



2019 AWESOME Making Waves Action Agenda

SEVEN SMART MOVES TO MAKE BIGGER WAVES FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Recommendations from leading women on how to
transform supply chain leadership



achieving women's excellence
in supply chain operations,
management, and education

September 2019



NOT PASSIVE OR PATIENT ANYMORE

Since AWESOME was founded in 2013, we have learned much about the leading women in the supply chain field. We've learned obstacles they've faced, triumphs they've achieved, and some of their secrets to success. We've learned they are eager to share their lessons in leadership – and they are passionately energized by the need to improve opportunities for women coming after them.

We decided to tap into that energy – as well as the wisdom gained through their own successful careers. At both the 2018 and 2019 AWESOME Symposiums, we gave senior women supply chain leaders the opportunity to work together and brainstorm the best ways to move women's leadership forward. We call it "Making Waves" because we know that individual leaders taking responsibility to start things in motion is how change happens.

SUCCESS DOESN'T "HAPPEN" TO WOMEN – THEY MAKE IT HAPPEN.

Leaders must find solutions, fix problems and drive change. It's a critical part of their leadership role, and for so many – both a personal and a professional imperative.

At the 2019 AWESOME Symposium, we asked participants to focus on leaders' actions in five dimensions of Reaching Beyond and Achieving More:



When we compiled and analyzed their brainstorming comments, we came to a powerful conclusion. Certain moves will have a greater impact than others and those are the steps leaders should take and encourage others to take. Many of those moves apply to more than one of these reaching dimensions – they do double or triple duty. Also, they are proven by our leaders' own experience and by the research we conduct in partnership with Gartner, to be most effective.

The result is the **2019 Action Agenda: Seven Smart Moves to Make Bigger Waves for Women's Leadership**

1 HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN TO BUSINESS SUCCESS.

Educate others on your management team about what the supply chain is and does. Promote the value of supply chain to your organization. Develop an elevator speech about your own role that includes what the supply chain is doing for the organization.

Inside your organization, know your organization's goals and strategies. Understand the impact the supply chain can have on reaching those goals. If sustainability is important to your organization, establish the link between supply chain and sustainability.

Look to be involved in strategic discussions. Collaborate with other functional areas.

Build your credibility as an expert who can understand the bigger business picture.

If you need to improve your business knowledge, make that an area of focus. Tap into classes, webinars, podcasts. Find a mentor who is outside supply chain. Expand your network to include people and groups who focus on other areas of business.

Build your relationship currency with business partners.

Be the expert in supply chain for groups that need supply chain expertise.

Resources:

[The Logistics Bureau](#) published "7 Reasons Why the Supply Chain Matters to Business Success."

[American Express](#) cites "5 Reasons for Having a Supply Chain Strategy."

"As the supply chain rises in an organization, so will supply chain leaders."



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2 ADVOCATE FOR DIVERSITY

Take an objective look at how diverse your organization really is. Use benchmarks from other organizations.

Consider the family-leave policies and work environment of your company. Determine which enable women to succeed and which obstruct success.

Identify, initiate and expand the specific corporate initiatives that are most effective at improving diversity.

Get involved in recruiting. Reduce gendered language in job descriptions, remove gender-identifiers from job applications, and improve the representation of women interviewers. Convince your organization to require diverse slates of candidates.

Once your organization commits to diversity, set targets and have managers be accountable. Recognize those who meet their targets. Celebrate progress.

Publicize the successes of diverse teams.

Form a women's ERG (Employee Resource Group) or affinity group.

Resources:

[McKinsey](#) makes a convincing case for "Why Diversity Matters."

[Catalyst](#) wants every company to offer paternity leave – and to encourage men to take it.

[Forbes](#) has published a list of the 2019 Best Employers for Women.

[The Center for Creative Leadership](#) published a whitepaper titled "What Women Want from Work" based on a survey of 500 women leaders.

"Research makes it increasingly clear that companies with more diverse workforces perform better financially."



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3 ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS, AND ACTIVELY PURSUE AREAS WHERE YOU CAN GROW.

Align your strengths with your company values.

“Know the adjectives that are associated with success for the seat that you’re sitting in or the seat that you aspire to sit in.” (Carla Harris)

Be courageous. Take risks. Leave your comfort zone.

Fill gaps in your knowledge. Move laterally if the role offers the opportunity to learn something new.

Learn new skills and capabilities. Get P&L experience.

Ask for what you want. Ask for the tough jobs.

Keep inspiring yourself. Go to Symposiums and Forums. Expose yourself to motivational speakers.

Make yourself available as a speaker or as a quotable resource to industry publications.

Resources:

[Carla Harris, Vice Chair of Morgan Stanley and author of Expect to Win and Strategize to Win](#), spoke at the 2019 AWESOME Symposium about finding the three adjectives that best describe you – and then living them.

[AWESOME’s recommended reading list](#) includes books on a wide range of topics aimed at improving leadership skills and performance.

“When you hear that internal voice saying you could be doing something more, listen to it.”



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4 EXPAND YOUR NETWORK

Understand that different types of networks bring distinct benefits.

Proactively seek input and knowledge from others (including men).

Internally: Create opportunities to connect across functions and management levels. Organize regular gatherings with leadership from other departments.

Build relationships with business partners, supplier and vendors.

Externally: Broaden your network to establish a path to future opportunities.

Make new experiences and contacts work for you. Follow-up after you make new contacts. When you attend conferences, connect with speakers.

Use social media to interact with people you don't see face-to-face.

