corporate landscape is completely divided when it comes to target agreements and the resulting data gathering: almost half of respondents to a Chefsache management survey said that their company had target quotas for women (47%). Of those, 17% said that these targets were relevant to bonuses. 41% said that their company collects and communicates data about quotas of women.

There are various reference values and structural options available for use in target agreements. They can be used to track, for example, the share of women in terms of new recruits, development programs, and promotions.

Target agreements come in a wide variety of formats, depending on what fits best with the company's culture, or on the progress an organization has made so far in this area:

- **Time frame:** target agreements can be introduced as a permanent measure or, as a first step, for a limited time only.
- **Responsibility:** a collective target applies to all women at a certain level, while individual targets are tailored to each individual manager.
- **Granularity:** targets can be set for the company as a whole or specifically for each business area.

The Volkswagen Group brands Porsche and AUDI have opted to establish non-bonus-related target agreements to permanently increase the share of women. Their experiences prove that this works:

AUDI AG has set itself targets of 8% at the first management level and 16% at the second management level through 2021. Since 2018, it has been a priority to integrate these two metrics into the target agreements for all employees who report directly to the board. The company has used these long-term targets to derive annual targets as KPIs not only for AUDI AG as a whole, but also for the relevant business areas. The degree of target attainment serves as the basis for annual reviews. The level of target attainment at AUDI AG level is critical, since this is a collective target toward which everyone is working. Once a quarter, the company issues a report outlining the current status. This report is also explicitly designed to create the best possible transparency between divisions.

*"I am optimistic that our strategy is working. We want to collaborate with our managers to permanently increase the share of women at every level."*



WENDELIN GÖBEL  
Member of the Board of Management for Human Resources and Organization and Labor Director at AUDI AG



**Bonus-related target agreements for promoting women at Porsche**

Measurable and binding commitments to equal opportunities have formed part of the target agreements for all managers at Porsche since 2013. Beyond the requirements stipulated by law, Porsche management has set division-specific targets for the share of women being promoted to management. These targets are based on the gender ratio in the highest tariff groups. To support these efforts, flexible working models, such as job sharing in management, empower people with families to enjoy an uninterrupted career.

The impact is clear for all to see: there have been significantly more women in management since the targets were introduced.

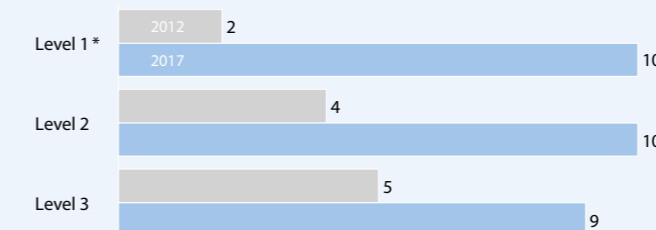
*"Our binding targets have made sure that management are taking seriously their mandate to increase the share of women. It was important for us to adopt a fair approach based on the existing ratios of men and women in our talent pools."*



ANDREAS HAFFNER  
Member of Executive Board Human Resources and Social Affairs at Porsche AG

FIGURE 03

Share of women in management at Porsche  
Percent



\* Level below the board

That said, nowhere near all members of Chefsache have defined detailed metrics for percentages of women. Their reasoning is that it is impossible to rule out false incentives for promotion decisions when quotas come into play. Five main side effects can cause issues here:

- The person receiving the promotion is stigmatized as a “quota woman”.
- A cultural “breach” happens due to the (false) perception that a promotion was not based on performance alone.
- Male talent migrates due to (perceived) poorer chances for promotion.
- “Alibi nominations” of unsuitable female candidates simply to meet targets and receive bonuses.
- Slower filling of open vacancies since the search for female candidates mandated by the target agreement takes more time.

Based on their experiences and interviews with experts at other companies, the Chefsache members have identified success factors for introducing percentages of women into target agreements (see info box).

innogy has set a target to increase the share of women at the first and second management levels below the innogy SE board by mid-2022 – to 25% at the first level and to 20% at the second. To that end, the board has agreed to an average 40% placement quota for management roles at the highest levels of management at the innogy Group. In the second half of 2017, the average placement quota in the innogy Group across all segments met or exceeded that target. Around half of the positions were filled by a woman. The Volkswagen AG has set itself a target quota for all management levels. There are individual rates of increase for its specialist departments, which depend on pipeline fulfillment, current status of female employees, etc.



