



Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

co•a•li•tion: *noun* a group of people, groups, or countries who have joined together for a common purpose. (Merriam-Webster) This toolkit describes suggestions for identifying and engaging allies as you pursue the mutually beneficial goal of optimizing 100% of your company’s workforce and achieving 50% women in senior leadership positions¹.

Ground Rules

Remain focused on your day-to-day job responsibilities. Don’t let your change efforts distract you from achieving your work goals.

Mitigate risks by knowing and following your company’s internal ethics, compliance and HR policies. Find and read your company’s policy books and employee orientation materials. In particular, you want to learn how your company views:

- Conflicts of interests
- Retaliation
- Employee opinions and concerns
- Open door policies
- Employee dispute resolution

Leverage your curiosity as you seek to understand the status quo. Don’t be afraid to ask why over and over. A Lean Six Sigma² problem solving technique is to ask why five times to get to the root cause of an issue.

Document everything to avoid misunderstandings. Keep track of your observations and learnings.

Networking

Build your coalition without disrupting your or your colleagues’ work responsibilities. Have change management discussions before or after work or during breaks. However, don’t be afraid to network strategically at all times. Networking is a legitimate business function. Business encounters are tools for exploring and identifying potential allies- and growing your company’s revenues and profits at the same time. Networking is about identifying how you can help others and how they can help you. View all of your work-related meetings, internal or external, as networking opportunities.

According to Judy Robinett, the author of *How to Be a Power Connector: The 5+50+150 Rule* (McGraw-Hill, May 2014), effective networking strategies are about meeting people you need to know and bonding with them quickly to further your goals and theirs. Judy suggests you ask three questions during a conversation: 1. How can I help you? 2. What ideas can you share with me? 3. Who else do you think I should meet? Use your networking toolbox. This means keeping your eyes and ears open at all times so you recognize comments and behaviors that indicate potential allies within and outside your organization.

¹ ShowMe50 defines senior leadership as director and above positions

² Lean Six Sigma is a methodology for improving business performance by eliminating waste in processes.



Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

The Power of a Group

So far you’ve learned about the ShowMe50™ Win-Win Checklist, gender bias and influencing. Now it’s time to gather supporters to make change happen. There is undeniable power in numbers. Margaret Mead³ said it eloquently, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

When you present the business case for gender balanced leadership flanked by other well-regarded managers instead of alone, power begins to tip and the landscape changes. Identify influential allies to join you in your campaign to compel change. Initially, select one or two managers with excellent performance and leadership reputations who are either formal or informal leaders within their work circles. Managers will initially be afraid but the resources on the ShowMe50™ website will help illustrate that change is possible.

Employees, customers and shareholders will benefit from a level playing field enabling women equal access to the leadership decision tables at S&P 500 companies. ShowMe50™ goals to leverage the talent of 100% of the workforce are well aligned with company’s goals to maximize profits.

As your group develops, work hard to preserve this mind-set:

- Understand your company’s landscape through a variety of perspectives
- Gain balanced knowledge of the interests and priorities of the company, groups, departments, managers and senior level executives
- Seek to provide a safe space for individuals to talk about experiences and learn more about how to change policy
- Start to change the culture towards a more gender intelligent⁴ one

Assess the Landscape for Change

What people, departments or groups are currently involved and influential in policy, decision making and change?

What kinds of persons might be interested in joining your change efforts? What makes them most likely to get on board? (See appendix A, Personas.)

Allies

Where to begin? Identify one influential trusted potential ally (TPA) that you trust deeply, woman or man. From where should you source your TPA?

³ Margaret Mead was a famous anthropologist who sought to apply the principles of anthropology and the social sciences to social problems and issues, such as world hunger, childhood education, and mental health. Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mead/mead-shaping.html>

⁴ Gender intelligence as defined by Barbara Annis is understanding and appreciating the natural talents that men and women bring to the table; <http://baainc.com/gender-intelligence/what-is-gender-intelligence/>

Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

WORK CONFIDANTS

Your immediate circle of female work confidants is a good place to start. Consider also including male colleagues. If your coalition includes men you will gain the interest of men, who will naturally be curious. There are many men in management positions in S&P 500 companies who are supporters of gender intelligence⁵. They recognize that implementing checks and balances to prevent bias from negatively impacting talent management systems helps men too. The idea of leaving a meaningful legacy will appeal to long-tenured managers. They may feel they have long-enough endured an ingrained culture of conformance and intolerance to differences in leadership approaches... the “good old boy” network.