Find ways to spend time with people in other fields and in other age groups.

Build a personal board of trusted advisors. Include people who see your potential and who will give you honest feedback.

Be ready to give – as well as get – advice.

Resources:

[Kellogg School of Management of Northwestern University](#) says, "To Land Top Jobs, Women Need Different Types of Networks than Men."

[Fast Company](#) says men and women network differently and offers six ways women can leverage their connections for the same kind of boost men enjoy.

"Everyone is approachable; don't let pre-conceived notions become a barrier."



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5 BUILD THE BENCH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

Proactively become a mentor or sponsor.

Engage with other women in your organization. Keep track of the careers of high potential women. Be a source of support. Recognize their contributions.

Connect the women in your organization with each other.

Give women stretch assignments.

Introduce other women to new people and experiences. Bring them with you to symposiums, conferences, etc.

Amplify the ideas of other women. Advocate for them in meetings where possible assignments and promotions are being discussed.

Schedule time to connect with women you can help so it doesn't get overlooked.

Establish work practices and environments that will engage more women.

Get involved in recruiting for your organization. Lobby for diverse slates of candidates.

Learn about integrated pipeline planning and advocate for it in your organization.

Resources:

[The 2019 AWESOME/Gartner Research](#) found that supply chain organizations with goals and formalized initiatives report progress. Those without, don't. Also, recruiting and integrated pipeline planning programs (recruiting, development, mentoring and sponsoring) produce results for the largest number of supply chain organizations.

[Working Mother](#) shares example of how sponsors are helping women rise through the ranks

[Forbes](#) offers reasons why women who support other women are more successful.

"If I've made it up the corporate ladder and I haven't helped other women in my organization, I've failed."



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6 REACH BACK EVEN FURTHER

Realize that you can be an important role model for young women.

Be able to express why supply chain is an exciting and rewarding career choice.

Connect with a school in your location or with your alma mater.

Participate in career days or class projects.

Become a member of a university supply chain council.

Develop an internship in supply chain at your organization.

Support STEM initiatives for elementary, high school and college-age girls.

Resources:

[LeanIn](#) offers tips on how to be a role model.

www.techbridgegirls.org

Theconversation.com explains how to encourage more girls to pursue science and math careers.

“Conformity to social expectations, gender stereotypes, and lack of role models continue to channel girls’ career choices away from scientific or technical fields.”



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7 DEVELOP ALLIES WHO ARE MEN

Emphasize the business imperative: Companies with more diverse leadership teams perform better.

Don't frame diversity as just a "women's issue" or create an "us" vs "them" mentality.

Involve men in dialogue about diversity. Include them in initiatives. Recruit them as mentors and sponsors. Develop mixed-gender mentor groups so women can sponsor men, too.

If your organization has a women's development group, get men involved as speakers, panelists, participants in meaningful ways, etc.

Recognize unconscious bias and don't let it go unaddressed.

Think ahead and develop constructive responses for when you observe bias. Explain vs. complain. Don't shame.

Be aware of messages younger men are getting so the bias isn't carried forward.

When you find men who are allies, help them and their views on diversity to be visible in the organization. Have them help you show a unified approach.

Find out if the top leaders in your organization have daughters. Studies show they may be more inclined to hire and advance women.

Resources:

[LeanIn](#) offers "50 Ways to Fight Bias," a card-based activity with a short video series designed to give people the tools to address gender bias head-on.

[UN Women](#) takes a global perspective and has put together a HeForShe toolkit, including a Gender IQ test that shows the user situations that may occur as a result of unconscious bias.

Unskirting the Issues: A Guide for the Well-Intentioned Man in Today's Workplace, a book written by Bonnie Fetch, an executive with Cummins and a speaker at the 2019 AWESOME Symposium

[The National Bureau of Economic Research](#) found in a study conducted with venture capital firms that firms at which senior partners had more daughters than sons hired more women partners and performed better than their competitors.

[Jeffrey Halter](#), gender strategist and speaker at the 2018 AWESOME Symposium, has created an opt-in initiative for men titled "The Father of a Daughter Initiative."

[Harvard Business Review](#) reported on research showing that CEOs with daughters tend to run more socially responsible firms.

"Men must get involved, and women need to involve them in a meaningful and respectful way."



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SEVEN SMART MOVES TO MAKE BIGGER WAVES FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

1. HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF SUPPLY CHAIN TO BUSINESS SUCCESS.
2. ADVOCATE FOR DIVERSITY.
3. ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS AND ACTIVELY PURSUE AREAS WHERE YOU CAN GROW.
4. EXPAND YOUR NETWORK.
5. BUILD THE BENCH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION.
6. REACH BACK EVEN FURTHER.
7. DEVELOP ALLIES WHO ARE MEN.

MAKING WAVES

This 2019 Action Agenda – ***Seven Smart Moves to Make Bigger Waves for Women's Leadership*** -- is produced by AWESOME, an organization of senior women leaders in the supply chain field. Conclusions are based on the observations and recommendations of more than 300 leaders who participated in "Making Waves" brainstorming sessions at the 2019 AWESOME Symposium.

This is the second generation Action Agenda. The first, produced in 2018 was ***16 Ways to Make Waves and Advance Women's Leadership***. That report is available for download on the AWESOME website.

Also Available: **THE AWESOME REACH FRAMEWORK**

Apply the AWESOME Framework to your own career planning and your organization's strategies for achieving greater diversity.

Watch for details on <http://www.awesomeleaders.org>

[awesomeleaders.org](http://www.awesomeleaders.org)