## Success factors for introducing gender metrics to target agreements

If a company moves toward using gender metrics in target agreements, the following points need to be considered:

- A plausible, easy-to-understand change story that supports the process also generates conviction.
- Supporting activities that allow women to be flexible in their management roles help fill the pool of female candidates. Suitable measures include childcare, flexible and mobile offices, and part-time management.
- Establishing KPIs as a collective target avoids female candidates being shunted between departments to no real benefit.
- Temporarily introducing these metrics can be enough to shift the organization’s focus onto this topic.
- Targets have to be achievable to keep side effects to a minimum. When formulating targets, it is important to take account of the following factors:
  - Current percentage of women
  - Metrics broken down at middle management level to create transparency on individual contributions to the target and to spur staff on
  - Available internal and external pipeline, e.g., the number of people with a relevant degree or vocational qualification.
- Transparency on target attainment in individual organizational units increases peer pressure among colleagues, especially with regard to collective targets.

# On target quotas for gender balance in practice at Volkswagen AG



We sat down for an interview with Elke Heitmüller, Head of Diversity Management, Sabine Schönberg, HR Director Quality Assurance Brand and Management Development Quality Assurance, and Andreas Klar, Head of Quality Assurance Brand Volkswagen Cars to explore the challenges of getting women into leadership positions.

## Why did Volkswagen AG introduce a target quota for women in management?

Heitmüller: As a global automotive Group and provider of sustainable mobility, Volkswagen needs a diverse workforce, including at management level. Management at Volkswagen is still predominantly male and German. For that reason, we believe that defining KPIs to gradually increase the share of women in management is an enabler of a very necessary paradigm shift. The resulting quotas will create a better balance of female and male, national and international managers in the medium term.

## Why is diversity so important?

Heitmüller: We believe that diverse teams are much more capable of satisfying volatile future requirements. Markets are becoming more international, the purchasing power of women is still rising, so we also need to make ourselves more international and more female.

## So it's not just about gender equality?

Heitmüller: Obviously, this is also an issue of equal opportunities. We want every employee in the Volkswagen Group, regardless of gender, origin, religion, and so on, to be able to have a career as befits their capabilities. Balanced teams of decision makers are not an end in themselves, they are a business factor. They help us increase effectiveness in change processes, and discussions of strategically important matters are of significantly better quality and produce better results.

Klar: I support that completely. Neither our customer base nor our employee structure is entirely male. A gender balance at every hierarchy level leads to a multidimensional

understanding of the expectations people have of our products. Heterogeneous teams help us focus the quality of our products more on existing requirements. I have had really good experiences with teams that work this way, especially at the Kaluga plant, where one-third of each management team is made up of women who come from a technical background.

Schönberg: Any industry expert will tell you that taking the various facets of a product into account during the product creation process requires a range of experiences – male, female, German, non-German. In other words, diversity ensures that we capture the largest possible intersection of customer requirements.

## What does that mean, exactly?

Schönberg: Here's a good example. We used to only have men working in quality assurance and development. In the 1990s, they agreed to install a certain type of seat cover. All the men thought it was terrific! As a woman who sometimes wears a skirt it was an absolute nightmare! The seat fabric was incredibly scratchy. But none of the men had noticed because they only ever tried it out when they were wearing long trousers. Yet women accounted for a good third of the buyers of that particular model.

## You focused especially on the advantages of mixed gender teams. Mr. Klar, what risks do you think exist in practice?

Klar: I don't think there are any risks really, and that's been my experience in practice as well. A team's success depends on the team members' personalities and competencies, not their gender. When all team members are open and trust each other, they can produce truly excellent results.



Elke Heitmüller



Sabine Schönberg



Andreas Klar

## Ms. Heitmüller, what approach did you take to the quotas for management positions?

Heitmüller: We opted for a fact-based approach: How high is the share of female graduates in specialisms that are relevant to Volkswagen? And what is the proportion of new female recruits in the relevant departments? How do these female employees develop compared to their male colleagues? How high is the share of female managers in these areas? One thing quickly became clear: the share of women in leadership and management is too low, comparatively speaking. There is a gap between what is possible and what is reality.

## How large is that gap?

Heitmüller: In specialisms that are relevant to Volkswagen, the share of female graduates is around 30%. So we now have a target to attract that same percentage of our new recruits. We're already well on the way. Already 20% of our academics are women. So it would only be logical to find this 20% reflected at all levels of management. That is a goal that we are realistically likely to reach soon. All of our employees, men and women, go through various training programs when they first join us. If we then fail to deploy half of those women in line with their qualifications, that is not very cost effective.

Schönberg: That's true, but since not every female graduate wants to work for a car company, we do have to think outside the box and reach out internationally as well to cover the demand. And if that isn't possible, then we have to open the door even further. It isn't just about achieving a 30% share of women in every area. Specialist departments such as electrical engineering are not that popular with women. The share of female graduates in those fields tends

to be in the single figures, whereas marketing and sales boast more than 50% women due to the higher numbers of female graduates. And that is why we haven't always single-mindedly pursued a target of exactly 30%, but rather a number that has to be broken down to each individual specialist department.

