

# Women, We Have A Problem

Why It's Time For Employers To Get Talking



Business & Talent. Aligned.®

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH

*The Right Management Global Career Conversation Study was conducted November-December 2015 to develop a deeper understanding of employees' perceptions about self managing careers across geographic regions, gender and age groups.*

*Our 4,433 respondents represented 15 countries (Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States) and ranged in age from 25 to 55.*

*We surveyed both individual contributors and managers on the following areas:*

- *What are the most important questions employees have about their careers?*
- *How do employees feel about the way they are being developed?*
- *Who do employees speak to for career advice?*
- *In what ways do development and high quality Career Conversations translate into important individual and organizational outcomes?*

# INTRODUCTION



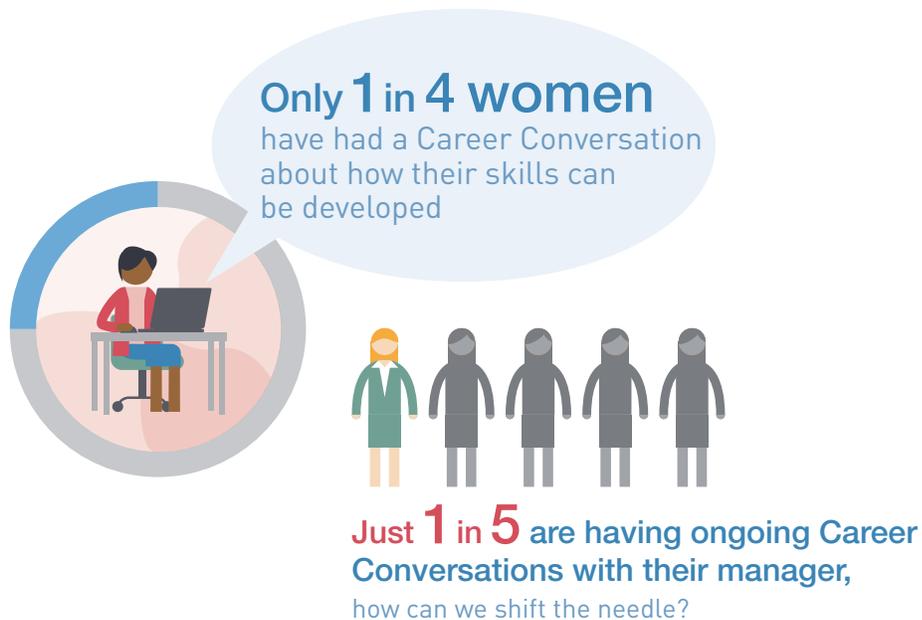
**MARA SWAN**

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
MANPOWERGROUP, GLOBAL STRATEGY  
AND TALENT & GLOBAL BRAND LEAD  
FOR RIGHT MANAGEMENT

“AS TECHNOLOGY CONTINUES TO DISRUPT, AND WE SEE THE EMERGENCE OF A SKILLS REVOLUTION, WE KNOW THE BIGGEST IMPACT WILL BE FELT BY WOMEN.”

They're already underrepresented in industries anticipating greatest job growth—engineering, technology, architecture and mathematics and they're overrepresented in sectors most threatened by digitization, automation and robotics—office and administration positions.<sup>1</sup>

When just one in four women have had a Career Conversation about how their skills can be developed, and only one in five are having ongoing Career Conversations with their manager, how can we shift the needle? Women need to develop their learnability: their desire and ability to learn new skills to stay relevant and take advantage of these new roles. And employers need to nurture women's learnability to ensure they have the skills for the future. Progress begins with effective Career Conversations.



<sup>1</sup> The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, World Economic Forum, January 2016.

# CAREER CONVERSATIONS:

The Career Conversation is not a single conversation. More than a simple “add-on” to the performance management review, Career Conversations guide the future of an individual's working life.

A series of conversations designed to help answer the questions employees most care about:



*Who am I? How do I fit?*



*What is expected of me?*



*How will my talents and contributions be recognized?*



*How am I doing?*



*What's next for me?*



*What and how should I develop?*

In the second Right Management series on Career Conversations we present more insights from our survey of over 4,400 employees and managers—including 2,200 women—in 15 countries.

