

Best in Class Snapshot

How eBay, Inc. is Making Progress on Gender Diversity in Senior Leadership

In 2010 eBay began its journey to increase women in senior leadership. Between 2011 and 2013, eBay increased the number of women in leadership roles by 30% annually.

How are they doing it?

Visible support from the top. The CEO made it personal – he talked about watching his wife’s challenges over her career. He anchored to personal conviction rather than the business case alone because it can’t generate enough passion to sustain gender diversity as a priority.

Accountability to women. The CEO asked the board to hold him accountable for increasing the number of women in leadership roles, reducing their attrition rate below that of men, and improving women’s satisfaction with their jobs and work. He also committed to mentoring five women leaders.

Walking the talk. By modeling the behavior, the following year his vice-presidents suggested they also adopt similar goals. All vice-presidents agreed to:

- Fill all open leadership positions through a diverse slate of candidates and interviewers.
- Develop and discuss career development plans with high potential women at every level.
- Monitor the diversity of their promotion pipelines to ensure fairness.
- Mentor or support five high potential women.
- Measure progress on demographics regularly.

Targeted changes in practices.

- Insisting on diverse slates of candidates.
- Expanding pool of women candidates by looking more carefully internally.
- Expecting sourcers to find more diverse candidates.
- Increasing presence at women’s recruiting events.
- Taking on hidden bias more directly.
- Encouraging constructive career discussions between women and men. Providing discussion starters that managers can use.

Transparency. Statistics for each business, function, region and critical talent segment are reviewed twice per year to reinforce accountability. The data is discussed in staff meetings by the heads of each business and function. In the staff meetings the number and proportion of women leaders reporting to the direct reports of each business unit president are shown so all of them can see the results.

Sustaining Progress. At the most senior levels eBay remains almost exclusively male and diversity remains a work in progress. The authors conclude that a few things mattered most in the progress to date: senior leadership commitment and conviction, a focus on a few people processes and the measurement of data. Further progress will require shifting mind-sets and changing the corporate culture to embrace differences.

Adapted from McKinsey Quarterly, September 2014, “Realizing the Power of Talented Women” by Michelle Angier and Beth Axelrod.

“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.

Show Me 50, Inc. retains any and all intellectual property rights in these materials and requires the retention of the copyright mark on all pages reproduced.

Show Me 50, Inc. is not able to independently verify information contained in this document. This document is provided solely for informational purposes and is not to be construed as providing advice, recommendations, endorsements, representations or warranties of any kind. Neither Show Me 50, Inc. nor any of its directors, employees or agents accept any responsibility or liability with respect to this document.