## It's one thing to attract women to take a job at Volkswagen AG, but it's another to entice them into leadership positions.

Heitmüller: It's true, that is a massive hurdle that we've yet to overcome. The gap is still too wide between what is necessary and possible and what is reality. Not every woman wants to be a manager. Not every man wants that either. Our differentiated reporting tells us that we lose more women than men on the path into management. It shows the different ages and career phases when that happens. That helps us analyze the root causes and launch countermeasures.

Schönberg: From my perspective, there are two conditions we need to meet. First, there must be a critical mass, as I call it, in the specialist departments. By that I mean a sufficiently high number of female employees who are suited to management tasks. Imagine that the only woman in your department rejects the offer of a management role. Very soon people would be saying that „the women“ just don't want the job.

The second condition is that we must change our corporate culture. We have to make it easier for women to access management positions. And we have to make it clear to men that it is a competitive advantage for Volkswagen as a company when women take on leadership responsibility.

Klar: To be a good role model as a manager, it's important to examine the entire talent pool when making recruitment and appointment decisions. If I look at the list of potential candidates and notice there isn't a single woman on it, I always ask why. It's often the case that men are quicker to apply for challenging jobs, which is why reaching out to female talent directly is often an effective measure. As a manager, I am responsible for taking a stance through my actions.

Heitmüller: Both genders want to break out of traditional gender roles. More and more women are very, very highly qualified and want to focus on their career. Of course, the question then is how to achieve a work-life balance. And how to share the workload. At the same time, there are more and more men who want to play a larger role within their family and so are no longer willing to devote excessive hours to work. Generation Z means that trend is likely to grow in future.

#### **What other actions can specifically help increase the number of women sitting behind executive desks?**

Heitmüller: The board has agreed to extend top management target agreements, by including fixed KPIs for each business area to increase the share of women in management. The task is slightly different, and some might say easier, in HR than in R&D, for example. These targets form the basis for calculating bonuses; all board members and top managers have agreed to this. That has increased everyone's awareness of the issue.

Schönberg: The goal has to be to embed the issue of quotas of women in every HR development tool that we use – keeping in mind our goal that, at some point in future, this will be something that happens automatically without anyone questioning it. After all, that's how it works with other KPIs.

Heitmüller: Right. A quota for a fixed share of women is an enabler. It means that the issue is talked about throughout the entire company, and that is the one of the prerequisites for change processes. Since the metrics have been implemented in target agreements here in Diversity Management, we've received more requests than ever before for support and help with developing actions. When HR management and department heads cooperate well and the quantitative analysis by Diversity Management has them suitably convinced to recruit and develop more women, it will take us one gigantic step closer to our goal.

Klar: I can attest to that. We cannot afford to ignore top talent based on their gender or background. And the more good experiences we have with mixed teams – at every hierarchy level – the more self-evident that becomes.

#### **Transparency on gender metrics**

Chefsache members all agree that gender metrics need to be made transparent in a department's structures, processes, and systems. Even where there are no target agreements, transparency alone, e.g., on the differences in promotions for men and women in the department, can reveal structural differences and increase management awareness.

Since January 2018, managers at Siemens have had access to a dashboard at the touch of a button, containing information about gender ratios at every level from the board down to n-4. The information is available for Siemens as a whole, as well as for each division, business unit, and lead country. The Diversity department also shares these figures with the HR business partners once a quarter. Managers' awareness of these figures has increased since this work began. The figures also serve as regular reminders to management to encourage female talent. Evonik issues a quarterly report in its board meetings on the key diversity metrics, in the form of a diversity cockpit. Evonik also publishes an annual diversity report offering information about Evonik's diversity in various dimensions as a way to create transparency – a sign of its moving away from gut instincts and hypotheses and toward data and reality. BASF and Volkswagen AG have also installed a similar "gender cockpit".

The UN has seized on the importance of gender reporting and established a corresponding program: "Making Every Woman and Girl Count". So far, only 13% of countries have a budget for gender reporting. This program, which runs from 2016 through 2020, offers technical and financial support for the collection and analysis of gender data at global, regional, and national level. Data transparency will be an incentive for political measures designed to satisfy the 2030 UN Gender Equality Commitments (United Nations, 2016).

#### **Nonmonetary incentives**

Nonmonetary incentives can also motivate managers to engage with talent development. They can actually be even more effective than monetary incentives, as evidenced by Intel in a field experiment outside the diversity environment. Installers were split into four test groups and promised a reward if they reached their productivity target on the first day of their four-day week. The first test group was promised USD 25 in cash, the second a coupon for a meal, the third USD 25 cash or a coupon for a meal, and the fourth a thank you letter from their manager. All four rewards had a positive effect (5 to 7%) on the installers' productivity that day. The best results came from the meal coupon group and the thank you letter group. No rewards were promised for the second, third, and fourth days. While the cash and meal coupon test group saw a significant drop in productivity, it remained stable and high in the thank you letter group and the group offered their choice of reward. The most effective (aside from the time-specific opportunity costs for their production) type of reward was the free thank you letter.