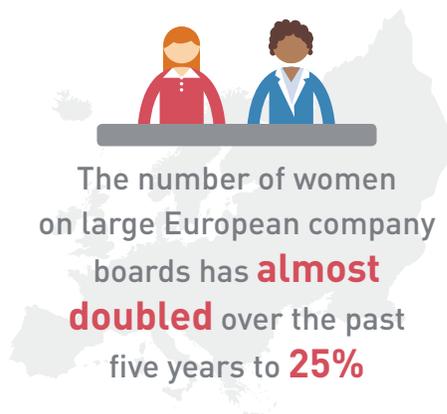
In this paper we look specifically at responses from women around the following themes:

	The most important questions employees have about their careers
	How employees feel about their skills development
	Where employees go for career advice
	How high quality Career Conversations translate into valuable individual and organizational outcomes
	The benefits of mentoring vs. sponsorship

We provide practical steps so employers can achieve gender parity starting with the easiest and most cost effective step of all—Career Conversations.



## The Illusion of Progress



The number of senior positions held by women has **risen just 3%** in the past five years, to stand at **24%**

On paper there's no doubt that women have made great progress. Women outnumber male university graduates in 95 of 144 countries. In Europe, the percentage of women on large company boards has almost doubled over the past five years to 25%.<sup>2</sup> In the UK Theresa May is the steady hand at the Brexit helm and Angela Merkel has again been named the world's most powerful woman. Abenomics has increased female participation in the labor market in Japan by one million and increased female corporate board members by 30%.<sup>3</sup> But these high profile roles may be just an illusion of progress.

**Behind the numbers, women face a triple threat: underrepresentation in industries poised for growth, over representation in roles threatened by automation and stubbornly low levels of women in senior roles.** The number of senior positions held by women has risen just 3% in the past five years, to stand at 24%.<sup>4</sup> The business case has been broadcast. We know that businesses with diverse workforces outperform others and are better positioned to adapt.<sup>5</sup>

But men and women have very different perspectives on **how to help women achieve gender parity** in leadership.<sup>6</sup> Our Seven Steps to Conscious Inclusion Research found that men see themselves and an entrenched male culture as part of the problem. They say programs, policy and HR will make gender neutral hiring and parity happen. But these are tried, tested and too slow. Women leaders know that relying on policies or practices is simply not enough and that change starts at an individual level. Leaders say gender parity is still at least a generation away—an average of 17 years. So are we kidding ourselves? Is there really only an illusion of progress?

<sup>2</sup> The Current Status of Women on Boards in 2016: A Global Roundup, *Market Integrity Insights*, 7 October, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Tetsu, Mizuno, 2016. "Abenomics is Womenomics," *Discuss Japan*, 5 June.

<sup>4</sup> Lagerberg, Francesca, 2016. "Women in business: turning promise into practice," *Grant Thornton*, 8 March.

<sup>5</sup> Medland, Dina, 2016. "Today's Gender Reality In Statistics, Or Making Leadership Attractive to Women," *Forbes*, 7 March.

<sup>6</sup> Seven Steps to Conscious Inclusion: A Practical Guide to Accelerating More Women into Leadership, ManpowerGroup, December 2015.

## Managers, Who Are You Talking To?

Regular Career Conversations are good for individuals and good for business. But women are disproportionately impacted by a lack of effective Career Conversations with their direct managers. **Just one in five female leaders has ongoing Career Conversations with their manager.** And when male leaders say the best way to advance is to self-promote, be open to risks, challenges and new opportunities<sup>7</sup>, employers risk losing top talent unless they start talking. Research has repeatedly pointed out that women do not raise their hands until they know they can do the job, so may not actively seek stretch assignments or P&L positions. If women aren't self-promoting to male leaders who are the majority—how will female leaders advance?