ERGs/BRGs

Employee Resource Groups/Business Resource Groups (ERGs/BRGs) are particularly aligned with the desire to achieve balance in senior leadership. Obtain the ERG/BRG charters for each group and read about the organizations’ missions and their initiatives. Attend meetings and events.

Find out who the influential members are as well as the formal leaders. Evaluate the underlying desire for change among BRG/ERG members. Meet one-on-one with the presidents/chairs to start a conversation about gender balanced leadership.

Resistors

When you engage with resistors, keep this in mind:

- Resistors are afraid of losing their job
- They lack an understanding of the implications of gender bias
- They have a “you shouldn’t rock the boat” mentality

Potential actions:

- Share your personal “why” story
- Lead them to the website for learning
- Have a dialogue with them about what makes them uncomfortable
- Read Toolkit 4 – Learn to Influence Change

Start the Conversation

An example agenda in Appendix B provides ideas for your first meeting. Your TPA will be curious. Share with him/her that you would like their advice on a project you are exploring that is of mutual interest. Keep in mind that the ideas on the ShowMe50™ website constitute a self-directed framework to be

⁵ Barbara Annis, a global leader in gender diversity and inclusive leadership training for organizations, defines gender intelligence as understanding and appreciating the natural talents that men and women bring to the table. She has said that gender intelligence allows us to understand the contributions of both men and women. In essence, it’s shorthand for the notion that “great minds think unlike.” As men and women come to understand each other’s ways of thinking and acting, they step up to a new and powerful level of conversation. They begin to include each other more confidently and more willingly. <http://baainc.com/gender-intelligence/what-is-gender-intelligence/>



Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

used only as a guide. The ideas should be tailored to your specific situation. Only you know your company's culture, obstacles and opportunities.

Explain your personal story- how you discovered ShowMe50™, what it all means to you, why you reached out to the person.

You might choose to use the ShowMe50™ infographic, the introductory video, the ShowMe50™ Win-Win Checklist or the suggested presentations to explain your interest in leveling the playing field.

Ask open ended questions during your dialogue. Examples:

- What's your opinion on the topic of gender balance and achieving 50% women in senior leadership positions in the S&P 500?
- What are the positives of our company's current promotion practices?
- What are the negatives of our company's current promotion practices?
- When you hear the words bias and stereotypes, what do those mean to you?
- Do you think bias and stereotypes impact career opportunities at work? If so, how?
- What kind
- What are some of the obstacles that could block or slow implementation of the ShowMe50™ Win-Win Checklist?
- Which components are unclear to you or do you agree or disagree with?
- What are some ways those obstacles could be overcome?
- Who from your network might have similar experiences and might want to learn about making transformational change at our company?
- What fears do you have about all this?
- How do you think your boss would react if he/she knew you were working with other individuals to change the status quo? How could you ease concerns?
- Ask them if it's OK if you follow up with them in two weeks.
- Put a follow-up meeting on the calendar: The second meeting should be used to jointly define next steps.
- If they are not interested in participating, do they know someone who might be? Probe why they aren't interested so you can learn and improve your message.

Now What?

- Make a list of potential allies and decide who to reach out to first.
- Use a calendar to map out rough timelines for activities to determine a realistic action framework. See Appendix C for an overall flowchart to guide your ideas.
- Schedule your first meeting.



Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

Appendix A - Personas

Personas are fictional characters whose profiles summarize the attributes of customers. Personas help marketers define strategies and execute communication plans. The personas below suggest the profiles of potential allies.

Glass Ceiling Celia

AGE: 36, TITLE: GROUP DIRECTOR

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

Celia joined her S&P 500 company right out of school and has worked her way up the ranks since. Once she reached a mid-management position, she began to realize that an “old boys club” mentality was still very much in practice – even if not intentionally. She can’t help but think she has been written off as being on “the mommy track” since the birth of her second child two years ago. She is not interested in affirmative action–esque quotas, but is tired of being overlooked for positions that she is highly qualified for and very interested in...they just always seem to be filled by men without ever being posted internally.