If we translate this to talent development, even nonmonetary recognition, such as in-person praise, can raise motivation. Public appreciation from managers who have distinguished themselves in terms of talent development motivates other managers to engage with the process and shapes their understanding of their function. Digital McKinsey rewards its managers for delivering this exact type of appreciation with the ideal prize for outstanding and inspiring leadership, e.g., in the field of talent development. Imitation is explicitly requested here.

**Nudges in everyday life remind managers of their responsibility**

Small triggers, or “nudges”, throughout the day remind managers of their responsibility and offer extra motivation. Nudges influence people’s irrational behavior in a predictable way without falling back on embargoes or changing financial incentives. They allow an organization to achieve better results without any appreciable additional costs (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). With regards to talent development, nudges can foster management self-image and further reinforce existing incentive mechanisms.

Even simple actions incurring no additional costs can encourage managers toward equal opportunity talent development. For example, regular e-mail reminders help introduce and permanently establish new activities or standards. That’s why BASF is discussing whether, in the future, all managers should receive an e-mail reminder before talent roundtables. The e-mails should remind managers of the existence of unconscious biases and encourage them to evaluate employees objectively.

Another effective option is to introduce earmarked development budgets. Deutsche Telekom provides its managers with HR development budgets that expire if they are not used. The budget reminds managers of their responsibility to develop their employees, while simultaneously giving them the freedom and the means to actively influence how this happens, e.g., by financing suitable trainings.

Yet another highly effective lever to prioritize the discussion of talent and diversity issues is to set new standards (default setting). Installing equal opportunity talent management as part of the default agenda for management meetings strengthens the topic’s presence in discussions. Team meetings can also have a fixed agenda item to discuss obstacles to talent development, which can help trigger active engagement with this management task and also eliminate any concerns. If this agenda item is not addressed, those in attendance must offer a written justification. Fixed coaching windows in managers’ diaries and those of their team members, or even a monthly feedback day for the organization as a whole, can inspire employees to actively confront these issues and potentially demand that others confront them as well.



# Talent

How future talents are forging their careers –  
Chefsache talent testimonials

First and foremost, organizations and managers need to lay the groundwork for optimum and equal opportunity talent development. There is clear evidence that such actions are most successful when three factors are satisfied: persistence with implementation, management commitment (especially the CEO), and a holistic transformation program (Devillard et al., 2016).

Additionally, talents need to actively make the most of development opportunities and offerings, mainly to continue their personal development and build leadership qualities, but also to draw attention to themselves by way of these qualities. However, many Chefsache members report that women are less likely to join development programs and respond to job ads for management positions, and are less proactive in requesting training (e.g., Schmidt & Stettes, 2018).

This is particularly surprising given that one representative survey, carried out among 5,000 employees and students on behalf of the Chefsache initiative, revealed that women have (almost) the same career aspirations as men.

Around 40% would happily take on a leadership role or more management responsibility. The exact figure for women was 37%, and for men it was just above 43%. There was even more good news in that 67% of the women surveyed who are working toward a management position are confident that they will achieve their goal. 77% of men are convinced that they will be promoted. The index also shows that women and men would like more encouragement in the working environment. Yet only 26% of women and 33% of men feel that their professional environment supports their career plans. According to a Women Matter survey, the willingness to „sacrifice part of their personal lives to reach the top“ is practically identical for women and men (61% and 64% respectively) (Devillard et al., 2013). Julia Sperling, Partner at McKinsey, concludes that: „Even if the ratio of men to women is still not perfectly balanced, these survey findings dispel the widely held belief that far fewer women than men have high aspirations for their career.“

In an effort to better understand this, innogy runs „Ask the Women“ workshops hosted by female managers and employees. The female

participants mentioned organizational hurdles as one possible reason for this, as well as unappealing job ads and a lack of transparency on options for maintaining a work-life balance. Studies also reveal that a lack of role models makes it more difficult for women to break through into management positions (Leopold et al., 2016). The previous sections discussed various actions that can help eliminate these organizational hurdles.

Mental obstacles can also make women more reticent, and this is a factor that conventional talent development has long neglected. We are not referring to the basic will to move into a management position – as explained previously, the Chefsache initiative has not detected any noticeable differences between the genders. One potential mental obstacle that can influence the success of a talent in an organization is poor awareness of one's own strengths. An internal survey at Fraunhofer discovered that men tended to recognize their strengths and capabilities more often than women (9 percentage points difference) and were more confident that

they could cope with unexpected events (12 percentage points difference). Acknowledging one's own strengths can be supported through coaching, mentoring, and career advice, among other options.