Women cite recognition of ability as the top reason to take a senior position.<sup>8</sup>

**Career Conversations provide the perfect opportunity to reaffirm strengths and align women's goals and motivations with the organization's needs.**

### Regular Career Conversations Mean All Employees Would...

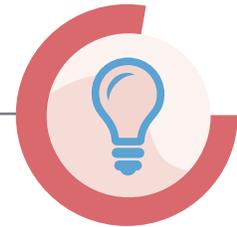
I would be more engaged

82%



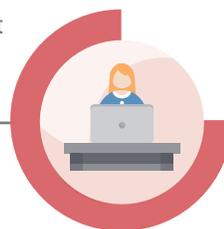
I would share ideas more freely

78%



I would be more likely to stay with my current employer

75%



“LEADERS NEED TO WALK THE TALK, DELIVER ON THEIR COMMITMENTS AND DO WHAT THEY SAY THEY WILL DO TO GET MORE WOMEN INTO LEADERSHIP.”

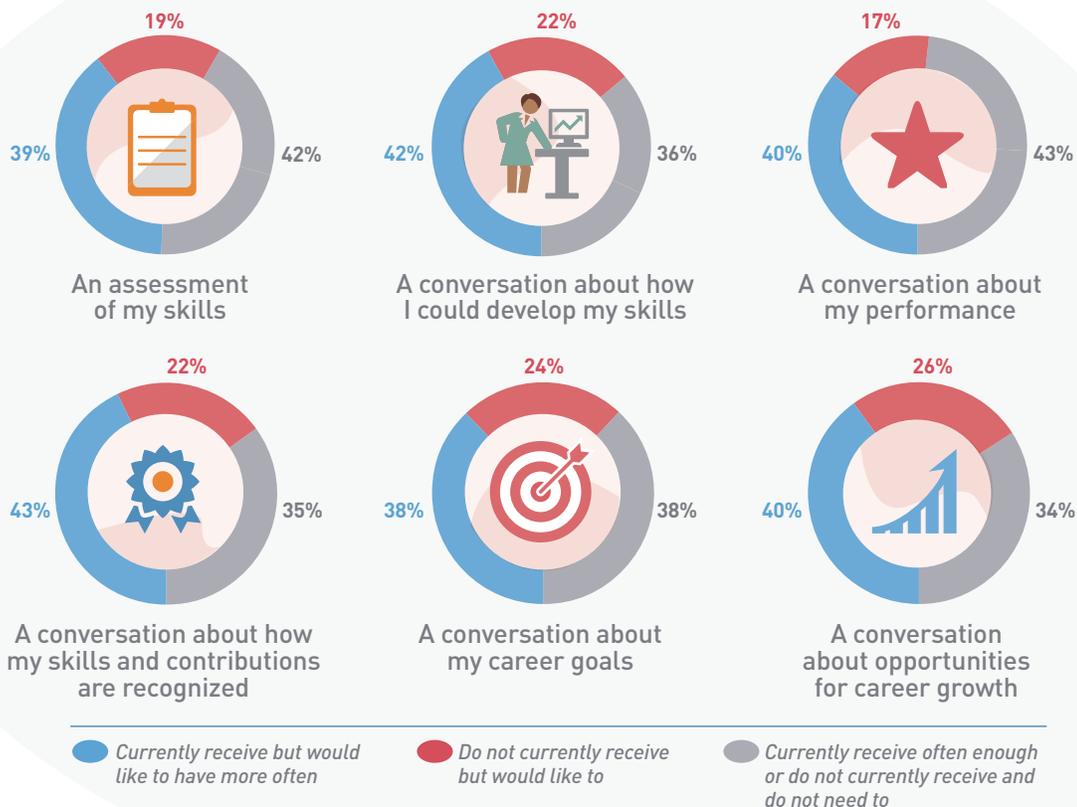
**Mara Swan**

Executive Vice President, ManpowerGroup,  
Global Strategy and Talent & Global Brand Lead  
for Right Management

<sup>7</sup> Seven Steps to Conscious Inclusion: A Practical Guide to Accelerating More Women Into Leadership, ManpowerGroup, December 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Lagerberg, Francesca, 2016. “Women in business: turning promise into practice,” Grant Thornton, 8 March.