Lean In Lori

AGE: 50, TITLE: EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

While Lori has achieved a fair amount of success and accolades throughout her career, she is tired of doing battle on an uneven playing field. It’s taken her years to earn her seat at the table and yet she still needs to fight to have her voice heard. She has no problem “leaning-in”, heck, that’s how she got here, but she can’t help but wonder how much more productive she could be if she didn’t have to always deal with the exclusive culture around her. She does not believe in handouts – as frankly, that would be insulting, but she does think it’s high time her company recognizes what they are missing by not fully utilizing half of their workforce. She also empathizes with women that are “her 10 years ago” and is frustrated that they are still getting passed over.

Consultant Clare

AGE: 32, TITLE: BUSINESS CONSULTANT

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

After years of weekly travel, Clare is looking to trade in her consultant lifestyle for a better work/life balance. Having contracted with many S&P 500 companies, Clare has seen it all. She has experienced first-hand the companies where it is “better” for her to take a back seat and let her male colleagues lead the conversations – and conversely, she has also been exposed to other companies that go out of their way to bring out the best in their employees – regardless of gender.



Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

Before she makes her next move, she wants to know exactly how the company ranks in terms of gender equality in executive positions, as well as their stance on family benefits and work/life considerations.

MBA-Minded Maya

AGE: 22, TITLE: COLLEGE GRAD

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

Just finishing her undergrad degree, Maya is looking to gain real world experience at a company she can grow with while she completes her MBA. Maya was raised to believe that anything is possible with hard work and dedication – and that the best way to rectify the wrongs of yesterday is by changing tomorrow. She knows she has what it takes to be a superstar wherever she lands, so she is going to choose her first career step wisely to ensure that the company truly embraces equality at all levels of management.

Fearless Fran

AGE: 24, TITLE: ASSOCIATE

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

Fran landed an entry-level job at a S&P 500 company shortly after college. While she doesn't view this as her "forever" career, it has its perks – namely a steady paycheck and paid time off. She craves a certain degree of ownership and autonomy as she knows she is capable of doing great things. In the short time that she's been in the corporate world, Fran can't help but notice the lack of women in executive positions. She feels that it's high-time that this old boys' club lets in some new members, and she is not afraid to say so.

HR Hannah

AGE: 44, TITLE: SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HR

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

Hannah was brought into her S&P 500 company because of her successful track-record at several mid-sized tech companies. She gets that the business landscape has changed and that corporations need to do their part to not only meet consumer demands, but to recruit and retain top talent. As an executive herself, she also understands how difficult and politically charged implementing change at large corporations can be. Hannah sees herself as part lobbyist, part mediator and business consultant. She wants her company and all of its employees to realize their full potential – but she realizes that in order to do so, she needs the support and buy-in of their mostly male executive team.



Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

Justified John

AGE: 50, TITLE: EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, SALES & MARKETING

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

As self-proclaimed “evolved” individual and business leader, John is all for playing to the strengths of his individual team members and doesn’t think a gender imbalance exists. Several women on his team have negotiated flexible work arrangements which has helped him retain key staff during critical “family years.” But at the end of the day, he believes that you need to be all-in if you are going to thrive. The way he looks at it, women have more responsibilities at home, which generally makes them less available. If they are able to put in the hours and do the job that needs to be done – and do it well, it’s theirs for the taking. What’s not fair about that?

Bottom Line Bill

AGE: 62, TITLE: PRESIDENT & CEO

MINDSET/BEHAVIOR

Bill has mixed feelings about gender equality issues. While he would never want to limit the potential of his 2 daughters and 4 grand-daughters, he just feels more comfortable having a mostly-male leadership team and certainly wouldn’t want to put practices in place that would make it even harder for men to advance in organizations. Having said that, he realizes that times are changing and that they need to adapt their internal business practices if they are going to continue to be relevant. The jury is out, but if it will benefit the company in the near and long-term, he is open to “exploring” the concern a bit more.