There are other ways to help someone build confidence and resilience. It is essential to support women in not getting discouraged, as has been demonstrated, e.g., by a study of high-ranking managers in Great Britain. The study found that women are 1.5 times less likely than men to apply for management positions if they have already suffered a rejection in their career. This has negative consequences for their overall career trajectory as it leaves promotion prospects untapped (Brands & FernandezMateo, 2017).

Risk aversion can also be a major hurdle. Given the ever-changing business environment, several Chefsache members have pointed out that a willingness to take risks and the courage to make mistakes are increasingly important for a successful career. And yet many studies suggest that women are less willing to take risks

than men (e.g., Eckel & Grossman, 2008). This a fantastic jumping-off point for organizations and managers. A stronger error culture within the organization as a whole, i.e., better ways of dealing with mistakes, means that people will be less worried about failing. Personal conversations and support by way of sponsoring and mentoring are often the key to motivating talent to take on new challenges. In-house (women's) networks create spaces for female talent to discuss how to tackle problems, as well as offering mutual reinforcement and support. Sheryl Sandberg, COO at Facebook, really got to the heart of this issue with her campaign: „What would I do if I weren't afraid?“ (Sandberg, 2013).

Another obstacle to the advancement of women is that their networks are often smaller. Given how important networks are to getting ahead in business, it is important to support women in building theirs. Many organizations arrange networking events with potential sponsors and mentors specifically for women. Unfortunately, these do not always produce satisfactory results and there is no guarantee of anyone building lasting relationships. As various studies have demonstrated, networking using a more „superficial“ approach (e.g., engaging in small talk with many people instead of having in-depth conversations with individuals) is many times more expedient. Women tend to find this more challenging than men (Babcock & Laschever, 2007). Help with this comes in the form of preparatory workshops during which the participants have professional support available to discuss their expectations and goals in advance of an event, and are able to come up with strategic approaches.

#### Being present

People in an organization rarely talk about another colleague's performance without reason. So it really depends on an individual's image as

to whether people notice their talent. This is why many Chefsache members offer in-house training to develop soft skills such as communication, voice modulation, and body language. Volkswagen AG offers image and communication training to female future talent as part of its mentoring management program. BASF offers „Führung rockt“ („Management rocks“) training that is aimed at female managers and female future leaders. The program explores the person's image and presence, as well as power play rules and training on each individual's personal elevator pitch. All this plus an analysis of each person's networks to identify colleagues that can support them as they progress upward through the organization. The three-day seminar has already received resounding positive feedback. Women at Caritas can attend a training called „Gleichgestellt in Führung gehen“ („Getting into management on equal terms“) as part of the „Geschlecht. Gerecht gewinnt“ („Gender. Equality wins“) project, during which they can develop ideas about their own coherent leadership identity.

*„Since 2012, we've been working with projects including 'Gleichgestellt in Führung gehen' to deliver equal access for men and women to management positions at Caritas, as well as building a gender-inclusive organizational culture.“*



JÖRG MILLIES  
Head of Finance and HR and  
Secretary General at the  
German Caritas Association

## „Ask The Women“ workshops at innogy



In an effort to get more women into management, the Board of Directors at innogy decided to ask their female employees directly: under what circumstances would you consider applying for a management job? The Diversity Management & Inclusive Culture department hosts regular „Ask the Women“ workshops in various formats.

Female employees and managers from different segments and business areas have already taken part in these workshops. Several of those who attended complained about how job ads are structured. The

emphasis leans heavily toward functional requirements. More weight needs to be given to soft skills. The participants also emphasized the need of transparency on existing offerings. For example, is there enough information provided about mentoring programs, coaching, or other options for balancing personal life and work? At innogy, opportunities for sabbaticals and extended vacations have been introduced for men and women – in addition to the usual measures to make working conditions more flexible.



## Successful leadership in Chefsache organizations

Now it's time for the talent to take the stage: successful women with diverse backgrounds who work in different leadership roles and areas within Chefsache organizations. Here they share their experiences and tips for a successful career track into leadership, as well as stories of how they overcame obstacles and mastered challenges.



Sandra Reichert, 40, is a unit head at Allianz Germany and works full-time with one day in her home office. She has two children, aged one and four.



### 1. Dare to do

Sandra Reichert had already completed her apprenticeship at the company – with a definite plan in mind to take on a management role if she were promoted.

When she took over management duties from an experienced male colleague, she approached the task with a great deal of respect. “Those were pretty big footsteps to follow. I immediately started questioning myself,” she says. “I told myself, very deliberately: just do it – just try! Sometimes you have to risk it!”