## What Women Want: A Career For Me



## How Women Will Win in a Skills Revolution

Rarely a day goes by without news of digitization, artificial intelligence and virtual reality impacting the workplace. Business leaders, politicians and economists want to quantify technology's impact on employment—but no one knows for sure what the outcome will be. Plenty has been written predicting the future. **But few are telling people that they will need new skills and they will need to refresh them more often to stay employable for jobs we may not even have heard of yet.**

The life cycle of skills is shorter than ever before and an individual's employability will depend on their ability to demonstrate learnability—that's the desire and ability to learn new skills to stay relevant for the long-term. Fortunately, men don't own the corner on learnability. It's up to both employers and individuals to nurture learnability and upskill. Yet one in five women has never had an assessment of their skills and one in four has never had a conversation about how they can develop. While we cannot slow the rate of technological advancement, ongoing Career Conversations and investment in skills development will increase the relevance and resilience of women.



## Numbers Numbers Numbers: The Importance of Profit & Loss

P&L exposure is critical for advancement, but few women recognize its importance and often get stranded halfway up the ladder. **Leaders must know exactly where they need women to be.** Looking at macro numbers and averages is not enough and can result in “Pink Ghettos:” concentrations of women in HR, communications and support roles. There’s no silver bullet. More than mentoring, women need coaching and sponsorship to succeed, and experience and exposure to advance.

### Mind the Sponsor Gap

Women are more likely to be strong networkers and talented relationship builders than their male counterparts. But their networks can be quantity over quality when it comes to careers. Women tend to network across a wide range of people with a strong tendency to include workplace peers, family and friends.

### It's Not Who You Know, It's Who You Need to Know

*Who Are Women Turning To?*

	Career Advice	Mentoring	Learning & Development	Exposure to Job Opportunities	Networking
Direct Manager	X	X	X	X	
Manager's Manager		X			
HR			X		
Work Colleagues	X		X	X	X
Mentor		X	X		
Family	X	X			
Friends	X				X

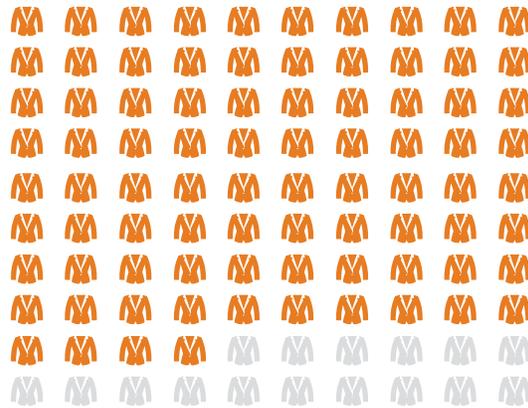
“A SPONSOR IS SOMEONE ON YOUR SIDE, PUSHING YOU—YOUR POSITION, YOUR SKILLS, YOUR VALUE TO THE ORGANIZATION—FORWARD.”

**Bridget Beattie**

Group Executive Vice President,  
Asia Pacific Middle East, Right Management

# 84%

of women **have not been able to identify a sponsor** within their organization.