Ally Allen

AGE: 47, TITLE: VP MARKETING

Allen is married with two daughters. Both he and his wife are as dedicated to their work and their daughters. Allen has long disagreed with how his company makes selections for rotational assignments and promotions. He believes job selection is based on favoritism. His wife’s company has similar practices and she frequently describes the un-level playing field at work. Allen’s oldest daughter has graduated from college and has been working at an S&P 500 company for six months. She tells her own stories of bias and favoritism. He’s frustrated and willing to listen to a new approach.



Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

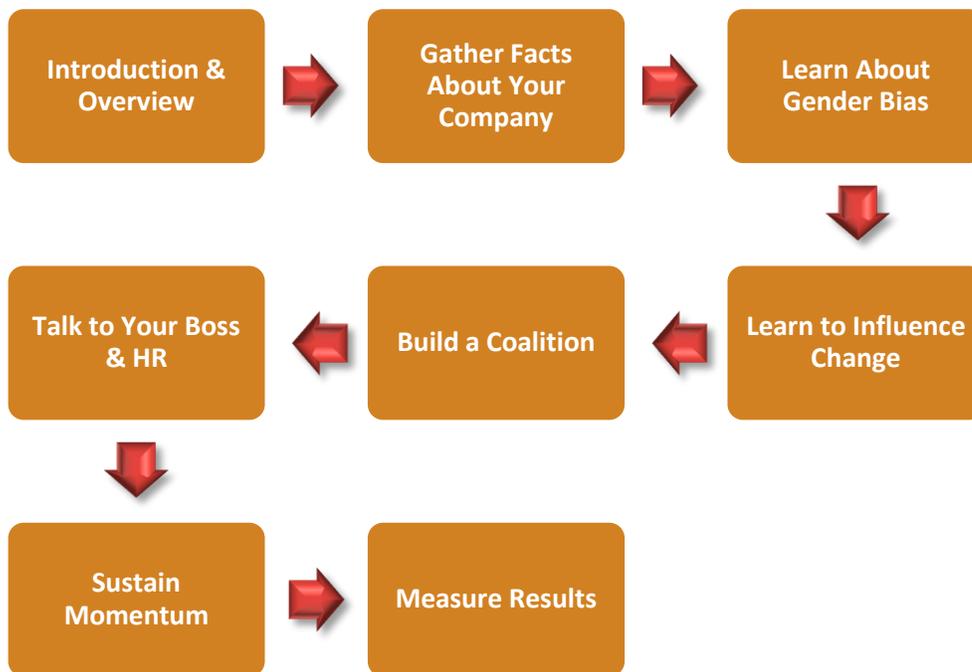
Appendix B – Example Run of Show for First Meeting

- ❑ Meeting objective
 - Explain the ShowMe50™ concept and why you are interested in leading or co-leading the effort at your company
 - Ask for constructive feedback
 - Obtain agreement to join you and/or identify another ally(ies) to talk to

- ❑ Agenda
 - Ask for confidentiality. Explain that you trust this person to maintain confidentiality because until people are properly informed, their perceptions could be incorrect.
 - Tell your personal story. Why are you compelled to do lead change that might be viewed by some as challenging the status quo?
 - Use the ShowMe50™ website to show the short summary video.
 - Deliver a ShowMe50™ PowerPoint presentation.
 - Engage in a frank, constructive conversation about gender balance in senior leadership in general and the ShowMe50™ approach specifically. Discuss how it might be tailored for your company's situation.
 - Decide next steps which could include:
 - Determining when the person can tell you if they are in or out.
 - Identifying if there is one more influential manager to join your team. If there is, both of you could meet with the person and repeat the agenda.
 - Identify timing for immediate actions which include:
 - if/when a 3rd person will be added to your team
 - date by which allies study the ShowMe50™ approach through the website
 - a follow-up meeting to build a roll-out plan that includes tailoring the ShowMe50™ approach for your organization, developing an engagement strategy for the BRGs/ERGs, and scheduling meetings with bosses, HR and recurring coalition meetings

Toolkit 5 – Build a Coalition

Appendix C - Overview Flowchart



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead



Disclaimer

Show Me 50, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to provide a platform to engage individuals in actions that level the playing field for women. We encourage individuals to actively collaborate with their companies to inform and implement a culture of gender equality that leads to the achievement of 50% women in senior leadership positions.

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