### 2. Ask for feedback

“As a woman, you're sometimes quicker to doubt your own skills,” says Sandra Reichert. Hence her advice to female talent: “Proactively asking for feedback from your line managers is one way to get clarity on your own strengths.”

### 3. Inquire about experience

Personal and professional female mentors are a valuable asset on the path to management. “Having a trusted person inside the company, someone who you can ask for an opinion based on their experience, makes it easier to launch your career and facilitates your ongoing development.”

### 4. Stay flexible

Sandra Reichert is a mother to two children, and just as much a manager as her husband. “It works well because as a married couple we live this model together, because my boss has my back, and because I'm able to be flexible with my working hours. On Fridays, I work from my home office, which saves me the commute time.”



Almut Nolte, 50, joined the Bundeswehr in 1990 as a Medical Officer Candidate. In 2016, she became the first woman on her track to rise to the rank of Surgeon General. She is currently serving as Deputy Commander of the Command Regional Staff Medical Service Support. She lives with her partner in Limburg.

„You grow by getting out of your comfort zone.“

„I've always looked at changes, like secondments and special duties, as opportunities and approached every new challenge the army offered me throughout Germany with every last drop of enthusiasm I have. I've never gone easy on myself – and I doubted my own skills in the first few years especially. Several of my managers – always men – really encouraged me during those phases, just as they did for their committed male employees. They became mentors whose advice I still very much respect today.“

Although the Bundeswehr sets out definite timelines and targets, it doesn't specify how you have to get there. We call that ‚mission-type tactics‘, and it allows for a variety of leadership styles and potential actions. Back when I was a soldier, my approach often led to my being seen as ‚different‘ than my colleagues. But I still managed to develop my own style, motivate teams, and produce

solid results. The key factor is that my managers also saw those results.

Military outlook conferences in HR development work intensively with the potential of every single officer above a certain development level, and give recommendations for the next steps in their career. I always accepted the offers they made, even if that meant constantly moving home and starting over in completely new areas at work. Of course, that calls for a great deal of understanding from family and friends. But with a well-organized day-to-day routine and support from family, friends, and colleagues, those changes turned out to be exhausting but always possible.

It's important to stay curious and have as many different experiences as possible. You should never let obstacles or prejudices discourage you. In a conformist environment, being able to think outside the box is a strength, even if you have to persuade others of that at first.

So I would advise female talent in particular not to blindly copy a male style of leadership, to actively and fearlessly seek out new challenges, and always, always believe in yourself.“



## LUFTHANSA GROUP

Dagmar Ludu-Haß is responsible for process management in Passenger Experience & Product Process Management for hub airlines in the Lufthansa Group (Lufthansa, Austrian, and Swiss). In 2016/17, she took part in the CrossCompany Mentoring (CCM) program.

### Two years ago you relocated from a subsidiary in Hamburg to Lufthansa headquarters in Frankfurt am Main. Why did you decide to move?

To me, this career change felt a lot like when you move from a small town to a major city. I wanted to keep developing beyond the limits of my previous role. I mainly wanted to strengthen my position within the company, to become more visible, and to expand my network.

### What helped you reach those goals?

My mentor was hugely supportive; we were matched by Lufthansa's CCM program. I knew that I could speak with her openly, fearlessly, and in confidence, as well as ask the occasional 'stupid' question. It was a fantastic bonus that we also clicked on a personal level. One key element of the program was that I got to know other companies and their leadership cultures, and was able to adopt the best aspects for myself. The program also allowed me to grow my personal network and expand my views on certain topics.

### What else did you learn from your mentor?

Take control over your own wants and goals. Be clear about what you want, stay active, recognize and seize every chance, and don't wait around for that 'perfect'

opportunity – it might never happen. A setback is not a failure, it's a vital step in your personal development. Accept it.

### What approach do you suggest other women take when they join a mentoring program?

I'd recommend asking yourself: what do I want to achieve, and how can I formulate concrete objectives? You also need to realize that mentoring also demands your personal commitment and time. Mentees need to prepare really well to ensure the sessions are successful – I need to know what I want to achieve and keep one eye on my objectives. But that also means investing in myself. That's absolutely invaluable. Wellness might relax you, but mentoring makes you stronger.

Does everyone who completes the CCM automatically get a new job? Obviously not. Everyone has to take their own next steps. But mentoring definitely helps you use the right tools.



Dr.-Ing. Stefanie von Andrian-Werburg has spent the last 16 years at EnBW and has been a manager since 2007. She is currently Head of Budget and Service Relationships Electricity/Gas in technical plant management at EnBW Netze BM GmbH. She is married and has a nine-year-old son.



### What do you think were the major turning points in your career?

I've taken so many decisions in the course of my career, and some of them were probably wrong. Looking back, I can say that there were two decisions that massively influenced my path.