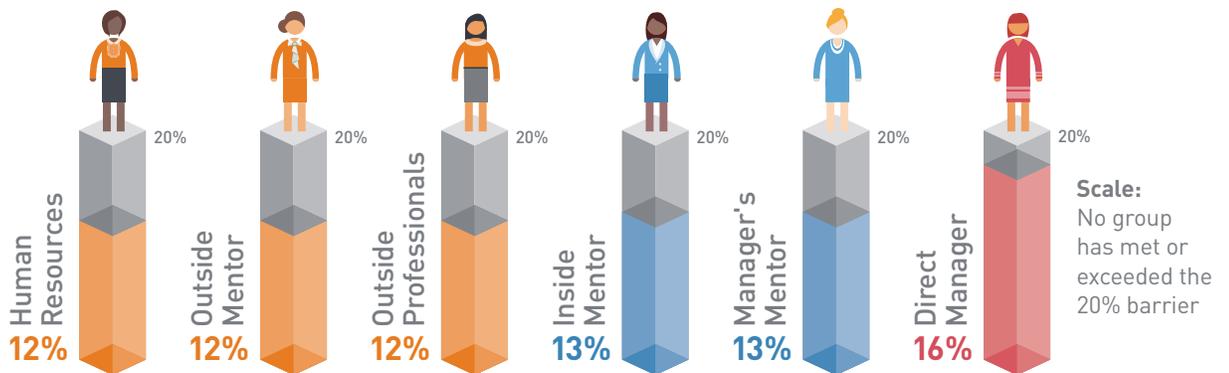


Women tend to be **over mentored and under sponsored...**

Sponsors develop talent and help women to get promoted.

What defines a sponsor versus a mentor is often misunderstood, but they are not interchangeable. **Women tend to be over mentored and under sponsored** so leaders must act. Mentors may act as a sounding board and make women feel more comfortable, but they do not help them get ahead. Sponsors develop talent and help women to get promoted. They have open conversations, help address how work gets done and the way performance is measured. **Sponsors create a culture of conscious inclusion and support and consciously advocate for women in the boardroom.** For many women lack of access to a sponsor and an inability to identify an influential network is an obstacle to progression. Eighty-four percent of women have not been able to find a sponsor within their organization.

## Closing the Gap—Where Women Are Finding Sponsors



**Forward-thinking companies equip senior leaders to become sponsors, facilitate the movement of high potential employees and make sponsorship a critical part of their talent and organizational strategy.**

## That's Just The Way It Is, Some Things Will Never Change

Women couldn't care less, literally. They are more likely to spend time caring for children, older relatives or partners. **Millennial women plan to take more time out than Millennial men to care for others—for children, older relatives, partners, so we cannot expect gender parity to come with a new generation.** Of course we cannot change biology, but we can have conversations about shifting priorities beyond the office and how people can achieve a One Life work-life blend. Travel, long hours and time away from home may have historically accompanied cutting edge assignments, but employers need to ask why?



## Practical Steps Towards Effective Career Conversations

**Forty-percent of women would like to have more conversations about their opportunities for growth.**

And when it comes to Career Conversations what works for women works for the entire workforce. If organizations are serious about getting more women into leadership roles and including half the talent in the workforce, they must go beyond programs and change the culture. Employers can take practical steps to engage employees and meet business goals.

**With the right questions, any manager can Talk the Talk.**

40%

of women would like to have **more conversations** about their **opportunities for growth.**<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Right Management, Global Career Conversation Study, 2016

# IN CONCLUSION: THE HOW TO...

**We Hear You! A series of questions to explore with employees to help answer the questions they care about most:**

## *Who Am I? How Do I Fit?*



Helps the employee **clarify their career goals**, and match these with their values, motivations and abilities.

## *What Is Expected Of Me?*



An opportunity to work with the employee to **develop goals that are SMART:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

## *How Will My Talents And Contributions Be Recognized?*



Meaningful dialogue about what **intrinsic motivations engage the employee** and how those might change.

## *How Am I Doing?*



**An ongoing conversation between manager and employee to observe strengths and opportunities and provide feedback.**

## *What's Next For Me?*



Finding the sweet spot between the employee, manager and organization to **identify steps to reach the next career goal.**

## *What And How Should I Develop?*



Laying out a **developmental timeline of individual skills needed** for the current role, future roles and to remain employable.



## About Right Management

**Right Management** is the global career and talent development expert within ManpowerGroup®. We help organizations become more agile, attractive and innovative by creating a culture of career management and learning that nurtures future talent, motivates and engages people, and provides individuals with opportunities to increase their value throughout their careers. We improve time to value through our expertise in organizational effectiveness, career management and individual development. Our approach is centered on the fact that organizations thrive when individuals are successful in their careers. We've spent the last 35+ years identifying workforce challenges and developing innovative solutions, enabling our globally informed methods to be time-tested across more than 50 countries.

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION ONLINE

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