After spending the first five years of my working life at EnBW, I chose to leave the company in 2005. I'd had trouble finding development opportunities, plus I wanted to travel more and gain some international experience. As a senior consultant at a management consultancy, I was especially thrilled with how successfully I got to grips with the new work and with my ability to get direct feedback on client satisfaction. The change in perspective did me a lot of good in the long run. I also became aware that I had to take control of my own development. Following this hugely instructive period, I felt well-prepared for my first management role and returned to EnBW.

For me, it was also important to return to work quickly after the birth of my son. Basically I just really love working and also wanted to keep my job. After he was born, I quickly checked my work e-mails and my husband and I took turns to look after the baby. Since Valentin is a year old, we're both back to working full-time. Of course everyone has their own preferences, but this is the right model for us. And the reward? A good balance between work and private life gives stability and energy. Everyone wins.

### What role did EnBW and your manager play in your career progression?

I've always considered EnBW to be a very open and multifaceted company. There were so many completely new areas available to me: from generation through sales to the grids. My career is not just about moving up: curiosity is what really drives me! EnBW offered me the perfect support system.

My best managers trusted in me right from the start and are still role models for me today. Taking part in development programs helped further my professional development and professionalize my leadership role. The most valuable thing for me was being given 'permission to act' as well as receiving open and clear feedback.

### As an engineer, you've always worked in a male-dominated environment. Where did you find support for your development?

When I decided to study mechanical engineering, I accepted that I'd be a bit of an outsider. But I have to say, I really like working with men. Though I prefer working in mixed teams! The more mixed the team, the better the decisions, in my opinion. Part of that is down to the differences in risk appetite. And the higher the proportion of women, the more open the communication. I've always been interested in raising the share of women in teams to a 'healthy' level.

Unfortunately that isn't always possible, so to offset that I often seek out closer ties with women. For example, I worked with a 'mother' when writing my doctoral thesis, I deliberately take time to speak with female colleagues in other fields, and I am involved in a number of women's networks.

I believe that it is also helpful to see otherness as an advantage; trying to fit in at any cost will probably just slow you down.

Overall, the situation at EnBW has improved drastically in the past few years, and there are more and more women moving into technical management roles. It's such a great thing to see!

**What factors do you think make for successful talent development?**

Both male and female employees need to take the reins for their own career development, tailoring it to their

personal wants, goals, and strengths in alignment with the company's objectives.

When I engage with talent development, I don't just focus on high potentials. I always try and help everyone to get clarity on and explore their full potential, so that they can (actively) own their development instead of being (passively) developed by someone else.

**How have you managed to establish such a high percentage of women in your areas?**

It was easy for me because there are more highly qualified women in technical fields than people like to think. You just have to keep your eyes open. Women are possibly more willing to pick the woman if candidates have identical qualifications because they feel there is a better fit and their attention is pulled more toward women. I've also noticed that women attract women. And as luck would have it, a growing number of competent women have applied to work for me.



Ewelina Seifert, Expert, Sales & Solution Center North, 35 years old, 2 children (9 and 4 years old)

**When you look back, what were the key decisions you made in your career?**

My main milestone was when I came to believe that a career and having children could be a compatible combination. I was really afraid of not being a „good“ mother anymore if I pursued a career. The „Karriere mit Kind“ (Career with Children) program really helped me a lot. For example, at the WoMenPower career congress, I was able to address my concerns in a coaching session and develop a plan for how to overcome them.

**How did the „Karriere mit Kind“ program help you drive your career forward?**

I met a lot of mothers and fathers in the program who were very enthusiastic about further developing their careers or who already had – some of them eventually became role models for me. We have had a lot of fun motivating and supporting each other along the paths we are individually pursuing. The „ProfilPass“ analysis made me aware of my abilities and strengths. I hadn't realized that in even in my free time, I have leadership responsibilities as well, for example, when I'm leading a climbing course. But what has been especially great about the program is that it has helped me venture out of my comfort zone.



**What type of role did your mentor play in developing your career path? How did you profit from your mentor's support?**

My mentor regularly coached me, shared his experiences, and motivated me to push on even when I had setbacks. He helped me in finding new ways to tackle challenges and approach them more flexibly. If it hadn't been for his advice, I might not have taken the chance to tell my manager about my desire to make a change and pursue further development. By the way, my mentor was assigned to me – so I was also able to expand my network.

**Given what you know now, would you do anything differently?**

The program was the perfect springboard in developing my career. When I look back at it now, I think I could have spent more time preparing for the meetings with my mentor.



Miriam Neumann, 40, works full-time as a senior executive in top management development at Bayer AG. She lives with her husband and three children as a blended family.



„It's important for female future leaders to position themselves correctly.“

„Over the course of my career, I've received a lot of support in the form of training and development as well as challenging roles where I was afforded considerable leeway. I was fortunate to be able to take on responsibility early on. It is important for female future leaders in particular to position themselves correctly and find a way to achieve their goals. That's not always easy, especially in male-dominated fields. It takes self-confidence and courage. Occasionally, I did think I'd have preferred more female role models with whom I could have shared my experience. Learning to stay true to my own values and openly communicate my career goals has helped me on my journey. I want to be a working mom. For me, that means that I give 100% to the job while also meeting my own expectations of being a mother. But the environment has to be right for that to work. At Bayer, I'm able to leave early sometimes without feeling guilty. I was actually promoted during one of my pregnancies – I thought that was an exceptional sign of the company's trust in me.“

# Actions to promote equal opportunity talent development

This report illustrates that the triad of organization, management, and talent is essential for the success of equal opportunity talent development. It explains how to deal with potential pitfalls and how Chefsache members are using innovative methods to develop talent in their own organizations.

## How organizations can contribute to equal opportunity talent development

Organizations can realize actions throughout the entire „talent cycle“, from recruiting to succession planning, to support women and men equally and without bias.

### Seven of these are worthy of special mention:

**1. Gender-neutral language in job ads and data-based candidate selection** can support organizations in making equal opportunity recruiting decisions. At Scania, for example, a gender-neutral job ad nearly doubled the number of female applicants. One service provider installed automated, data-based CV selection and invited 15% more female applicants to interviews. IBM is also relying on artificial intelligence to reduce biases when selecting candidates.

**2. Informal feedback that is separate from formal performance appraisals** continuously supports talent in their development. At this time, women receive over 20% less feedback than men, even though they request it just as often (Devillard et al, 2016). This is why WAREMA, for example, separates informal and development-driven feedback from formal performance appraisals, to eliminate any obstacles to giving feedback.

**3. Evaluations are more objective** given a solid foundation of **data-based, standardized, and regular performance appraisals, along with talent panels**, instead of individual evaluations alone. This objectivity is particularly important given that the probability of women receiving negative performance feedback from individuals is 1.4 times higher than for men (CecchiDimeglio, 2017). In addition to performance appraisals by individuals, there is a distinct need for data and „collective wisdom“, which is why the Bundeswehr has instituted talent roundtables.

**4. With the help of internal career advice and coaching**, development and career issues can be targeted and tackled systematically. This point is especially significant given that only 26% of women and 33% of men feel that their

professional environment supports their career plans (according to a representative survey of 5,000 employees). Coaching programs are a way to systematically promote talent in their development (e.g., at EnBW, Lufthansa, Google, Caritas, or Siemens).

**5. Through talent programs**, top talent are empowered to develop their competencies and build stronger networks together. Participants in Fraunhofer's TALENTA program, for example, are promoted more often and are able to demonstrate considerably more scientific findings.

**6. Self-nomination** is another mechanism that encourages equal opportunity talent development. Talent become less dependent on their manager's opinion and are more proactive in seizing opportunities. For example, since TÜV Rheinland introduced the option for self-nomination, the number of women attending a talent conference has almost doubled.

**7. Transparency on progress made** delivers clarity and perspective as impetus for action. For example, since January 2018, management at Siemens can press a button on a dashboard to see information about the share of men and women at every level, from the board to n-4. At innogy, there is a placement quota for leadership roles at the top levels of management. Volkswagen AG has set itself a target quota for all management levels.

## How managers contribute to equal opportunity talent development

Managers also have a key role in ensuring the success of equal opportunity talent development. There are countless tools available for this.

Informal talent management alongside **situation-specific feedback, mentoring, and sponsoring** allow managers to directly influence

equal opportunity talent development. Various studies have proven the positive correlation between mentoring and various career dimensions, such as promotions and salaries (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007).

BASF and Allianz have introduced „**reverse mentoring**“, and Deutsche Telekom has launched an initiative to share ideas with digital natives. **Managers acting as role models** for equal opportunity talent development helps motivate other managers. Evonik opted to honor this by setting up a Diversity Council at board level.

## How talents shape equal opportunity talent development

And last but not least, the talent themselves influence just how successful equal opportunity talent development is. According to the aforementioned Chefsache initiative survey of 5,000 employees, 37% of women and 43% of men want to take on at least one management role in the course of their career. So much for the cliché that women are less keen to have a successful career than men.

For these career wants to become a reality, talent need to seize control of their own development to be brave and willing to take risks. What's more, they need to be visible within their organization and build their networks.

## Conclusion

Equal opportunity talent development is a multifaceted topic and can be advanced through impactful actions. The organization, management, and talent are equally responsible for securing real equality of opportunity.

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